



Missionary Society of St Columban

聖高隆龐傳教會

General Council

CA A23: Re: United Nations Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons

To Reconcile the Nations and to Heal the Earth

*Statement of the Missionary Society of St. Columban
on the United Nations Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons*

“I felt a duty to come here as a pilgrim of peace, to stand in silent prayer, to recall the innocent victims of such violence, and to bear in my heart the prayers and yearnings of the men and women of our time, especially the young, who long for peace, who work for peace and who sacrifice themselves for peace.”

- Pope Francis, on his November 2019 visit to Hiroshima and Nagasaki

Today, January 22, 2021, the United Nations Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons officially goes into effect. One hundred and twenty-two nations, including the Vatican, signed the historic treaty in 2017, and in October 2020 the necessary fifty nations needed to implement it ratified the treaty. It was a moving testament to the solidarity of the global community, 75 years after the atomic bombing of Hiroshima and Nagasaki, to rid the earth of nuclear weapons.

For the past 40 years, the Missionary Society of St. Columban has called for abolition of nuclear weapons, rooted in our missionary experience in Japan and in fifteen other countries, including four of the nine nations that currently possess nuclear weapons.

“Our understanding of Christian Discipleship leads us to condemn in strongest terms defense policies that every day make life more insecure. The most blatant of these are present policies of nuclear armament which threaten all life. These policies are themselves a form of killing since they consume resources desperately needed to meet basic human needs.” (Columban General Assembly, 1982)

On July 7, 2017, the day the UN treaty was signed, Pope Francis addressed the nations gathered: “We must commit ourselves to a world without nuclear weapons ... especially when we consider the catastrophic humanitarian and environmental consequences that would follow from any use of nuclear weapons ... and the waste of resources spent on nuclear issues for military purposes.”

Two years later, during his historic visit to Hiroshima and Nagasaki, Pope Francis condemned both the use *and the possession* of nuclear weapons by any state as “immoral.” In Nagasaki, he said that a world free of nuclear weapons is “the aspiration of millions of men and women everywhere,” as he called for a concerted effort of individuals, religious communities, and civil society, and the nine nations that currently possess nuclear weapons, to build the necessary mutual trust necessary to abolish them.

According to the International Campaign to Abolish Nuclear Weapons (ICAN), winner of the 2017 Nobel Peace Prize, a limited nuclear war today would likely kill 250 *million* people, and an all-out war would end life on earth as we know it. In addition to the catastrophic number of deaths, chronic illness and genetic damage, a nuclear war would also severely disrupt the climate and agricultural production, resulting in widespread famine.

We share the anguish of people around the globe who have already suffered from the use of nuclear weapons and experience the despair of the many who see their hope for a dignified life frustrated by the misappropriation of the world’s resources. As Christians, and people of good will, we must be actively involved with those who raise their voices in protest on this crucial issue of our times because it is at the heart of what it means to defend life and protect creation, now and for future generations.

Fr. Tim Mulroy

Fr. Tim Mulroy

Society Leader