

Interfaith Prayer Service for Nuclear Weapons Ban Treaty Negotiations
Pax Christi International, March 28, 2017, Isaiah Wall, New York City

WELCOME

CONVENER:

“Peace, Salaam, Shalom to all gathered here in support of the Nuclear Weapons Ban Treaty.”

ALL:

“We seek blessings upon:”

- *“Those gathered here;*
- *“Those who cannot be here today;*
- *“Those who have suffered horrific death and disfigurement, genetic disruptions, the massacre of family and friends, and the devastation of their beloved earth due to others’ use and testing of nuclear weapons;*
- *“Those who have gone before us, preparing the soil and planting seeds of a nuclear weapons ban;*
- *“Those who are gathering this week, from around the world, to engage in critical conversations;*
- *“Those who refuse to be here this week, that they may be imbued with a consciousness of the imperatives needed to safeguard our humanity, and all creation;*
- *“Those other creatures with whom we human beings share this fragile planet, whose lives and futures are bound up with our own.*
- *“Our Mother Earth itself, whose very existence is imperiled by nuclear weapons.”*

CONVENER: *“We stand at a pivotal moment in the life of both our World Community, and our Earth Community. “*

Statement 1 (Pope Francis, December 7, 2014)

READER 1: *“Nuclear weapons are a global problem affecting all nations and impacting future generations and the planet that is our home. . . . While the focus is often placed on nuclear weapons' potential for mass killing, more attention must be given to the unnecessary suffering brought on by their use. . . . There are those among us who are victims of these weapons; they warn us not to commit the same irreparable mistakes which have devastated populations and creation.”*

Response:

ALL:

“Having witnessed the savage suffering inflicted by one nation’s nuclear weapons upon the people of another nation, we know that the use of such weapons violates the moral integrity of our human family.

Statement 2: (Pax Christi International Statement regarding the Nuclear Weapons Ban Negotiations)

READER 2: "Nuclear weapons are instruments of ultimate violence. Our planet has no place for weapons of such terror and mass destruction. For anyone to possess them takes a toll on everyone's humanity. Their presence in an era of increasing interdependence is an affront to human dignity. Nuclear weapons are designed to cause catastrophic humanitarian consequences and their use, under any circumstances, is unjustifiable and unthinkable. "

Response:

ALL:

"Having unleashed the horrors of nuclear weapons, human beings now possess the power of irreversible global annihilation -- a power that vastly exceeds the moral authority of our species."

Statement 3: (Philip Berrigan)

READER 3: "I die with the conviction . . . that nuclear weapons are the scourge of the earth; to mine for them, manufacture them, deploy them, use them, is a curse against God, the human family and the earth itself. [O]ur nuclear adventurism . . . has saturated the planet with nuclear garbage from testing, from explosions in high altitudes . . . from . . . nuclear power plants, from nuclear weapons factories that can't be cleaned up – and so on. Because of myopic leadership, of greed for possessions, a public chained to corporate media, there has been virtually no response to these realities..."

Response: (*The Hebrew Scriptures, Isaiah 2:2-5*)

ALL: "They shall beat their swords into plowshares and their spears into pruning hooks. One nation shall not raise the sword against another, nor shall they train for war again. "

Statement 4 (Archbishop Joseph Takami (Hibakusha in utero) of Nagasaki (2010)

READER 4: "An atomic bomb means a total denial of the dignity of a human person. The human race does not need such an inhuman weapon nor should we need it . . . [T]he existence of nuclear weapons is intrinsically evil and there is no reason whatsoever to justify this deadly weapon. Even one nuclear weapon should not be tolerated. The existence of nuclear weapons in the world is a grave threat to peace and we need to abolish them."

Response:

ALL:

"Having known the ravages of nuclear testing and bombardment upon the earth itself, and upon its creatures, the world cries out for an end of the specter hanging over us."

Statement 5: (His Holiness the Dalai Lama)

READER 5: "By far the greatest single danger facing human-kind, in fact, all living beings on our planet - is the threat of nuclear destruction. I would like to appeal to all the leaders of the nuclear powers who literally have the future of the world in their hands, to the scientists and

technicians who continue to create these awesome weapons of destruction, and to all the people at large who are in a position to influence their leaders, I appeal to them to exercise their sanity and begin to work at dismantling and destroying all nuclear weapons. We know that in the event of a nuclear war there will be no victors, because there will be no survivors."

Response:

READER 1: Ban nuclear weapons!

READER 2: Ban nuclear weapons!

READER 3: Ban nuclear weapons!

READER 4: Ban nuclear weapons!

READER 5: Ban nuclear weapons!

CONVENER:

"Let us now share two minutes of silent reflection, remembering all those who have suffered and died as a result of the use and testing of nuclear weapons, and all those who have suffered as a result of the diversion of money from human needs, in developing these instruments of mass annihilation."

[TWO MINUTES OF SILENT MEDITATION IN REMEMBRANCE, SORROW, AND CONTRITION]

Statement 6: *(Rabbi David Saperstein, Director, Religious Action Center of Reform Judaism)*

READER 1: "At this crucial crossroads of history, we join to call on the world to recognize that violence begets violence; that nuclear proliferation benefits no one; that we can, we will, and we must find other ways to protect ourselves, our nations and our future: for it is not sufficient to have peace in our time, but, instead, we must leave a peaceful world to our children."

Response:

ALL: "We commit ourselves to the abolition of nuclear weapons, for the sake of our selves, our children, and all of creation."

Statement 7: *(Abolition Now)*

READER 2: "Nuclear weapons remain the most dangerous of all weapons, the only ones that can destroy civilization in a day. We need to redefine security in human and ecological terms, rather than military ones: food, shelter, clean air and water, jobs, healthcare and education. This kind of security is universal."

Response:

ALL: "We denounce and reject the funding of nuclear weapons, as undermining true security. We commit ourselves to funding life, not destruction"

Statement 8: *(Archbishop Desmond Tutu (2010))*

READER 3: “Nuclear abolition is the democratic wish of the world's people, and has been our goal almost since the dawn of the atomic age. Together, we have the power to decide whether the nuclear era ends in a bang or worldwide celebration.”

Response:

ALL: “We have the power to choose life, or to choose death. We choose life.”

CONVENER:

“Let us now conclude with two minutes of silent contemplation of the critical work to be done; in solidarity and support of those who are meeting this week; and in hope and re-imagining of a world free of the scourge of nuclear weapons.”

*[TWO MINUTES OF SILENCE IN SUPPORT OF THOSE WHO ARE MEETING THIS WEEK,
AND ENVISIONING A WORLD FREE OF NUCLEAR WEAPONS]*

CONVENER:

“Let us go in peace -- and let us get to work!”