

**EUCCHARISTIC CELEBRATION  
IN COMMEMORATION  
OF THE  
77<sup>TH</sup> ANNIVERSARY OF THE BOMBING OF NAGASAKI**

**CATHEDRAL BASILICA OF ST. FRANCIS OF ASSISI**

**AUGUST 9, 2022**

As we gather today to commemorate the 77<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the bombing of Nagasaki, which followed only three days after the first atomic bomb fell on Hiroshima, we cannot help but remember the four Muslim men who were ambushed and cruelly murdered in Albuquerque, one last November and three just recently. We in the Archdiocese of Santa Fe are appalled at these hateful and horrific crimes and we utterly condemn them. We pray for the victims' families, for the Muslim community, now living in fear and for the speedy apprehension of the racist perpetrator or perpetrators. These abhorrent crimes have no place in the just, loving and tolerant society that we have come to know and treasure here in the Southwest. May those whose lives have been cut short rest in peace and may their souls and all the souls of the faithful departed rest in peace.

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In this evening's Gospel, we hear once again Jesus's beautiful Sermon on the Mount, which begins with the Beatitudes. Scripture scholars tell us that the Beatitudes paint a verbal picture of Jesus himself. Hence, if we study the Beatitudes we are studying Jesus. If we live the Beatitudes, we are following Jesus. Of particular interest to us tonight is the seventh beatitude according to Matthew's list: Blessed are the peacemakers, for they will be called children of God. As peacemakers, we are gathered here tonight for this Eucharist to remember what happened in Japan in August of 1945 and to pray for peace, nuclear disarmament and the healing of those who have already been scarred by the effects of atomic weapons in our land.

My fellow peacemakers, this is the sacred Cathedral of St. Francis. The Pope too has taken his papal name from that venerable saint. Moreover, the name of our beloved City, "Santa Fe", translates from Spanish as the "Holy Faith" of St. Francis, who through the ages has been held up as the model "instrument of peace." Therefore, it is more than appropriate that from his Cathedral I invoke his prayer:

"Lord, make me an instrument of your peace:  
where there is hatred, let me sow love;  
where there is injury, pardon;  
where there is doubt, faith;  
where there is despair, hope;  
where there is darkness, light;  
where there is sadness, joy."

But next to this place of peace, less than a hundred footsteps away, is 109 East Palace, the gateway to the secret Los Alamos Lab during the World War II years. The main purpose of

the Manhattan Project was to develop the plutonium bomb that destroyed Nagasaki, instantly killing some 70,000 people. We commemorate the anniversary of that atomic bombing this very day.

And Jesus said, BLESSED ARE THEY WHO MOURN, FOR THEY WILL BE COMFORTED

Now, 77 years later, the Los Alamos Lab is aggressively expanding the production of the radioactive cores of nuclear weapons, known as plutonium pits. This is the single most critical part of the government's 2 trillion-dollar plan to completely rebuild existing nuclear weapons with new military capabilities; and buy at enormous taxpayers' expense new missiles, submarines and bombers to deliver them. This is nuclear weapons forever!

We are in a new nuclear arms race that is arguably more dangerous than the first. New cyber and hypersonic weapons, artificial intelligence and multiple nuclear adversaries are increasing the grave risks, even as climate change and growing economic inequality undermine the status quo. The old argument that we need thousands of nuclear weapons for the declared rationale of "deterrence" is false when only a few hundred weapons are truly needed for just deterrence. Yet the U.S. and Russian governments reject minimal deterrence in order to keep nuclear warfighting capabilities, despite their declared rhetoric that a nuclear war can never be won!

And Jesus said, BLESSED ARE THE MEEK, FOR THEY WILL INHERIT THE LAND

There is probably more money spent in this Santa Fe Archdiocese on nuclear weapons than any other diocese in the country. This is because of the Los Alamos and Sandia National Laboratories and the Kirtland Air Force Base, which has the largest repository of nuclear warheads in the country. Given the prominence of nuclear weapons in the land entrusted to our spiritual care, the Archdiocese of Santa Fe has a special responsibility to advocate for and provide guidance toward a future world free of nuclear weapons. This is what our savior Jesus Christ proclaimed in the Gospel and what our patron, St. Francis, would want us to do.

There will be those who will call us naïve for thinking that we can rid the world of nuclear weapons. But who is it that is really naïve? Robert McNamara, Defense Secretary during the 1962 Cuban Missile Crisis, said that human civilization survived only by luck. Counting on luck is not a winning strategy. The history of nuclear weapons is replete with near misses, miscalculations and accidents. With the war in Ukraine, we are now facing the most serious nuclear threats since the middle 1980's. Isn't it the height of naiveté to think that humanity can survive on into the future as long as nuclear weapons exist?

And Jesus said, BLESSED ARE THEY WHO ARE PERSECUTED FOR THE SAKE OF RIGHTEOUSNESS, FOR THEIRS IS THE KINGDOM OF HEAVEN

The New Mexican congressional delegation has generally promoted expanding nuclear weapons programs as jobs programs. But Pope Francis has unequivocally stated, "The possessing of nuclear weapons is immoral." No amount of money can explain that away.

And who is it that really benefits from that money? Los Alamos County is the fourth richest county in the USA but is surrounded by some of the poorest counties in the nation. Why is it

that the Land of Enchantment stays perennially at the bottom of socioeconomic indicators, such as the most children living in poverty and dead last in quality of education? Just yesterday I read in the paper that New Mexico slipped to 50<sup>th</sup> in child well-being – again!

The Department of Energy is going to spend 9.4 billion dollars in New Mexico next year, more than the state's entire budget of 8.5 billion dollars. But what good will that do for the average New Mexican? Just imagine if that money was spent creating jobs that truly benefitted New Mexicans, such as state-wide wildfire protection, protecting our precious water resources and making our public schools something to be truly proud of!

And Jesus said, BLESSED ARE THE POOR IN SPIRIT, FOR THEIRS IS THE KINGDOM OF HEAVEN

These are the things that need to be openly debated instead of sacrificing New Mexico to the nuclear weapons and radioactive waste industries. The question is how can we permanently eliminate nuclear weapons in a universal, verifiable manner? And how can we make this poor state thrive, when clearly 75 years of the nuclear weapons industry has failed to do so?

This is the dialogue I seek to start. It is a dialogue that is grounded in the common good and the relationships that form us as one human family, all God's children. It is in this spirit that we are responsible to one another, and it is in this spirit that we must care for one another and make amends, even when we may not be directly involved in harmful behavior.

Therefore, to our Japanese brothers and sisters watching on the internet, I apologize for the Hiroshima and Nagasaki atomic bombs that were developed and built within my Archdiocese. I am sorrowful for the death, destruction and suffering they caused, just as your government should be sorrowful for the death, destruction and suffering it caused during World War II. Together, may the Japanese and American people drive the international will to ensure that nuclear weapons are never used again. May you all be blessed and healed!

I apologize to the world's first nuclear victims, our very own Trinity Test Downwinders from southern New Mexico, who continue to suffer from the cancerous effects of fallout. I specifically want to recognize Rosalie Cordova, a life-long Catholic resident of Tularosa who ran the Youth Choir for more than 10 years. She has lost many people to cancer, including her husband Tony, her mother, sister, and sister-in-law. Both of her daughters are cancer survivors. Rosalie has relied heavily on her faith to survive all the loss she has experienced. May all of you be blessed and healed!

And then there's Doris Walters, also from Tularosa. She is an 11-year cancer survivor and her mother, daughter, three sisters and aunts have all had cancer too. Doris is a lifelong member of St. Francis De Paula Catholic church in Tularosa where she and her husband Adolph have been active supporters of the church. Doris and Adolph have also been founding members of the Tularosa Basin Downwinders Consortium whose mission is just compensation for the Trinity Test Downwinders. May all of you be blessed and healed!

If Rosalie, Doris and Adolph are here, would they please stand and be recognized.

And Jesus said, BLESSED ARE THE MERCIFUL, FOR THEY WILL BE SHOWN MERCY

I apologize to the people of the Marshall Islands, who suffered horribly as the result of 67 H-bombs tests by the U.S. The Los Alamos Lab has proudly named streets after the Enewetak and Bikini Atolls test sites. In reality it is a source of deep national shame how the Marshallese were treated by our government. In that vein, I want to recognize Paul Griego, a health physics technician during the incomplete Marshall Islands cleanup, who himself suffered high radioactive doses. He is the New Mexico State Commander of the National Association of Atomic Veterans and continues to work as an advocate and consultant for the Marshall Islands. May all of you be blessed and healed!

I apologize to the uranium miners and workers who suffered cancers and had their lands contaminated, particularly the Diné and Pueblo people. I also apologize to the Pueblo people and Hispanic homesteaders who had their lands seized and contaminated by the Los Alamos Lab. May all of you be blessed and healed!

I apologize to the more than 7,000 workers at the Los Alamos Lab and 700 workers at the Sandia Labs who filed claims against the government for their occupational illnesses caused by nuclear weapons research and production. May all of you be blessed and healed!

Finally, I ask God to protect those who might be harmed by nuclear weapons in the future. We must never let that happen again.

Pope Francis has made clear statements about the immorality of possessing nuclear weapons, moving the Church from past conditional acceptance of “deterrence” to the moral imperative of abolition. We are robbing from the poor as we plan to spend 2 trillion dollars to “modernize” our nuclear weapons and keep them forever.

Pope Francis declared, “We must never grow weary of working to support the principal international legal instruments of nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation, including the Treaty on the prohibition of nuclear weapons.” I believe that it is the duty of the Archdiocese of Santa Fe, the birthplace of nuclear weapons, to support the new international nuclear weapons ban treaty while working toward universal, verifiable nuclear disarmament.

And Jesus said, BLESSED ARE THE CLEAN OF HEART, FOR THEY WILL SEE GOD

Just across the street from this Cathedral, at 109 East Palace, was the gateway to global destruction. Today I hope to sanctify this Cathedral of St. Francis as the gateway to global nuclear disarmament. I call for the healing of all past victims of nuclear weapons and protecting those who might be future victims by eradicating nuclear weapons from the face of the earth.

And Jesus said, BLESSED ARE THE PEACEMAKERS, FOR THEY WILL BE CALLED CHILDREN OF GOD

I hope that you will join me toward that end, my fellow children of God, my fellow peacemakers. Jesus is faithful and true to his promises. You are truly blessed.

The Most Reverend John C. Wester  
Archbishop of Santa Fe