

Prayer for the End of the 40-Day Fast for Christian Nonviolence
August 9th, 2026
81st 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 81st 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: God our creator and sustainer, we gather to pray in the midst of a broken people who today remember the darkness and the shadow of death and destruction caused by nuclear weapons. We know that we deal falsely with the world and with ourselves, healing wounds too lightly by saying "peace, peace" when there is no peace. Let there be sown in us anew the unity, the light, and the peace which passes all understanding. Be with us today and keep our minds and hearts in you and in your peace.¹

Reading from a Presentation by Rosemarie Pace at a Hiroshima/Nagasaki Gathering, 8-2-26

As we know, the threat of annihilation from nuclear weapons is even worse today than it was 81 years ago. Today, nine countries, not one, have nuclear weapons. Each nuclear weapon is far more deadly than the two dropped in 1945. Despite that fact, the nuclear-weapon states are focused on upgrading their arsenals, not abolishing them. Just this past May, the latest review conference on the Nuclear Nonproliferation Treaty failed yet again to make progress toward the treaty's goal of limiting nuclear weapons and failed even to agree upon a final statement. And some non-nuclear weapon states feel so vulnerable that they are considering becoming nuclear-weapon states, themselves, for supposed self-protection.

A Litany for Peace

Forgive us, God, for supporting the manufacture of arms through the payment of taxes.
Forgive us for the unrelieved suffering and hardship which money spent on arms could heal.
Forgive us for threatening to commit genocide by holding nuclear weapons as a deterrent.
Forgive us for half-heartedness in hearing, living, and sharing the way of peace.
Forgive us for dividing the world into good and bad, and treating human beings as enemies and objects of hatred or scorn.

Deliver us from the chains of violence and nuclear death.
Deliver us from peace that is no peace.
Deliver us from security that is no security.
Deliver us from the politics of terror.
Deliver us from the spiral of armaments.¹

A Reading from “The Mother I have Never Been Able to Forget” by Ikuko Nakazaki in *Footprints of Nagasaki*, a memoir by students of Nagasaki Girls High School on August 9th, 1945

Soon after the air-raid siren stopped, all of the mobilized students hurried back from the shelter to their workshops in the foundry at the Mitsubishi Arms Factory Morimachi Plant. We had all resumed our assigned work when there was a bright flash and then the tremendous roar of an explosion.
“Whaaaaaaaaaan!”

Instinctively, I ducked under a nearby desk. When I regained my senses the dust in the foundry was dense and unbearable. With a girl from my neighborhood, I crawled on my hands and knees in complete darkness searching in vain for some light. We struggled for a long time, then finally saw a dim light.... Fleeing for our lives, we frantically climbed up on the roof and then jumped down to the ground. Then, amid a torrent of other people, we finally managed to get out of the gate of the factory.

...I parted from my friend. I ran straight to my house.... Blood-covered people begging for water, people with big open cuts..., people in torn and shredded clothes, I passed by one appalling sight after another. When I reached my house, I found only a pile of flattened debris....

A fire across the street was getting bigger and bigger.... I hopelessly looked for my mother or any other member of my family, but I could not find a single familiar face among the many bloody and injured people lying on the ground.... At daybreak... I decided to make an attempt to return to my house. The trip back...was a hellish experience. The town was still burning. It was littered with animal carcasses and human corpses as well as smashed and abandoned streetcars. The odor was unbearable....

People who looked like lifeless ghosts moving aimlessly and others swollen up like balloons due to severe burns whispered their last words: “Water! Please water!”

...The atomic bomb literally stripped my father and me of all our personal possessions.

...The house continued to burn for several days. We could not do anything because of the heat. Finally, we started to search through the remains of the house a little at a time and found my mother’s ashes in the debris....

Countless corpses and the hellish landscape of burnt earth extended as far as the eye could see. I want to speak out against nuclear weapons and scream to the world, “ENOUGH! NEVER AGAIN!”

A Litany of Remembrance

We remember the 300,000 people in Hiroshima and Nagasaki who died as a result of the atomic bombs: May they rest in peace.

We remember all those who died in the war with Japan, especially those who perished in the prisoner of war camps.

We remember those who gave their lives to help those suffering after the bomb and who died of radiation sickness. May their faithful and loving witness inspire us to compassion.

We remember those living in places of war and conflict today. We pray that you would raise up more peacemakers within those countries and beyond. And we ask that nonviolent solutions may be found to heal wounds, and to bring justice and lasting peace.

We remember those who were able to forgive the suffering inflicted on them by their enemies in war. We pray for the same greatness of heart.

We remember the peacemaker visionaries who have come before us, and we give thanks for their witness and their commitment to life.¹

A Reading from Pope Leo XIV

Though many years have passed, the two cities [Hiroshima and Nagasaki] remain living reminders of the profound horrors wrought by nuclear weapons. Their streets, schools and homes still bear scars—both visible and spiritual—from that fateful August of 1945. In this context, I hasten to reiterate [the words so often used](#) by my beloved predecessor [Pope Francis](#): “War is always a defeat for humanity”.

As a survivor from Nagasaki, Dr. Takashi Nagai wrote, “The person of love is the person of ‘bravery’ who does not bear arms” (*Heiwato*, 1979). Indeed, true peace demands the courageous laying down of weapons—especially those with the power to cause an indescribable catastrophe. Nuclear arms offend our shared humanity and also betray the dignity of creation, whose harmony we are called to safeguard.

In our time of mounting global tensions and conflicts, Hiroshima and Nagasaki stand as “symbols of memory” (cf. Francis, [Letter to the Most Reverend Alexis-Mitsuru Shirahama, Bishop of Hiroshima](#), 19 May 2023) that urge us to reject the illusion of security founded on mutually assured destruction. Instead, we must forge a global ethic rooted in justice, fraternity and the common good.

It is thus my prayer that this solemn anniversary will serve as a call to the international community to renew its commitment to pursuing lasting peace for our whole human family—“a peace that is unarmed and disarming” ([First Apostolic Blessing “Urbi et Orbi”](#), 8 May 2025).²

Closing Prayer of Remembrance for Hiroshima and Nagasaki (excerpt)

...Good and gracious God, forgive our past silence, give us the courage and strength to tirelessly 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.... Amen, so be it!³

¹ <https://ncpo.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2017/07/NCPO-Hiroshima-Day-Service-Resources.pdf>

² <https://www.vatican.va/content/leo-xiv/en/messages/pont-messages/2025/documents/20250714-messaggio-hiroshima-nagasaki.html>

³ https://myemail.constantcontact.com/Pray-Study-Act-on-anniversary-of-Hiroshima-and-Nagasaki.html?soid=1011223557022&aid=YvycnlsDY_M