

Prayer for the End of the 40-Day Fast for Christian Nonviolence
August 9th, 2022
Anniversary of the Atomic Bombing of Nagasaki, Japan and
The Executions of St. Teresa Benedicta of the Cross (Edith Stein)
And Blessed Franz Jaegerstaetter

Introduction: For the past 40 days, many people have participated in a fast against the violence that plagues our world. Today, the anniversary of the atomic bombing of Nagasaki, the largest Christian community in Japan at the time, we draw the fast to a close as we commemorate that bombing and pray for the abolition of nuclear weapons and all weapons of war—be they bombs or bullets, hatred, fear, vengeance, or greed. Let us pray.

(Please use the prayer service alone or in community whether you fasted or not. Feel free to add music, a time for silent meditation, and/or your own “prayers of the faithful.”)

Voice of a Hibakusha in *Hibakusha: Hiroshima-Nagasaki*, edited and published by Nihon Hidankyo, the Japan Confederation of A-and H-Bomb Sufferers Organizations

In total disregard of the worldwide call for “no more Hiroshimas or Nagasakis!,” the nuclear super-powers are threatening to push all humanity over the brink to extinction by nuclear war. Recently, the possibility of the “first strike” use of nuclear weapons or the launching of “limited nuclear war” by the use of theater or tactical nuclear weapons is openly spoken of by the war-mongers. Do they claim that nuclear war is excusable if “limited”?

But whatever is meant by “limited,” what a terrible hell would be let loose if nuclear weapons were ever to be used! The suffering of the Hibakusha provides the evidence. Hiroshima and Nagasaki show the pattern of destruction and mass-slaughter of nuclear war. Whatever the type and whatever the circumstances, nuclear war should be the last thing even to be considered for humanity, the very last!

Opening Prayer, A Gathering Storm of Hope by Fr. John Dear

God of peace, as we remember our sisters and brothers killed in Hiroshima and Nagasaki, we repent of the atomic bomb, of those horrific acts of all the death and destruction that we have wrought.

As our country continues to design, build, and maintain these genocidal weapons of mass destruction, we repent of our mortal sin.

As our country threatens the whole human race and the entire planet, we repent of our willingness to destroy the gift of your creation.

As we continue to hold the world hostage and commit the ultimate act of terrorism by threatening to use these nuclear weapons, we repent of nuclear terrorism and the fear, distrust, and infidelity we spread.

For our silence, indifference, fear and despair, we repent. For all the violence we have personally committed, and for our own complicity with the culture of war and nuclear weapons, we repent.

Disarm our hearts, disarm our cities, disarm our military and our nation, disarm our world. Give us the gift of a world without war, poverty, or nuclear weapons, a new world of peace.

First Reading from “Living at the End of the World” by James Douglass, reprinted in *The Risk of the Cross* by Art Laffin

Faith is believing that there is hope for our world. Despair is denying that our nuclear war systems can be stopped or changed. Faith is a commitment to the world’s transformation through God to a Kingdom of justice and peace.... Never before has our despair at changing institutions threatened the extinction of all life on earth. Faith is belief in a reality, and a transformation through which it is possible for us to live deeply enough to choose new life rather than nuclear death. A lived faith will stop the bomb.

We need to join in a community committed to that nonviolent life-force which is the power of the powerless. We need to test the truth by betting our lives on it in the world. If a community can experiment deeply enough in a nonviolent life-force the power of the Pentagon will crumble.

Litany of Repentance from *The Risk of the Cross* by Art Laffin

Response: *Lord, lead us to repentance.*

For questioning the authority of Jesus’ teachings on the cross, we ask you...

For placing human standards above divine compassion, we pray...

For the moral blindness of our nuclear intention, we beg you...

For trusting in instruments of death to save us rather than in the power of the Living God, we beseech you...

For our nation’s desecration of the earth and environmental destruction resulting from the mining, testing, production, and deployment of nuclear weapons, we pray...

For not fully believing that the risen Christ is alive in our hearts, we plead...

Chiyo Takeuchi’s Story excerpted from *Beyond Hiroshima* edited by Jean Fallon & Anne Goldfeld, a Hibakusha story

All men and women have love engraved in the deepest part of their souls.... The only way we can restore ourselves in the middle of destruction is to uncover this common love that we all have. We need to pray that we are the kind of person who is able to cast aside ego and really reach out to other people in any situation or crisis....

I believe that we all have within us some capability of building peace, of expressing our love for one another. Each of us has to try to find what that capability is and fulfill it....

Each thing is connected and builds a way to peace.

Prayer for Hiroshima and Nagasaki by Fr. Bob Cushing

Creator of the stars of night and earth's own rising sun, we beseech You to hear our prayer for peace.... In the light of your love we are one human family....

Only in the Light of your Peace, Creator God, can we find a way to peace on earth. Thank you for revealing that light of mercy and forgiveness that has overcome the darkness of war and fear, of nationalism and hate. Thank you for the courageous witness of Hibakushas who have consistently taught us the way of reconciliation and forgiveness as the only way to peace on earth. For they have seen the Light that surpasses all others. They have shown it to us that we may carry on this mission for which they have lived and died.

Creating God, grant us their moral authority and courage to carry on, that we may speak out boldly to the nations of the human family and build a new moral order in your beloved community. We ask this in the many names of God, the Holy Source of our being, that we may say "NO!" to the instruments of death and live our "Yes!" to the way of life and peace. Amen.

Restorative Environmental Justice (excerpts) by Sarah Vamvounis in *Silo: What We Are Owed* from Beyond the Bomb

We have spared nothing in our nuclear arms race, least of all the environment. While we cannot unscorch, unspill, or undo the harm already done, we can work to mend the damage. Like grass weaving makeshift scars over earthen incisions, I imagine that healing would look something like this:

Out of hills carved to husks for uranium, I picture rock regrowing, machines no longer whirring and scraping and digging....

In the place of hazardous waste dump sites, I picture community gardens, where the only sinister components of the soil are weeds or worms....

I imagine the billions of dollars allocated to nuclear weapons programs rerouted into...other efforts that would center the experiences and lives of those most affected by environmental injustice and nuclear weapons....

I imagine an environment and world that's almost fantastical, not because environmental justice and a post-nuclear world are unrealistic or unattainable, but because the possibilities for that world are endless. We get to choose what we keep, how we respond to the harm that we have already endured, and how we prevent cycles of violence from being repeated. Our ability is as expansive as our ambition. So in the face of climate change, state violence, and the military industrial complex, I choose to imagine a world where we have rectified that harm and worked towards something better. Because it is there, a bit further on, not easy, but within reach.

A Gathering Storm of Hope (continued) by Fr. John Dear

And so we pledge—

In this world of hatred, indifference, fear, and anxiety, to be instruments of your love;

In this world of selfishness, greed, and materialism, to be instruments of your selfless service and generosity;

In this world of revenge, retaliation, and resentment, to be instruments of your mercy,
compassion, and forgiveness;
In this world of doubt and despair, to be instruments of faith and hope;
In this world of lies and darkness, to be instruments of truth and light;
In this world of war, nuclear weapons, and death, to be instruments of your peace, nonviolence,
and life.

Final Commissioning—John 20:21

And Jesus said to his disciples, “As Abba-God sent me, so I send you.”

Go now in the peace of Christ into the world.

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