

NOVENA FOR NUCLEAR DISARMAMENT

In November 2019, Pope Francis spoke at the Peace Memorial in Hiroshima: “In a single plea to God and to all men and women of goodwill, on behalf of all the victims of atomic bombings and experiments, and of all conflicts, let us together cry out from our hearts: Never again war, never again the clash of arms, never again so much suffering! May peace come in our time and to our world.”

We invite all Pax Christi members to join in praying this novena to implore the Blessed Mother’s intercession as we remember the atomic bombings of Hiroshima and Nagasaki, and ask Jesus, the Prince of Peace, to help us prayerfully consider the historical and ongoing human and environmental costs of allowing nuclear weapons in our society and world. Please reflect on each daily intention, pray the Rosary or recite an Our Father, Hail Mary and Glory Be and conclude with the novena prayer below.

*Peace I leave with you; my peace I give to you.
I do not give to you as the world gives. (John 14:27)*

Mother of Christ and Queen of Peace: we pray with all fervor for the peace which our divine Redeemer came to bring us. May Christ banish from the souls of all whatever might endanger peace. May Christ transform us into witnesses of truth, justice and filial love. May Christ illumine with His light the leaders of governments so that, besides caring for the proper material welfare of their peoples, they may also guarantee them the fairest gift of peace without fear of nuclear annihilation. *Adapted from Pacem in Terris, 1963*



Day 1 – August 1: Today we pray for the determination never again to use atomic energy as weapons of war. May we heed Pope Francis’ call for “for prayer and commitment to a world completely free of nuclear weapons.”

Day 2 – August 2: Today we pray for solidarity with all Indigenous peoples impacted by uranium mining, atomic bomb testing, and the long-term storage of nuclear waste on their sacred lands. May we work toward real solutions to rectify these many wrongs done to our siblings.

Day 3 – August 3: Today we pray for the people impacted by nuclear weapons research, development, testing, and use, here in the United States and around the world. May we understand the real human, financial, and environmental costs of developing, maintaining, and expanding nuclear arsenals, even as many continue to suffer from a lack of basic human needs such as food, clothing, housing, education, and healthcare.

Day 4 – August 4: Today we pray for forgiveness, especially for those times when we have opted for violence instead of reconciliation. May we follow God’s way of encounter and dialogue for the resolution of all conflicts. As stated by Archbishop Wester of Santa Fe, “All our conversations should be respectful, rooted in prayer, based in nonviolence, and centered in the hope and belief that nuclear disarmament is achievable. We can do this, and with the God of peace with us, we can do this soon.”

Day 5 – August 5: Today we pray for the wisdom to understand fully the devastating consequences of using nuclear weapons, and for the fortitude never to justify their use again.



Day 6 – August 6: Today we pray for the people of Hiroshima on the anniversary of its bombing. As they continue to bear the wounds of nuclear warfare, may they know healing and peace.

Day 7 – August 7: Today we pray for all who are involved in conflicts and war around the globe, especially the people of Ukraine and Russia. May all forms of aggression cease and may every nation renew efforts to reestablish lasting peace.

Day 8 – August 8: Today we pray for people of the Pacific islands and atolls who suffered, and continue to suffer, from radiation-related illnesses, birth-defects, and environmental destruction as a direct result of nuclear testing.

Day 9 – August 9: Today we pray for the people of Nagasaki on the anniversary of its bombing. As they continue to bear the wounds of nuclear warfare, may they know healing and peace. May we say “never again” to the use of nuclear weapons.

Suggested reading:

- *Pacem in Terris*, 1963, encyclical of Pope St. John XIII
- *Church in the Modern World (Gaudium et Spes)*, 1965, Pastoral Constitution by Vatican Council II
- Address to the General Assembly of the United Nations, 1982, Pope St. John Paul II
- *The Challenge of Peace*, 1983, U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops (USCCB)
- *The Harvest of Justice*, 1993, USCCB
- Statement on nuclear disarmament, 2020, USCCB Committee on International Justice and Peace
- *Fratelli Tutti*, 2020, encyclical of Pope Francis
- *Living in the Light of Christ’s Peace: A Conversation Toward Nuclear Disarmament*, 2022, pastoral letter, John C. Wester, Archbishop of Santa Fe (New Mexico)

This novena was created by members of Pax Christi Maine, and is offered especially for the participants in the Archdioceses of Santa Fe and Seattle’s 2023 pilgrimage to Japan.

**Mission statement of the Archdioceses of Santa Fe and Seattle’s Pilgrimage of Peace:
Fostering compassionate bonds with the bishops of Japan to advocate for peace**

The mission of our Pilgrimage of Peace is to establish an ecclesial and personal relationship with the bishops of Japan to work toward the abolition of nuclear weapons, expressing our heartfelt sorrow for the devastating experiences endured by their nation. Furthermore, through open dialogue, shared prayers, and a commitment to unity, we strive to work together to ensure such human suffering is never inflicted upon humanity again. With the Holy Spirit as our guiding light, and under the patronage of Our Lady of Guadalupe and Our Lady of Nagasaki, we embark on this mission, standing with the bishops of Japan to create a legacy of peace for current and future generations.



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