

Catholic Church Teaching on Nuclear Weapons



Pope John XXIII, *Pacem in Terris*, 1963

(112): Justice, right reason and consideration for human dignity and life urgently demand that the arms race should cease; that the stockpiles which exist in various countries should be reduced equally and simultaneously by the parties concerned; that nuclear weapons should be banned; and finally that all come to an agreement on a fitting programme of disarmament, employing mutual and effective controls.



Pope Paul VI: *Gaudium et Spes*, 1965

(80): Every act of war directed to the indiscriminate destruction of whole cities or vast areas with their inhabitants is a crime against God and nature which merits firm and unequivocal condemnation. (82): All must work to put an end to the arms race and make a real beginning to disarmament.



Pope John Paul II: *Letter to Scientists at the Meeting of Erice*, 14th August 1982

The balance of nuclear weapons is a balance of terror. It has already used up too many of mankind's resources for death-dealing works and instruments. And it is continuing to absorb immense intellectual and physical energies, directing scientific research away from the promotion of the most authentic human values and towards the production of destructive devices.



The Bishops of Scotland: *Statement*, September 1982

We do know that the policy is one of deterrence, but we do not know what measure of retaliation is contemplated should deterrence appear to fail....' We are convinced, however, that if it is immoral to use these weapons it is also immoral to threaten their use. We should know whether a threat of retaliation with such weapons is likely to be implemented in the event of any attack or only in the case of a nuclear one. We are brothers and sisters and the earth is our common inheritance; we have a responsibility to share this world with everyone else, to pass it on uncontaminated, unpillaged, not despoiled, to future generations.



Pope Benedict XVI, *World Day of Peace*, 2006

What can be said about those governments which count on nuclear arms as a means of ensuring the security of their countries? ...this point of view is not only baneful but also completely fallacious. In a nuclear war there would be no victors, only victims. The truth of peace requires that all... agree to change their course by clear and firm decisions, and strive for a progressive and concerted nuclear disarmament. The resources which would be saved could then be employed in projects of development capable of benefiting all their people, especially the poor.



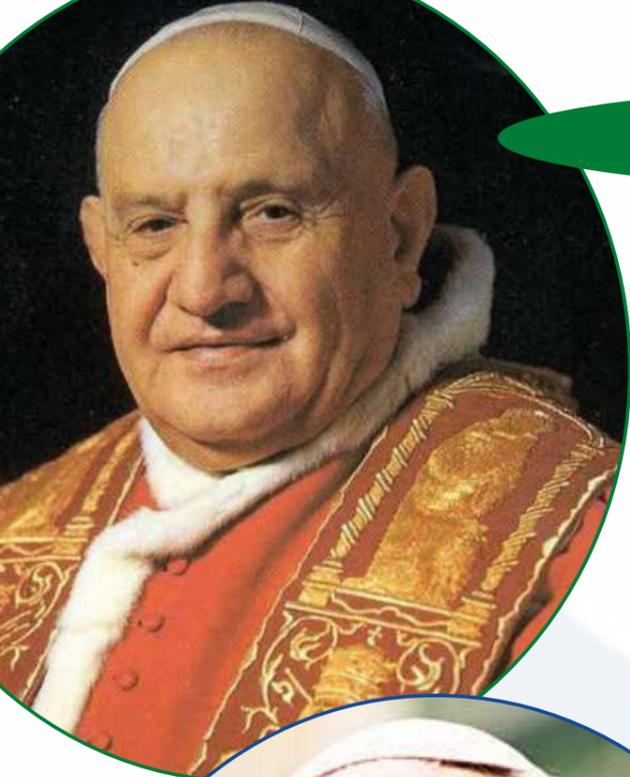
Pope Francis, *Address at Meeting for Peace, Hiroshima* - 24th November 2017

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 of the earth. How can we speak of peace even as we build terrifying new weapons of war?



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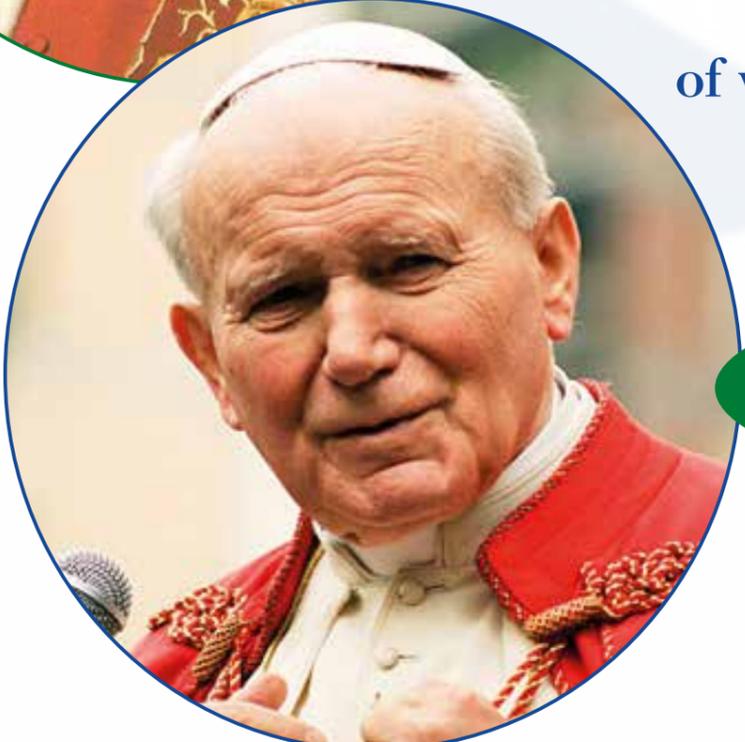
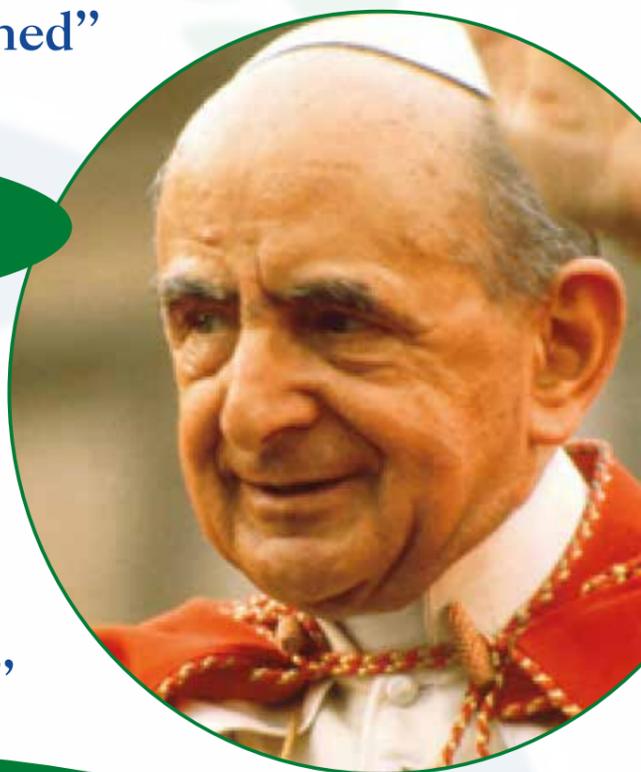


Pope John XXIII, *Pacem in Terris*, 1963

“Nuclear weapons should be banned”

Pope Paul VI:
Gaudium et Spes, 1965

“Every act of war directed to the indiscriminate destruction of whole cities or vast areas with their inhabitants is a crime against God”



Pope John Paul II:
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“The balance of nuclear weapons is a balance of terror”

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“If it is immoral to use these weapons it is also immoral to threaten their use”



Pope Benedict XVI,
World Day of Peace, 2006

“In a nuclear war there would be no victors, only victims”

Pope Francis,
Address at Meeting for Peace, Hiroshima
4th November 2017

“Possessing nuclear weapons is immoral”



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