



The 77th Anniversary of the Bombings Of Hiroshima and Nagasaki August 7th, 2022

“The use of atomic energy for purposes of war is today, more than ever, a crime not only against the dignity of human beings but against any possible future for our common home... The use of atomic energy for purposes of war is immoral, just as the possession of atomic weapons is immoral.”

~Pope Francis, November 24, 2019, Hiroshima, Japan

Today we remember in sorrow the 77th anniversary of the atomic bombings of Hiroshima (August 6th) and Nagasaki (August 9th) and we mourn the loss of life and destruction of these cities. Not only did 210,000 people die as a result of the bombing, 90% of them civilians, but thousands more have continued to suffer for the rest of their lives.

Nuclear weapons have devastating immediate and long-term effects which will not be constrained by national borders. No state or international bodies can address the immediate needs caused by a nuclear detonation.

On July 7th, 2017, following a decade of advocacy by the International Campaign to Abolish Nuclear Weapons and its partners, including Pax Christi International, an overwhelming majority of the world's nations (122) adopted a landmark global agreement to ban nuclear weapons, known officially as the Treaty for the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons (TPNW). The treaty was negotiated at the United Nations in 2017, with participation of 135 nations, as well as members of civil society (www.icanw.org). It entered into legal force on January 22nd, 2021 having exceeded the required ratification by 50 nations. To date 86 countries have signed and 66 ratified. The treaty prohibits nations from developing, testing, producing, manufacturing, transferring, possessing, stockpiling, using or threatening to use nuclear weapons, or allowing nuclear weapons to be stationed on their territory. A nation with nuclear weapons may join the treaty so long as it agrees to destroy them in accordance with a legally binding time-bound plan.

Unfortunately, under Donald Trump the U.S. withdrew from the Intermediate-Range Forces Treaty (INF) and the Iran Deal. Under President Biden, it is now engaged in tough negotiations to return to the Iran Deal. Fortunately, the U.S. and Russia did agree to extend the Strategic Arms Reduction Treaty (START), but tensions remain high especially due to the war in Ukraine. The U.S. is not a signatory of the TPNW making it critical that we correct these threats to our one and only planet. Please help by taking the following actions:

Action Suggestions:

In January of this year, Archbishop John C. Wester of Santa Fe, NM issued a pastoral letter calling for a “conversation toward nuclear disarmament.” We encourage you to read a summary of his letter on the reverse side of this hand-out and to read the full letter at https://archdiosf.org/documents/2022/1/220111_ABW_Pastoral_Letter_LivingintheLightofChristsPeace_Official_Reduced.pdf.

Nationally: The United States, which possesses approximately 6,550 nuclear weapons according to the Arms Control Association website, did not participate in the negotiation of the TPNW and has said it never intends to join it. This decision must be reversed. Urge your House Representative to co-sponsor H.Res. 1185 (117th Congress) which embraces “the goals and provisions of the TPNW.” Visit Back from the Brink (www.preventnuclearwar.org) for more legislative actions. Then contact the following to pressure them to abandon our county's nuclear weapons policies, to choose abolition instead.

President Biden, 202-456-1111, president@whitehouse.gov;

Your Senators, 202-224-3121, www.senate.gov; and Your Representative, 202-224-3121, www.house.gov.

Locally: Ask your Mayor to commit to join Mayors for Peace, a nonpartisan international network of municipalities, registered at the UN with ECOSOC. As of July 1st, 2022 there are 8,188 member cities in 166 countries and regions, including 220 US member cities. Mayors for Peace call for the total abolition of nuclear weapons.

In NYC: Urge Comptroller Brad Lander (<https://comptroller.nyc.gov/about/contact-our-office/>) to move forward with divestment from the nuclear weapon industry called for in Res 976 of 2021. That Res also reaffirms NYC as a Nuclear Weapons Free Zone and calls on our government to join the TPNW. Also urge Mayor Eric Adams (<https://www1.nyc.gov/office-of-the-mayor/mayor-contact.page>) to take down the recent totally uninformed city PSA on how to be safe during a nuclear attack and to implement Int 1621 which establishes a NYC Nuclear Disarmament and Nuclear Weapons Free Zone Advisory Committee.

Visit these Websites or their Facebook & Twitter pages to learn more:

Abolition 2000, www.abolition2000.org

Don't Bank on the Bomb, www.dontbankonthebomb.org

Heiwa Peace & Reconciliation Foundation, www.heiwafoundation.org/

Hibakusha Stories, www.hibakushastories.org

Internat'l Campaign to Abolish Nuclear Weapons, www.icanw.org

Lawyers Committee on Nuclear Policy, www.lcnp.org

Manhattan Project for a Nuclear-Free World, <http://mp-nuclear-free.com>

Mayors for Peace, www.mayorsforpeace.org

Nuclear Ban US nuclearban.us

Peace Action NYS, www.panys.org

Pax Christi International, www.paxchristi.net

PNND <https://pnnd.us>

Reaching Critical Will, www.reachingcriticalwill.org

Treaty Allignment Campaign <https://treatyawareness.us/>

Women for Nuclear Disarmament, www.wand.org

Youth Fusion, <https://www.youth-fusion.org/>

Living in the Light of Christ's Peace: A Conversation Toward Nuclear Disarmament

In September 2017, I traveled to Japan and visited Hiroshima and Nagasaki. It was a somber, sobering experience as I realized that on August 6, 1945, humanity crossed the line into the darkness of the nuclear age. Historically, the Archdiocese of Santa Fe has been part of a peace initiative, one that would help make sure these weapons would never be used again. I believe it is time to rejuvenate that peace work.

We need to sustain a serious conversation in New Mexico and across the nation about universal, verifiable nuclear disarmament. We can no longer deny or ignore the dangerous predicament we have created for ourselves with a new nuclear arms race, one that is arguably more dangerous than the past Cold War. In the face of increasing threats from Russia, China, and elsewhere, I point out that a nuclear arms race is inherently self-perpetuating, a vicious spiral that prompts progressively destabilizing actions and reactions by all parties, including our own country. We need nuclear arms control, not an escalating nuclear arms race.

Further, we need to figure out concrete steps toward abolishing nuclear weapons and permanently ending the nuclear threat. If we care about humanity, if we care about our planet, if we care about the God of peace and human conscience, then we must start a public conversation on these urgent questions and find a new path toward nuclear disarmament....

Pope Francis has made clear statements about the immorality of possessing nuclear weapons, moving the Church from past conditional acceptance of "deterrence" to the moral imperative of abolition. Instead of just a few hundred nuclear weapons for just deterrence, we have thousands for nuclear war fighting that could destroy God's creation on earth. Moreover, we are robbing from the poor and needy with current plans to spend at least \$1.7 trillion to "modernize" our nuclear weapons and keep them forever. The Catholic Church has a long history of speaking out against nuclear weapons. The Vatican was the first nation state to sign and ratify the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons. As Pope Francis declared, "We must never grow weary of working to support the principal international legal instruments of nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation, including the Treaty on the prohibition of nuclear weapons."...

In his reflections on the Gospels, Pope Francis often highlights the nonviolent Jesus and the themes of "blessed are the peacemakers" and "love your enemies." He has called on us to practice Gospel nonviolence. Therefore, I invite us to step into the light of Christ and walk together toward a new future of peace, a new promised land of peace, a new culture of peace and nonviolence where we all might learn to live in peace as sisters and brothers on this beautiful planet, our common home.

Your brother in the Light of Christ's Peace,

Most Reverend John C. Wester, Archbishop of Santa Fe

*This leaflet was prepared for Pax Christi Metro New York
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