

"the possessing of nuclear weapons is immoral"

-Pope Francis, Address at the Peace Memorial, Hiroshima, November 24, 2019

75 Years Under the Threat of Nuclear Annihilation

August 6 and August 9 mark the 75th anniversaries of the atomic bombings of Hiroshima and Nagasaki which ushered in the nuclear age. Humanity has lived under the threat of *omnicide*, the destruction of all life, for three-quarters of a century.

Historians can only estimate the number of people— predominantly civilians— killed by the atomic bomb blasts and by radiation sickness and cancer afterwards; it could be higher than 300,000.

Nine countries now possess nuclear weapons. The United States alone accounts for 5,800 of the 13,355 nuclear weapons in existence worldwide, according to the [Ploughshares Fund](#).

These are not things we usually think about.

Let's take the opportunity to live out our pro-life values by paying attention during these days of remembrance. Looking away does not make the threat go away. Facing this reality could help change it.



Pope Francis prays at the Nagasaki ground zero site, November 24, 2019. Credit: Vatican Media.

"With deep conviction I wish once more to declare that the use of atomic energy for purposes of war is today, more than ever, a **crime** not only **against the dignity of human beings** but **against any possible future for our common home**. The use of atomic energy for purposes of war is immoral, just as the **possessing of nuclear weapons is immoral**, as I already said two years ago. We will be judged on this. Future generations will rise to condemn our failure if we spoke of peace but did not act to bring it about among the peoples on the earth. How can we speak of peace even as we build terrifying new weapons of war?" -Pope Francis

[Address at the Peace Memorial](#), Hiroshima, November 24, 2019

Listen to the *hibakusha*



Catholic nuns and others tell their stories of living through the atomic bombings of Hiroshima and Nagasaki

"Convinced as I am that a world without nuclear weapons is possible and necessary, I ask political leaders not to forget that **these weapons cannot protect us** from current threats to national and international security. We need to ponder the catastrophic impact of their deployment, especially from a humanitarian and environmental standpoint, and **reject heightening a climate of fear, mistrust and hostilities** fomented by nuclear doctrines."

-Pope Francis

[Address at the Atomic Bomb Hypocenter Park](#), Nagasaki, November 24, 2019

[From the Maryknoll Office for Global Concerns](#)

Proposed 2021 Federal Budget Spending on Nuclear Weapons: **\$48.7 billion**

Increase from 2020: **+19%**

Projected cost of building & maintaining the U.S. nuclear arsenal for the next 10 years: at least **\$500 billion**

Join the U.S. Catholic Bishops in Advocating for a More Peaceful World

Tell Congress to extend the New Strategic Arms Reduction Treaty (“New START” Treaty), which was signed by the U.S. and Russia in 2010 and which is due to expire in early 2021.



“Under New START, long-range deployed nuclear warheads were reduced to 1,550 each and robust on-site inspections were held. If New START expires, there would be no legally binding, verifiable limits on the world’s two largest nuclear arsenals for the first time since 1972.”

Sign the petition here: www.votervoicenet.org/USCCB/campaigns/75604/respond

After you sign the petition, take the extra step of calling your members of Congress through the Capitol switchboard at **(202) 224-3121**. Even during the ongoing pandemic, Congressional staff members are still relaying messages to our representatives.

Catholics Taking a Stand Against Nuclear Weapons

On the 50th anniversary of the assassination of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., seven Catholics non-violently and symbolically attempted to convert weapons of mass destruction at Kings Bay Naval Submarine Base in Georgia, home to six ballistic missile subs and two guided missile subs. They hoped to call attention to the ways in which nuclear weapons kill every day, by their mere existence and maintenance. They were arrested and are awaiting sentencing. See kingsbayplowshares7.org/

Nuclear Weapons and Our Catholic Response



A study guide to use with viewing the documentary *Nuclear Tipping Point* is available at www.usccb.org/resources/nuclear-weapons-and-our-catholic-response-study-guide.pdf

“*Nuclear Tipping Point* is a conversation with four men intimately involved in American diplomacy and national security over the last four decades: former Secretaries of State George Shultz and Henry Kissinger, former Secretary of Defense William Perry and former Senator Sam Nunn. The four men share personal experiences that led to their vocal support for a world free of nuclear weapons and the steps needed to get there. Although produced in 2010, its central message remains relevant.”

Perhaps it is the irony of God that these men of politics, war and *realpolitik* have come out against nuclear weapons.

Is the abolition of nuclear weapons even possible?

Let’s be Realists: Eleven Answers to Common Questions and Comments about Nuclear Weapons

Download the [booklet](#) from the *International Campaign to Abolish Nuclear Weapons (ICAN)*, the organization awarded the Nobel Prize for Peace in 2017

For example: “No country will give up its nuclear weapons if other countries still have them.”

“Kazakhstan, South Africa, and Ukraine once possessed nuclear weapons but chose to give them up. Brazil, Sweden, and Switzerland, among others, started developing nuclear weapons but decided not to proceed.” The U.S. could too.

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