



Nobel Laureates sign Rome Declaration on Nuclear Weapons and AI

Nobel laureates, international experts and scientists, religious leaders, and former heads of state and government gather at Rome's Capitoline Hill to sign the "Rome Declaration for an Unarmed and Disarming Peace" in the Age of Artificial Intelligence and Nuclear Weapons. The joint appeal, in the face of immense challenges posed by nuclear weapons and AI, calls for renewed international cooperation.



By Deborah Castellano Lubov, Vatican News

The groundbreaking "Rome Declaration for an Unarmed and Disarming Peace in the Age of Artificial Intelligence, Nuclear and Autonomous Weapons, New Digital Protocols, and Emerging Models of Digital Development" was signed on Thursday, July 16, at Rome's Capitoline Hill, effectively culminating the Global Nobel Laureates Assembly on Artificial Intelligence and Nuclear War.

The Assembly, which brought together more than 200 of the world's most authoritative figures and representatives of leading international research institutions in the fields of peace and artificial intelligence, was inspired by Pope Leo XIV's Encyclical Magnifica humanitas, dedicated to safeguarding the human person in the age of artificial intelligence.

The Vatican hosted the event from 14–15 July at Borgo Laudato si' in the Pontifical Gardens of Castel Gandolfo, and it concludes today, 16 July, with the solemn session at Rome's City Hall on the Capitoline Hill. The

morning began with institutional greetings by the Mayor of Rome, Roberto Gualtieri.

Next, Professor Daniel Holz of the University of Chicago, Founding Director of the Existential Risk Lab (X Lab), frankly reminded those present that "the bad news" is that "it is a time of unprecedented danger," but "the good news is that there are plenty of things we can do to make ourselves safer from nuclear weapons and from AI."

Cardinal Reina: No machine or algorithm can decide on existential issues
The Vicar General of Rome, Cardinal Baldo Reina, said the Rome Declaration carries particular significance today. "It comes at a time marked by rapid transformation and profound risks: artificial intelligence, nuclear weapons, geopolitical instability, the crisis of multilateralism, and the temptation to entrust security to fear, deterrence, and mutual threats." Cardinal Reina stressed that we stand at a "pivotal moment" in history. "Scientific and technological progress offers extraordinary opportunities for healthcare, education, public health, environmental protection, the fight against poverty, and the building of peace. Yet the same progress, if detached from ethics, responsibility, and respect for the dignity of the human person, can become an instrument of domination, exclusion, and even destruction."

"The Declaration presented today reminds us with great clarity that no machine, no algorithm, and no autonomous system can be placed at the center of decisions upon which the survival of humanity depends."

He said that "decisions concerning life and death, peace and war, and the future of peoples and generations yet to come must remain under full, responsible, and meaningful human control."

AI can move humans to build or destroy

Meanwhile, Father Andrea Ciacchi, Chancellor of the Pontifical Academy for Life, reflected on human ingenuity. He observed that, on the one hand, humans are capable of creating incredible masterpieces, but on the other hand, human ingenuity can cause great devastation.

He said that AI and nuclear power are no exception, noting that "AI can move human beings to build or to destroy."

Cardinal Silvano Maria Tomasi and Nobel Peace Laureate Professor Maria Ressa of Columbia University also addressed those present with powerful words about the arms race and the need for a moral compass in these times of unprecedented risk.

Our survival is at stake

Professor David Gross, Nobel Prize laureate in Physics and Chancellor's Chair Professor of Theoretical Physics at the University of California, said

that his assessment of the danger of nuclear arms is much greater than it was 30 years ago.

He lamented that arms control treaties have disappeared and that nine nations are now nuclear powers. "We are in the middle of an accelerated arms race." The people of the world, he said, can no longer be ignorant of the way these threats may affect not only their own lives, but certainly those of their children and grandchildren.

Referring to the Declaration, Professor Gross stressed that its suggestions are simple and that we have heard them before.

He highlighted: "We ask that nuclear nations promote policies that reduce the risk of war, nuclear war, and annihilation."

He said that those present, inspired by the words of the Pope, the Church, and anyone with a moral sense, must act.

"Remember your humanity and forget the rest," the Nobel Prize laureate reiterated, warning that our survival, and that of future generations, is clearly at stake.

Peace Ambassador Sharon Stone also spoke, saying that, united in the goal of the common good and respect for every human person, as machines' capacities expand, so too must the moral efforts of those who build them. "Human dignity," she said, "is not an algorithm."