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The Voice of Maria Dolens

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Centenary of the Bell



The sudden change of course by U.S. President Donald Trump on the issue of broad-based tariff imposition—a topic that is highly sensitive, both economically and politically—invites some reflections that go beyond the strictly technical context, on which, moreover, the author does not claim to have sufficient expertise to elaborate.

In such an analysis, it is first appropriate to dismiss the temptation—embraced by some—to interpret the U.S. President's abrupt reversal as a 'commendable willingness' to

acknowledge and swiftly correct his own mistakes when necessary.

On the contrary, the prevailing view (which we share), by contrast, is one of strong criticism toward a leader who appears to regard his position in the 'elite of the powerful' as so unassailable that he feels exempt, in his public statements, from any clear duty of consistency—and thus entitled to advocate, with equal conviction, both a given position and, shortly thereafter and without any convincingly different rationale, its exact opposite.

To be continued on page 6...

IN THIS EDITION

02

The legacy of Pope Francis

04

Inauguration of the exhibition 'The Myth of the Bell - One Hundred Years of Maria Dolens'.

08

Centenary calendar announced

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THE LEGACY OF POPE FRANCIS

Artificial Intelligence and Peace

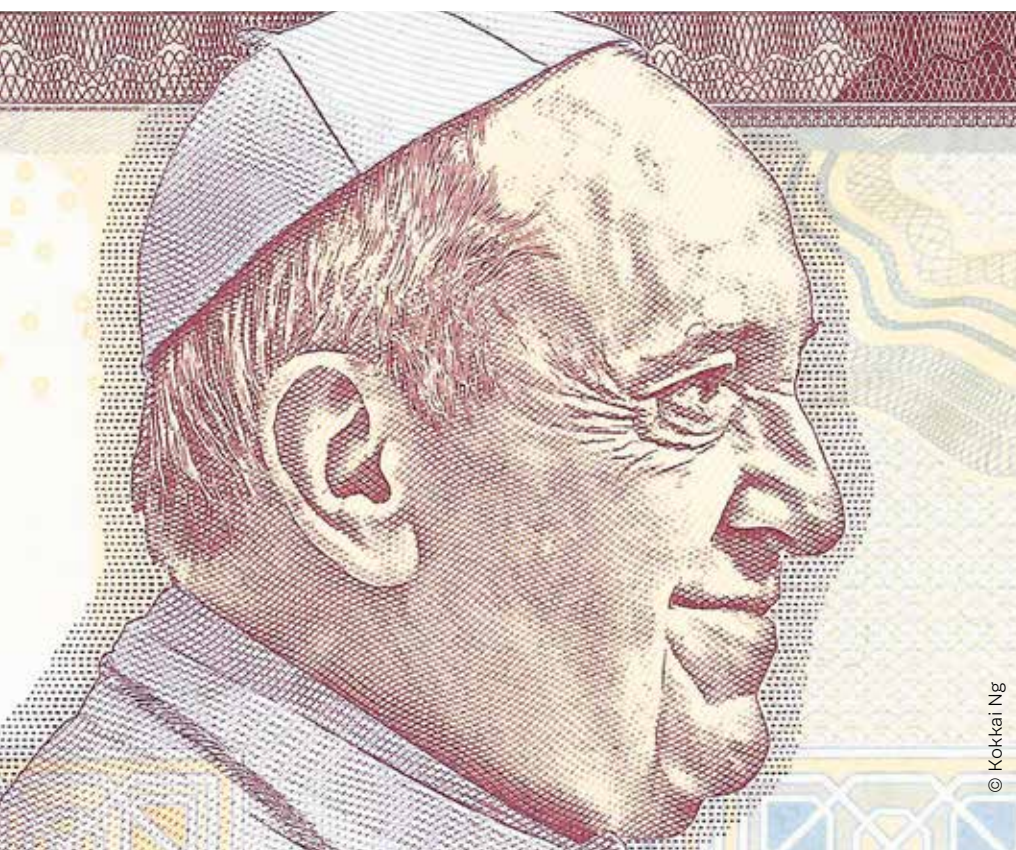
Among the latest public reflections of Pope Francis, the message for the 57th World Day of Peace, to be celebrated on 1 January 2024, seems to stand out. A line of reasoning that comes across as an attempt to illuminate the future with the light of responsibility, if not hope. Entitled 'Artificial Intelligence and Peace', the text lucidly addresses the challenges posed by artificial intelligence (AI), recognising its extraordinary potential but also its profound risks. AI, Francis

summarised, is the fruit of human ingenuity and a sign of the dignity that God has bestowed on Man. But all technological progress, if not guided by human and shared values, risks becoming an instrument of inequality and conflict. In this way he reinterpreted the history of intelligence as a gift and a duty. Technology, he said, is not neutral: it always carries a vision of the world with it. He thus called for a profound ethical reflection, capable of orienting digital development to the common good, to justice and to Peace.

'Rightly,' he wrote, 'we rejoice and are grateful for the extraordinary achievements of science and technology, thanks to which countless evils that afflicted 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'.

And the Pope was specific when he pointed out that '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. Some urgent questions must therefore be asked. What will be the medium- and long-term consequences of new digital technologies? And what impact will they have on the lives of individuals and society, on international stability and on Peace?'

In his message he emphasised the urgency of shared regulations, ethical oversight bodies and education on technological responsibility. "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," he wrote. Moreover, the large amount of data analysed by artificial intelligences is not in itself a guarantee of impartiality. When algorithms extrapolate information, they always run the risk of distorting it, replicating the injustices and prejudices of the environments in which it originates. The faster and more complex they become, the more difficult it is to understand why they produced a certain result.





“Intelligent” machines,” he added, “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.’

The Pontiff then denounced the risks of digital manipulation, systematic surveillance, algorithmic discrimination and the militarisation of AI.

But at the same time, secondly, he also offered a message of hope: if used responsibly, artificial intelligence can contribute to social justice, integral human development, and the building of Peace. He even went so far as to speak of ‘algor-ethics’, calling for a new dialogue between science, law, politics and spirituality. And he called for an international treaty to regulate the use of AI, also involving the voices of the poorest and most marginalised, who are often excluded from decision-making processes. ‘Ethical considerations,’ he wrote, ‘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.

The Pope’s words have resonated with several contemporary thinkers. Philosopher Luciano Floridi points out that although artificial intelligence is a powerful technology, it does not possess consciousness or awareness. Therefore, the responsibility for decisions concerning its use lies entirely with human beings. For his part, sociologist Zygmunt Bauman, notes that technology does not make us more human, but offers us a test case to prove how human we already are. In *Liquid Love* (2003), for example, he analyses how digital communication can make emotional ties even more fragile, pointing out that virtual proximity tends to separate communication and relationship, making human connections more superficial and brief.

In his message of 1 January 2024, Francis also spoke to young people, educators, legislators, and technology creators. And he concluded with a call not to let AI increase inequality, seeking instead to turn these new technologies into an opportunity to develop solidarity.

Just days after his passing, this appeal echoes as a legacy: to build a world in which artificial intelligence and all forms of human knowledge serve as instruments of Peace, not of domination.

INAUGURATION OF THE EXHIBITION 'THE MYTH OF THE BELL - ONE HUNDRED YEARS OF MARIA DOLENS'.

If politics decides what is art

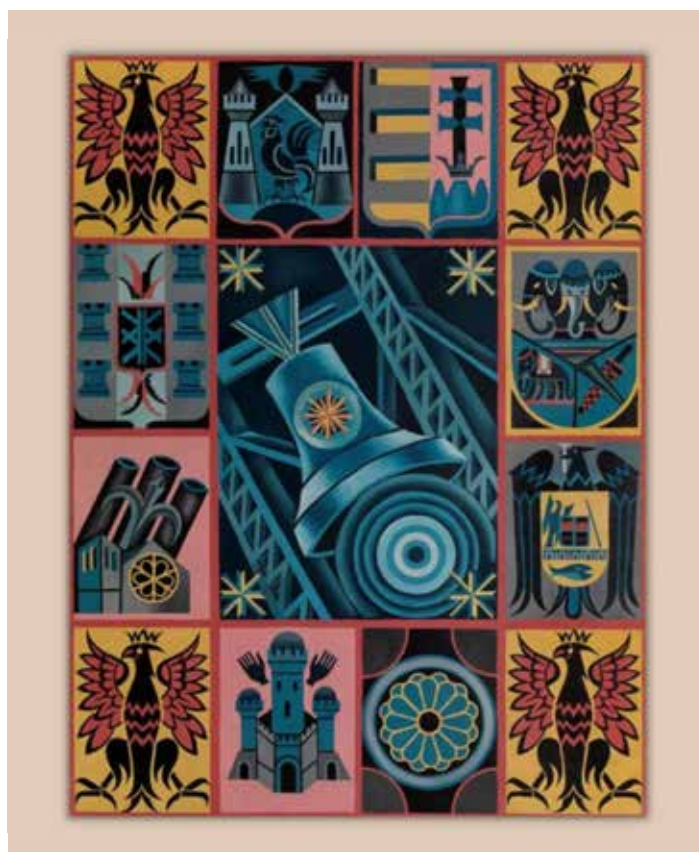
On 12 April, the exhibition 'The Myth of the Bell - One Hundred Years of Maria Dolens', curated by Chiara Moser, was inaugurated at the Foundation's headquarters, celebrating the long and fascinating journey of Maria Dolens. During the opening ceremony of the exhibition, which closes on 31 October, Member of the European Parliament Herbert Dorfmann gave a speech, summarised below.

The 100th anniversary of the Campana dei Caduti is an important anniversary, a 'milestone birthday'. For a century, this Bell has rung every day in memory of the fallen soldiers of all wars. It was commissioned and made in 1925, no doubt inspired by the devastating experience of the First World War. It was here, in this territory that once marked the border between the Austro-Hungarian Empire and the Kingdom of Italy, that the cruel and bloody Dolomite front developed, the scene of an unprecedented human drama.

Not surprisingly, not far from here, the first shot of the war between Austria and Italy was fired in 1915. Yet, those who devised this Bell could not have imagined that the worst was yet to come: the collapse of the world order, the horrors of the Second World War, which would also affect these lands. But the Bell also endured through the long period of peace that followed, and which, fortunately, still accompanies us today.

Today, those wars seem far away. Few of us have personal memories of the conflicts, and probably none of us personally knew their fallen. Peace has become almost a 'logical' condition in Europe, and perhaps because of this we tend to value it less than it deserves.

The second half of the 20th century saw the birth of international bodies such as the UN and the Council of Europe - places of dialogue and mediation - and above all the European Union, which would not have existed without the tragic lessons of the Second World War. We are also in a land that was the birthplace of one of the great founding fathers of Europe: Alcide De Gasperi. He understood that only collaboration between the peoples of Europe could guarantee lasting Peace on our continent.



Fortunato Depero, *Boundless Generosity* (1957)

So does all this mean that we can sleep soundly? That today we are only celebrating a memory of the past? Unfortunately not. For three years now, war has returned to Europe. Aggression has returned, and it has brought new casualties with it. At the gates of the European Union, young people with lives full of dreams and plans are forced to fight and die on the battlefields of Ukraine. Victims of an aggressive, unnecessary and also deeply irrational expansion plan, aimed only at consolidating power at the expense of the common good.



To be continued from page 1...

After all, the signs of Trump's accentuated distancing from what in any profession is called 'ethical correctness' had already become clear during the recent election campaign, from which, in fact, he emerged victorious, confirming his above-average communication skills (and resources).

Focusing solely on the international sphere, the then-candidate for the highest institutional office on the planet stood out for his bombastic claims about his alleged ability to bring a swift resolution—'within 24 hours'—to both the Russia-Ukraine war and the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. More than three months after he took office, it is clear that both crises remain far from any form of resolution and, in some respects—such as the humanitarian situation in Gaza, where the Palestinian population has been pushed to the brink—they exhibit even more alarming features than those seen during the much-maligned Democratic administration of Joe Biden.

Indeed, there is little doubt that, when it comes to a head of government, credibility is one of the most important qualities and it is valued highly, both by foreign counterparts and by the diverse array of domestic stakeholders. And in fact, when the fates of businesses, trades, and private individuals rest mainly on the actions of a high-ranking leader, er-

atic behaviours and contradictory decisions are exactly the elements that pose the greatest risk—one that must be avoided at all costs.

Here, the 'strong powers' within the United States, i.e. the very strong constituencies of finance and industry, were the elements that made Donald Trump desist from applying *erga omnes* tariffs of an unprecedented magnitude, a measure that would have ended up significantly damaging, with a few and probably not coincidental exceptions, precisely many well-established 'star and stripes' interests. As is known, these duties were not revoked *tout court* but were instead subject to a 3-month suspensive measure, subject to the immediate application of a 10% rate. All of this hinging, of course, on the hope—though this has become the rule rather than the exception—that the President would not change his mind again.

If the reaction of Europe - notwithstanding the widely shared need for the 27 Member States to maintain their unity, speaking with one voice with their interlocutors across the Atlantic - seems to oscillate between the adoption of retaliatory measures and the readiness to negotiate with Washington, while the case is different for the People's Republic of China (PRC) for which the tariff measures remain fully in force, with limited exceptions (primarily smartphones and PCs).





We will consequently hear a lot about guānshuì (Mandarin translation of 'tarif') in the coming weeks and, probably, months, not least because of the inflexible attitude that Beijing seems inclined to adopt towards American constraints. A 'wall-to-wall' situation, in short, exemplified by very high tariffs (+ 145% in the case of Washington, + 84% in the opposite direction, according to surveys that are certainly not definitive), potentially fuelling a real 'trade war'.

It is not difficult to predict the outcome of the latter: there will no real winner and, the 'losers' will be a substantial number of countries, spread across the five continents, completely uninvolved in the feud between the two superpowers.

It is to be noticed, however, that the negotiations held this week in Geneva managed to reduce considerably the level of tariffs existing so far between the two countries.

In conclusion, irrespective of their Democratic or Republican loyalties, all the American presidents, from the 1980s until 'The Donald' entered the White House, have been engaged in a sort of 'bet' on China, with a view to integrating it into the ever-increasing process of globalisation as well as, albeit from a perspective that is by no means close, the progressive opening up to the outside world of a regime that was so autocratic at the time as to be almost impenetrable.

Against this backdrop, while it may be acceptable that the United States and China experience periods of distancing and tension in their relations, it would be far less justifiable to ignore the indicators of long-term open conflict—albeit, for the time being, confined to the commercial sphere.

Reggente Marco Marsilli, Foundation President

CENTENARY CALENDAR ANNOUNCED

A New Beginning

For the Campana dei Caduti, one hundred years is not a milestone, but a starting point. One hundred years after its fusion, the message of Maria Dolens is more relevant than ever and has been declined in a very rich programme covering the whole of 2025. The calendar of events was presented on 2 April at the Foundation's Alberto Robol auditorium on the Miravalle hill. Those present included the Director, Marco Marsilli, the mayor of the municipality of Rovereto Giulia Robol, the president of the Valagarina Community Stefano Bisoffi, the president of the provincial council Claudio Soini, and the vice-president of the Autonomous Province of Trento Francesca Gerosa.

In his welcoming remarks, the Director emphasised that, when developing the content of the programme, the Foundation began with 'a number of general considerations.' First and foremost, from the desire to offer future visitors an appropriate mix of art exhibitions, musical performances, academic events, theatrical performanc-

es, moments of spirituality and more. Secondly, by seeking to 'team up' with the city's other museum institutions, taking advantage of mutual synergies'. From this perspective, he added, "I am particularly pleased that the first event on the calendar—the exhibition 'The Myth of Maria Dolens'—features contributions in the form of works or documents not only from Mitag (the new name of the Italian War History Museum), which provided the majority of the loans, but also from Mart, the Civic Museum, and the Trentino Historical Museum.' Another objective, he continued, is to 'strengthen the strong link of continuity between the Miravalle Pass and Rovereto "City of Peace". The latter's historic centre will be transformed from 25 to 27 July into the ideal stage for one of the most popular events of our centenary year, 'Invisible Cities'. The mayor of Rovereto spoke next, emphasising that the centenary 'is an important occasion for us to celebrate the Campana dei Caduti, the symbol which has made Rovereto "City of Peace" famous all over the

world, but that it is also an opportunity to renew our commitment to promoting the culture and values of Peace'. In Rovereto, he added, 'the fundamental values of harmonious coexistence and European integration are imprinted in the very identity of the community and should be promoted and celebrated as such. The Campana dei Caduti is, in this context, an extraordinary symbol, it is more than a monument, it is a call to active engagement, and as such it fits perfectly into the future vision of our city'.

For her part, the Vice-President of the Autonomous Province of Trento focused on young people, emphasising that 'we all have an important moral duty, and that is to take our children, our young people by the hand and accompany them so that they can do an even better job than those who have gone before them'. She added, "Each time the Campana dei Caduti tolls, it reminds us of what has been, of the memory of the people who sacrificed themselves for us, for future generations; a monument that carries important values: the value of Peace, of memory, the value of respect for human rights. "To these values, however, we must also add those of inclusion, integration, and the vital awareness that each of us, in our own small path and slice of life, can truly make a difference.

So much has been done, but we must not stop here.'

