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Pope Francisco's Messages for Peace Delivered in Nagasaki and Hiroshima

In this 75th anniversary year, many of our activities have been seriously affected by the spread of COVID-19. But we cannot postpone our work for the elimination of nuclear weapons and peace any further. On November 24, 2019, Pope Francisco delivered straightforward messages for peace in Nagasaki and Hiroshima.⁽ⁱ⁾ Today I would like to share the content of them with you.

1. On the day of the 70th anniversary of the atomic bombing of Nagasaki, he said, "(The bombing of Hiroshima and Nagasaki) has become the symbol of the boundless destructive power of man" and "serves as a perpetual warning to humanity to forever repudiate war and ban nuclear arms and all weapons of mass destruction. This sad anniversary calls us above all to pray and work for peace, to spread throughout the world an ethic of brotherhood and a climate of peaceful coexistence among peoples."

On September 20, 2017, the Holy See was among the first 3 states that have signed and ratified the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons. In November that year, it convened an international symposium, where Pope Francisco said, "...the threat of their (nuclear weapons) use, as well as their very possession, is to be firmly condemned."⁽ⁱⁱ⁾

2. In Nagasaki and Hiroshima

1) Pope's messages in Nagasaki and Hiroshima inherited the teachings of past Popes and the Church.⁽ⁱⁱⁱ⁾

2) In the A-bombed city, which made us "deeply aware of the pain and horror" that we human beings are capable of inflicting upon one another (Nagasaki), Pope Francisco first expressed his empathy towards the A-bomb victims and Hibakusha (Hiroshima), and "stood in silent prayer, bearing in his heart the prayers and

yearnings of the men and women of the time“, including the aged survivors, the young, the poor, the voice of the voiceless (Hiroshima) and those speaking out against the arms race (Nagasaki).

3) When he said, “The use of atomic energy for purposes of war is immoral, just as the possessing of nuclear weapons is immoral” (Hiroshima), he meant that it is the act of evil, as opposed to the good which should have been done.

The order which prevails in human society is wholly incorporeal in nature. “Its foundation is truth, and it must be brought into effect by justice. It needs to be animated and perfected by men's love for one another, and, while preserving freedom intact, it must make for an equilibrium in society which is increasingly more human in character.” “Such an order....finds its source in the true...God.”^(iv) The possession and use of nuclear weapons contradicts with such a good order of human society.

International peace and stability “can be achieved only on the basis of a global ethic of solidarity and cooperation” in the whole human family. The possession and use of nuclear weapons is incompatible with such good solidarity and cooperation on a global scale and also betrays the “morality of brotherly love” that “recognizes and respects diversity» between one another (Nagasaki). Arms race inherently wastes precious resources that could be “better used to benefit the integral development of peoples and to protect the natural environment”, sacrificing millions of children and families living in inhumane conditions. (Nagasaki)

4) “If we really want to build a more just and secure society, we must let the weapons fall from our hands.” “A true peace can only be an unarmed peace.”(Hiroshima)

A world without nuclear weapons is “possible and necessary,” and “To make this ideal a reality calls for involvement on the part of all: individuals, religious communities and civil society, countries that possess nuclear weapons and those that do not, the military and private sectors, and international organizations.” All of this necessarily calls for the “creation of tools for ensuring trust and reciprocal development.” (Nagasaki)

Conclusion

To “remember” the atomic bombing, to “journey together” with hope as a tool for reconciliation and peace, and to “protect” the pledge of never waging another war are the “three moral imperatives” that assume even more “powerful and universal

significance” which can “open a path to peace.” (Hiroshima)

(i) http://w2.vatican.va/content/francesco/en/angelus/2015/documents/papa-francesco_angelus_20150809.html

(ii) http://www.vatican.va/content/francesco/en/speeches/2017/november/documents/papa-francesco_20171110_convegno-disarmointegrale.html

(iii) In *Pacem in Terris*, Encyclical of Pope John XXIII (http://www.vatican.va/content/john-xxiii/en/encyclicals/documents/hf_j-xxiii_enc_11041963_pacem.html), he emphasized the significance of banning nuclear weapons and achieving disarmament (112) and building mutual trust (113). Pope Paul VI proposed in his Encyclical *Populorum Progressio* (1967), to set aside part of their military expenditures for a world fund to relieve the needs of impoverished peoples. He also said, “A person cannot love with offensive weapons in his hands.” (Address to the United Nations, October 4, 1965).

Pastoral Constitution on the Church in the Modern World (1965) of the Second Vatican Council (1962-1965) sets out the following: “Peace is not merely the absence of war;... but must be built up ceaselessly. (78); “Any act of war aimed indiscriminately at the destruction of entire cities ... along with their population is a crime against God and man himself.” (80); “...The arms race is not a safe way to preserve a steady peace, nor is the so-called balance ... a sure and authentic peace.” (81)

http://www.vatican.va/archive/hist_councils/ii_vatican_council/documents/vat-ii_cons_19651207_gaudium-et-spes_en.html

(iv) *Pacem in Terris*, Encyclical of Pope John XXIII (38)