



Fratelli tutti

BROTHERS AND SISTERS ALL TOGETHER

Use of Nuclear Weapons

We need also to ask ourselves how sustainable is a stability based on fear, when it actually increases fear and undermines relationships of trust between peoples. International peace and stability cannot be based on a false sense of security, on the threat of mutual destruction or total annihilation, or on simply maintaining a balance of power... In this context, the ultimate goal of the total elimination of nuclear weapons becomes both a challenge and a moral and humanitarian imperative...

Pope Francis, *Fratelli tutti*, paragraph 262

Watch

FASLANE (Justice and Peace Scotland) <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=EEbygZFImDo>

Scripture

The products they make are nothing but trouble; violence comes naturally to them. Their feet race to do evil; they rush to shed innocent blood; Their thoughts are bent toward injustice; destruction and trouble line the roads of their lives. They never travel the path of peace; no justice is found where they have been. They set a course down crooked roads; no one who follows their lead has a chance of knowing peace.

Isaiah 59: 6-8

Questions for discussion

- “In an age of nuclear weapons the countries which possess them should be the leading advocates of peace.” What do we think about this statement?
- In 2019 the UK government held a prayer service in Westminster Abbey to celebrate the nuclear deterrent. Was this an appropriate civic commemoration of service people, or the raising up of a false idol in a place of worship?
- In 2021 the UK government announced plans to break 30 years of gradual progress and increase its’ nuclear arsenal. As Christians how do we feel about our government taking to itself the power to undo creation entirely?
- In 2022 Vladimir Putin (leader of a nuclear power) invaded Ukraine, and has threatened the use of nuclear weapons against countries which oppose him. How do we understand our commitment to peace when living with this threat?

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Other Church Teaching

Our faith also teaches that God loves and offers salvation to all. We therefore do not accept a division of human beings into "allies" and "enemies". 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. So we have to rid ourselves of prejudice and mutual suspicion. We must totally reject any "arms race", any policy of revengeful slaughter, all greed and self-preservation at the cost of others.

The Bishops of Scotland, Peace and Disarmament, 1982

How can we propose peace if we constantly invoke the threat of nuclear war as a legitimate recourse for the resolution of conflicts? May the abyss of pain endured here remind us of boundaries that must never be crossed. A true peace can only be an unarmed peace.

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

Listen

Praise You in this storm (Casting Crowns) <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=0YUGwUgBvTU>

Prayer

Lord of all creation, make us instruments of your peace.
Let us learn the lessons of the past, and put an end to nuclear weapons.

Where there is hatred, let us sow love.
May our love for each other and for all of your creation leave no place for making or owning weapons of mass destruction.

Where there is injury, let us be bearers of your healing and pardon.
May we create paths to dialogue, understanding and reconciliation.

Where there is doubt, let us foster faith in you.
May we let the weapons fall from our hands and know that you are God.

Where there is despair, let us hold up hope.
May our lives reflect your love in the face of violence, knowing that love is stronger than death.

Where there is darkness, let us be bearers of your light.
May our choices show that peace is possible.
Where there is sadness, let us bring the joy of the Gospel.

Amen

Office for Social Justice,
Australian Catholic Bishops Conference

Further Learning

Bishops of Scotland – Peace and Disarmament (Statement on nuclear weapons 1982) <https://www.justiceandpeacescotland.org.uk/Campaigns/Nuclear-Weapons/ctl/details/itemid/3352/mid/905/justice-peace-scotland-statement>

Brian Toon, I've studied nuclear war for 35 years – you should be worried (TEDx) <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=M7hOpT0IPGI>

Pope Francis declares nuclear weapons immoral (Democracy Now) https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=H_A9K7ypriY

Catholic Nonviolence Initiative Resources <https://nonviolencejustpeace.net/resources-created-by-and-for-the-catholic-nonviolence-initiative/>