

Prayer for the End of the 40-Day Fast for Christian Nonviolence
August 9th, 2023
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 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.”)

Voice of a Hibakusha

“Peace is our number one priority.”

(Sachiko Matsuo, survivor of the atomic bombing of Nagasaki, August 9th, 1945)

Opening Prayer

Peaceful God, we come to you from the midst of a broken world where nations raise weapons against nations, and mother and children are the innocent victims of violence.

We cry out for peace!

Wise God, share your wisdom with the leaders of the world who continue to stockpile dangerous weapons, [especially nuclear weapons,] giving other countries the incentive to do the same, despite their commitment to the Nuclear Nonproliferation Treaty. We pray for the ability to overcome our brokenness, cooperating instead of competing across borders and boundaries.

We cry out for peace!

God of Comfort, it is hard to believe that our own country has refused to ratify the Comprehensive Nuclear Test Ban Treaty [or the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons], weakening their legitimacy and making our world less safe.

We cry out for peace!

God, Father and Mother of this world, we pray that you would inspire us to create a peaceful world. Help us call our leaders to accountability and to remind them that more weapons and war do not bring peace. Make us a peaceful people in a peaceful world. Amen.

(Jill Rauh, Education for Justice Project, Center of Concern – updated)

First Reading

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.

(Pope Francis in his June 2022 message to the First Meeting of State Parties to the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons)

Prayer of Confession and Pardon

God, the keeper of the atoms and stars:

You made us collaborators in creation, but we have pilfered the secrets of ordered existence and justified their immoral use in the name of “security” and “peace.”

We could say then that we didn’t know the consequences.

Now we do know, but we are complacent and silent.

God, have mercy.

We have abused the glue of the universe.

We have made and stockpiled weapons of mass destruction instead of saying “No” to their use for evil.

Fear and presumption have driven us to be ready to annihilate untold lives and make areas of the earth uninhabitable.

Christ, have mercy.

Open our eyes to see how small and fragile the planet is and how the destruction of any human being diminishes all.

Heal the wounds opened with the destruction of Hiroshima and Nagasaki.

Mend the fabric of the human family.

Will in us never to repeat this evil.

God, have mercy.

(source unknown)

Second Reading

To bring visions of peace before our eyes we need to take time to see beneath the surface, to recognize that the important events in history are not wars and conquests. The important events are the multitude of humble actions which heal wounds and reconcile. We need to learn to reread history, recognizing that even in war it is the moments of relief from conflict which make possible the constructive works which endure. It is in this perspective that we get a sense of the great tasks that lie before us, the tasks of eradicating misery and constructing an international system that will judge all institutions and policies by their ability to contribute to the well-being of the one human family.

(from “Visions of Peace” in *Words of Peace* by Mary Evelyn Jegen, SND)

Prayer That Nagasaki Be the Last Use of a Nuclear Weapon (excerpt)

Please, Dear God of All, Creator of every life, every heartbeat, every moment, every leaf, blade of grass, every one of us, and universes and galaxies beyond counting, Glorious Source of Love and Life, forgive us for forgetting.

You and Your blessings Friend within all friendship, Love within all loves, Life within all lives, witness of all and everything, bless us with the wisdom that comes from compassion such that we will skillfully eliminate these [nuclear weapons], devices of death, and use the gift of intelligence to serve to heal, sustain, harmonize, understand, and glorify You, our humanity, and honor Your creation.

To end the suffering of poverty, to protect nature, to love one another, remove the ignorance from our hearts.

Grant us hearts of gratitude, courage, and love such that we will not falter in bringing peace, justice, beauty, and unity to Your human family.

Help us eliminate [nuclear weapons], devices of death, and the motives from which we create them.

Please guide us in beautiful ways of peace such that we can be witnesses of Your Goodness.

Guide us with compassion, kindness and love that we might become fully human.

All praises are Yours.

Amen.

(Jonathan Granoff, President, Global Security Institute and Voices Founding Member)

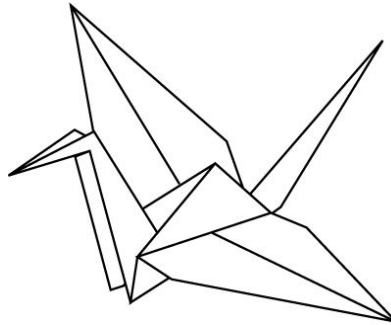
Closing Prayer

It shall come to pass that the peoples shall beat their swords into plowshare
and their spears into pruning hooks.

Nation shall not lift up sword against nation;
neither shall they learn war anymore.

(Isaiah 2:4)

May it be so. Amen!



Prepared by Rosemarie Pace, Ed.D., Coordinator, Pax Christi New York State