

Presentation at the Japanese Consulate, August 8th, 2023

My name is Rosemarie Pace. I am the Coordinator of Pax Christi NYS. Pax Christi, meaning Peace of Christ, is the Catholic Peace Movement, which was founded at the end of WWII.

From the beginning, Pax Christi has opposed nuclear weapons. Increasingly, the Catholic Church has spoken out against nuclear weapons and called for nuclear disarmament. Currently, Archbishops Paul Etienne of Seattle, WA and John Wester of Santa Fe, NM are on a Pilgrimage of Peace to Hiroshima and Nagasaki which is driven by a compelling vision and mission statement rooted in a world free from nuclear weapons due to their inherent threat to lasting peace.

Archbishop Wester said about this pilgrimage, “I hope to encourage conversation about universal, verifiable nuclear disarmament and to 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. I hope one day, we will stop building these weapons, disarm our state and our world, and embark on a new future without the fear and terror of the nuclear threat.”

Archbishop Etienne added, “God calls us to build a global community where the whole human family can flourish. Let us keep educating ourselves, praying for peace, and appealing for verifiable nuclear disarmament, which reflects our Catholic teachings and is the path for the common good.”

These statements are consistent with Pope Francis whose June 2022 message to the First Meeting of States Parties to the TPNW stated: “Nuclear weapons are a costly and dangerous liability. They represent a ‘risk multiplier’ that provides only an illusion of a ‘peace of sorts.’ Here, I wish to reaffirm that the use of nuclear weapons, as well as their mere possession, is immoral. Trying to defend and ensure stability and peace through a false sense of security and a ‘balance of terror,’ sustained by a mentality of fear and mistrust inevitably ends up poisoning relationships between peoples and obstructing any possible form of real dialogue. Possession leads easily to threats of their use, becoming a sort of ‘blackmail’ that should be repugnant to the consciences of humanity.”

It is in the spirit of this legacy that I stand here today, as I have since these vigils began, sending our message to the world, pleading for an end to all nuclear weapons (and nuclear power plants, as well). We will not cease until the world hears us and heeds us. “No More Hiroshimas! No More Nagasakis! No More Hibakushas! No More Nuclear Weapons!”