

Prayer for the End of the 40-Day Fast for Christian Nonviolence
August 9th, 2025
80th 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 80th 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.”)

Opening Prayer from Sabeel Wave of Prayer, 6-23-25

God of Truth, you hear the cries of the oppressed and see through the lies of empire. We come to you with heavy hearts as history threatens to repeat its worst chapters. When those in power try to manufacture our consent for war, remind us of your commandment to “do no wrong and do no violence to the stranger, the fatherless, or the widow” (Jeremiah 22:3). Holy Spirit, help us disrupt the machinery of death in our own creative and nonviolent ways. May we be examples of your love in a world deeply divided by hatred and sin.

Lord in your mercy... hear our prayer

A Reading from Martha Hennessy’s sentencing statement as a member of the Kings Bay Plowshares 7, November 13th, 2020

War stems from our unwillingness to love one another as Christ has loved us. This is what the Bomb represents to me.... We are to live by example, to be indignant over the rejection of God’s love. We spurn God’s love and misplace it when we rely on nuclear weapons to force our will on the globe.... Our nuclear arsenal is a theft from the hungry; it is economically and environmentally bankrupt, and legally and morally indefensible.... My opposition to war comes from the Gospel of Life that peace is a good to be pursued out of respect for human life. Today’s wars cannot protect the lives of civilians, and nuclear war cannot practice proportionality.... Our manifesto is the Sermon on the Mount, which means we will try to be peacemakers.

A Prayer for Nuclear Disarmament by Sr. Dian Smith, CSJ

Good and gracious God, we pray for a world free of nuclear weapons.
Lift the fog of atomic darkness that hovers so pervasively over the earth.
We pray for world leaders to come to the realization that more weapons and war do not bring peace.

May financial resources be allocated to alleviate poverty, support food security, housing, health care, environment, and educational programs.

Good and gracious God, we pray that the deadly power of nuclear weapons never again be unleashed on people and Your creation.

May such weapons of mass and indiscriminate annihilations be forever banned and eliminated from the face of the earth.

Good and gracious God, forgive our past silence, give us the courage and strength tirelessly to raise our prophetic voices to work to eliminate weapons of mass destruction.

Let us remember Hiroshima and Nagasaki as beacons as we commit ourselves to find ways to live together in peace, that we may not be just peace lovers, but peacemakers.

LITANY OF REPENTANCE from a Prayer Service for Aug. 9, 2022 White House Witness (courtesy of Art Laffin)

Response: *Forgive us, O God.*

For the U.S. development, use, and threatened use of nuclear weapons...

For the over 200,000 people who died in Hiroshima and Nagasaki as a direct result of the U.S. nuclear bombings...

For the countless Japanese A-Bomb survivors who have suffered and died from the effects of nuclear radiation...

For all American Indians who have contracted cancer and died as a result from uranium mining on their sacred lands...

For the unknown numbers of people who have suffered and died from nuclear testing in the Marshall Islands and South Pacific...

For workers in nuclear facilities who were exposed to radiation and who have suffered and died...

For those living downwind from nuclear facilities who have contracted cancer and died...

For those prisoners and people with mental disabilities who were subjects of nuclear radiation experiments...

For the U.S. use of highly toxic radioactive depleted uranium weapons in Iraq, Yugoslavia, Afghanistan and elsewhere which have claimed untold lives and have caused dramatic increases of cancer, leukemia and birth defects in each of the countries where these weapons have been used...

For the millions who needlessly suffered and died--past and present--because of the money and resources spent on weapons and war instead of on programs to help eradicate poverty and preventable diseases...

For desecrating the earth and the environmental damage caused by the mining, testing and use of nuclear technology...

For placing our trust in weapons and mammon rather than in God...

A Reading about and from the 2024 Nobel Peace Prize Winner

On December 10th, 2024, the Japanese organization, Nihon Hidankyo received the Nobel Peace Prize “for its efforts to achieve a world free of nuclear weapons and for demonstrating through witness testimony that nuclear weapons must never be used again.” After the atomic bombings of Hiroshima and Nagasaki in August, 1945, it is estimated that 650,000 people survived. Known

as hibakusha, they formed local associations along with victims of nuclear weapons testing in the Pacific. In 1956, these local associations formed a confederation now known as Nihon Hidankyo, the largest and most widely represented hibakusha organization in Japan. Through personal witness statements, Nihon Hidankyo has carried out extensive educational work on the catastrophic humanitarian consequences of the use of nuclear weapons. Hence the motto, “No more hibakusha.” (<https://www.nobelpeaceprize.org/laureates/2024>)

At the Nobel Peace Prize Ceremony, Terumi Tanaka, one of the three Co-Chairpersons of Nihon Hidankyo who was 13 years old at the time of the bombing in Nagasaki, spoke these words:

Our movement has undoubtedly played a major role in creating the “nuclear taboo”. However, there still remain 12,000 nuclear warheads on the Earth today, 4,000 of which are operationally deployed, ready for immediate launch. The nuclear superpower, Russia, threatens to use nuclear weapons in its war against Ukraine, and a cabinet member of Israel, in the midst of its unrelenting attacks on Gaza in Palestine [which amount to six to seven times the fire power of the bomb dropped on Hiroshima], even spoke of the possible use of nuclear arms. In addition to the civilian casualties, I am infinitely saddened and angered that the “nuclear taboo” threatens to be broken.

It is the heartfelt desire of the hibakusha that, rather than depending on the theory of nuclear deterrence, which assumes the possession and use of nuclear weapons, we must not allow the possession of a single nuclear weapon.

I urge everyone around the world to create opportunities in your own countries to listen to the testimonies of A-bomb survivors, and to feel, with deep sensitivity, the true inhumanity of nuclear weapons. Particularly, I hope that the belief that nuclear weapons cannot — and must not — coexist with humanity will take firm hold among citizens of the nuclear weapon states and their allies, and that this will become a force for change in the nuclear policies of their governments.

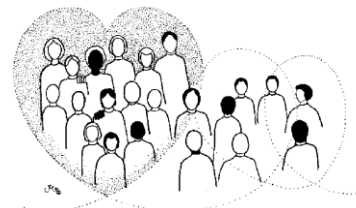
Let not humanity destroy itself with nuclear weapons!

Let us work together for a human society, in a world free of nuclear weapons and of wars!

Prayer Response by Monseñor Pedro Rubiano Sáenz, Cardinal of Colombia and Archbishop of Bogotá in *Prayers without Borders: Celebrating Global Wisdom* by Catholic Relief Services

Lord Jesus Christ,
Make us instruments of your peace.
Where there is hatred, let us sow love.
Where there is injury, let us offer pardon.
Where there is discord, let us build peace.

Oh divine Lord, you taught us that those who work for peace
are called the children of God.
Help us to persist in establishing justice and truth
as firm and lasting foundations of peace.



Lord, you offer us peace as a gift
and peace as a responsibility that we must realize with your help.
Give us the grace to reach out for peace,
to have attitudes of peace,
that our words may be words of peace,
and our works be works of peace.
Then may we build the peace that we and our nations need.

A Reading of Hope and Encouragement from Setsuko Thurlow, a hibakusha from Hiroshima upon accepting the Nobel Peace Prize in 2017

.... When I was a 13-year-old girl, trapped in the smoldering rubble, I kept pushing. I kept moving toward the light. And I survived. Our light now is the ban treaty [the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons]. To all in this hall and all listening around the world, I repeat those words that I heard called to me in the ruins of Hiroshima: “Don’t give up! Keep pushing! See the light? Crawl towards it.”

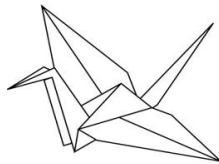
...let us follow each other out of the dark night of nuclear terror. No matter what obstacles we face, we will keep moving and keep pushing and keep sharing this light with others. This is our passion and commitment for our one precious world to survive.

And from Pope Leo XIV to a Jubilee Audience, June 14, 2025

The commitment to creating a safer world, free from the nuclear threat, should be pursued through respectful encounter and sincere dialogue, to build a lasting peace based on justice, fraternity, and the common good. No one should ever threaten the existence of another. It is the duty of all countries to support the cause of peace, undertaking paths of reconciliation and promoting solutions that guarantee safety and dignity for all.

Closing Prayer from the Christian Campaign for Nuclear Disarmament

You have given us life, intelligence and the beauty of creation, O God. Your good gifts were given, so we might be stewards of all that is alive. In our arrogance, we have unleashed fearful forces that destroy. We have brought down fierce fire from the sky. Your children have been burned, your gentle green earth scorched. Fear rules now, not Love. We have given in to evils, lesser and greater. In your mercy, help us turn from destruction, from bombs and barricades. Lead us to life again, to affirmation of all goodness, and to international disarmament, And to transform the nuclear nightmare into the peace you have proposed. Hear our prayer, O God, and guide us in your ways. Amen.



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