

Prayer for the End of the 40-Day Fast for Christian Nonviolence
August 9th, 2021
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 this 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 of peace, we thank you for the desire which your spirit of peace has roused these past 40 days: to replace hatred with love, diffidence with understanding, unconcern with care. Open our hearts even more for the needs of all our brothers and sisters, so that we may be better able to build a true peace.

(adapted and excerpted from a prayer by Pope Paul VI)

A Litany for Peace:

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
From the chains of violence and nuclear death,
Deliver us
from the worship of weapons,
Deliver us
from peace that is no peace,
Deliver us
from the spiral of armaments,
Deliver us.
By hunger and thirst for justice,
Grant us peace
by reconciliation of enemies,
Grant us peace
by gentleness and nonviolence,
Grant us peace
by the power of love,
Grant us peace.

A Reading from Bishop Thomas Gumbleton:

...Once and for all we must face up to the fact that to “justify” the wholesale extermination of human beings—at any time, for any reason—is evidence of corruption of heart and mind and soul that defies the very idea of morality. Yet that corruption is general. It rules the thinking of those who lead our nations. It rules the minds of many ordinary citizens. All too often, it even finds voice within our religious communities, or deadly silence when a clear prophetic call to stop the madness is surely what any genuine morality demands.

So we come back to that call for “an entirely new attitude toward war,” one which rejects the logic of war, the utility of war, even the “necessity” of war as a means of resolving conflict between nations. We must find alternatives, nonviolent alternatives, to achieve and protect ends that are just, and preserve the peace upon which the future existence of our planet and all its inhabitants depends.

in *Words of Peace*, Volume II by Pax Christi USA

A Prayer from Dom Helder Camara:

...Let us begin at once to fight our selfishness and come out of ourselves to dedicate ourselves once and for all, whatever the sacrifices, to the nonviolent struggle for a more just, more human world....

Let us look about us and recognize our brothers and sisters who are called like us to give up their ease and join all those who hunger for the truth and who have sworn to give their lives to make peace through justice and love....

Let us give the best of ourselves to helping create moral pressure for freedom to bring about the necessary change....

Let us through all this stand firm without falling into hatred; let us be understanding without conniving at evil. Amen.

in *Our Prayers Rise Like Incense* by Pax Christi USA

Catholic Social Teaching on Nuclear Weapons:

In the words of our Holy Father, we need a “moral about face.” The whole world must summon the moral courage and technical means to say “no” to weapons of mass destruction; “no” to an arms race which robs the poor and the vulnerable; and “no” to the moral danger of a nuclear age which places before humankind indefensible choices of constant terror or surrender. Peacemaking is not an optional commitment. It is a requirement of our faith. We are called to be peacemakers, not by some movement of the moment, but by our Lord Jesus....

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Closing Prayer:

Therefore I urge you to stir into flame the gift of God which is within you.

For God did not give us a spirit of timidity, but of power and love and wisdom.

(II Timothy 1:6,7)

Stir us again to flame, Lord.

Light fires in us that purify our hearts, sustain our beliefs, and strengthen conviction.

Light fires that burn against injustice, apathy, and neglect.

Light fires that melt our hardness, open our hearts, and heal our divisions....

Grant us the power of the Spirit, Lord, that we might be witnesses for you.

Grant us the power that crumbles barriers and overcomes suspicion,

that conquers fear and overwhelms hatred,

that we may indeed be witnesses, away to the ends of the earth.

Therefore, I urge you to stir into flame the gift of God which is within you.

For God did not give us a spirit of timidity but of power and love and wisdom.

from *Banquet of Praise* by Bread for the World in *The Way of Peace* by Pax Christi USA