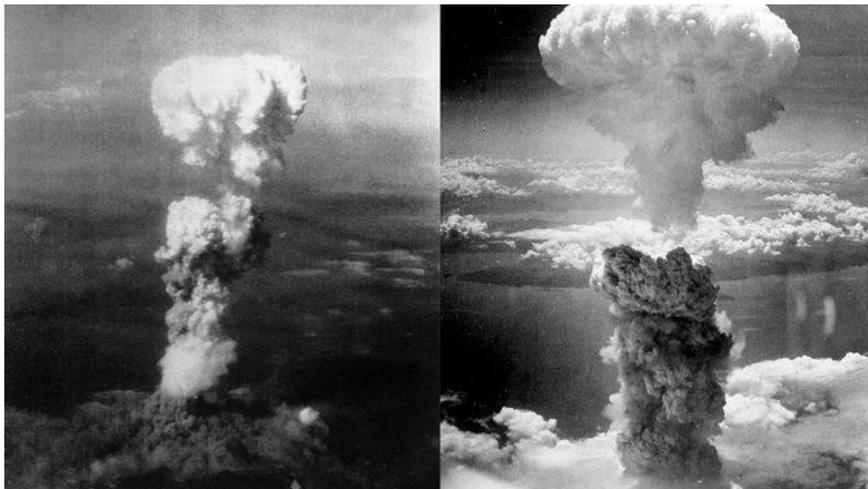


International Solidarity Days—August 2020

August 6 and 9—World Remembrance of Hiroshima and Nagasaki—75th Anniversary



At 8:16 AM, over Hiroshima on August 6 and at 10:58 AM on August 9 over Nagasaki, in 1945, the course of human history changed forever with the dropping of 2 nuclear bombs during World War II. This year marks the **75th Anniversary** of these horrific events. The overwhelming, destructive power of these weapons of mass destruction instantly obliterated these two cities, killing over 200,000 people, mostly civilians. Thousands more died in the following months due to burns, radiation sickness and other

injuries, compounded by malnutrition and illness. Indeed, victims continued to suffer and die from the long-term effects of radiation exposure over the next 20-30 years. Today nuclear weapons are far more powerful than those used in 1945. Even “a limited nuclear war” could make planet earth unrecognizable and uninhabitable for hundreds of years. Nuclear armed countries insist that their policy of threat, known as “mutually assured destruction” (MAD) can keep us safe. Yet, we know that a single moment’s decision could unleash “hell on earth” in response to actual or falsely perceived threats. On July 7, 2017, at the UN General Assembly, 122 states voted to adopt the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons (TPNW). This treaty bans the production, use and/or possession of all nuclear weapons. Advocates of the ban argue that the nuclear-weapon states that were parties to the 1968 Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) have been too slow in complying with their NPT Article VI commitment “to pursue good faith negotiations toward nuclear disarmament.” Although no nuclear-possessor state joined the TPNW negotiations, this treaty is an important step to delegitimizing these weapons. Hopefully, over time, nuclear weapons-armed states will agree to getting rid of all such weapons. Relying on nuclear weapons to “keep us safe and maintain peace” is, indeed, MAD (insane)! True and lasting peace must be built on a foundation of respect for human rights, international cooperation for the sake of the common good, and cross-cultural relationship building.

Holy One, change our hearts and lead us away from the fear, hatred and violence that leads to war. Turn us away from the idolatry of nuclear weapons and toward love, relationship building and honoring of diversity. As we demand an end to all production, possession and use of nuclear weapons, help us to work for the common good of all people with respect for human life and dignity.

August 11—Feast of St. Clare of Assisi



St. Clare was born in Assisi on July 16, 1194, as Chiara Offreduccio, the beautiful eldest daughter of Favorino Sciffi, Count of Sasso-Rosso and his wife Ortolana. Although she was of noble birth, Clare was inspired by the teachings of Francis of Assisi to live a life of radical poverty, loving service to the poor and sick, and dedicating her life to prayer. Together with Francis, Clare made it possible for women to follow this Franciscan Gospel way of life. The women who joined her became known as the “Poor Ladies of San Damiano” and today are known as “the Poor Clares”. She is considered the co-founder of the Franciscan family and was a spiritual advisor to Francis in the last several years of his life.

Clare was determined to chart her own course for her new community of women. She spoke out to popes and bishops about her Gospel way of life and refused to

compromise on what she felt God was calling her to. Eventually, she was successful. In the end, through her dedication to simple living, care for creation, commitment to non-violence, and courageous service to the poor who came seeking help, she and Francis changed the Church and the world. Their prophetic witness continues to inspire followers not only in the Catholic Church, but people from diverse nations and religions, more than 800 years after their deaths.

God, we thank you for the inspiring life of St Clare. May her dedication to living the Gospel values of simplicity, care for creation, compassionate non-violence and service to the poor and oppressed, inspire and strengthen our own commitment to following Jesus. Help us to remain steadfast and true to our own calling to create a world based on love, respect, peace and joy.

August 19—World Humanitarian Day



World Humanitarian Day honors the thousands of people around the world who risk their lives in order to provide food, medical care, water, shelter, and hope to millions of people suffering from the ravages of war, violence and natural disasters. Each day these dedicated workers reach out to neighbors and strangers alike offering whatever assistance they can to desperate people trying to survive. Many times, these aid workers continue their service at great personal risk from ongoing natural disasters, warring factions, and potentially lethal diseases. These brave heroes work to save lives one person at a time, reaching out to those in need with love, mercy and compassion.

God, we pray for the humanitarian workers many of whom risk their lives while reaching out to relieve the suffering of others. Protect them from harm and give comfort and hope to those they serve. May we reach out to assist them in their ministry of service in whatever way we can.

August 23—International Day for Remembrance of the Slave Trade and its Abolition



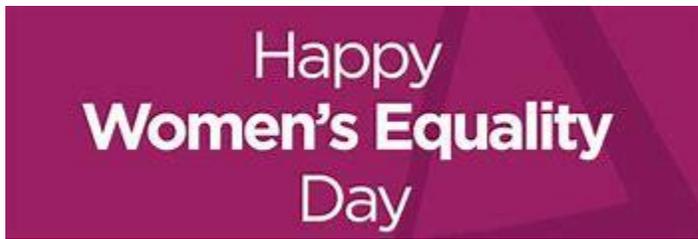
On the night of August 22 to August 23, 1791, on the island of Saint Domingue (now known as Haiti), an uprising began which set forth events which were a major factor in the abolition of the transatlantic slave trade. The uprising was finally successful at establishing Haiti's independence from the French in 1804 and was the only slave uprising to give rise to a state ruled by former slaves. On this day we remember the power of the human spirit to rise up and struggle for freedom, even in the most oppressive circumstances.

The transatlantic slave trade was only made possible by denying that all persons are fully human, with the same human dignity, equal value as persons, and brothers and sisters to one another. Even though the last slaves in the Americas were freed in 1888, racial discrimination

continues as a legacy of slavery in the Americas. The belief that race determines that some people are inferior to others continues to undergird structural norms of white supremacy. Until all human diversity is valued and treasured, the world will continue to struggle with the poverty, oppression, and discrimination of racism.

Holy One, bless in a special way those who suffer from the racism that remains embedded in societal structures in many parts of the world. Help us to work toward equality and freedom for all people, regardless of race, religion, tribal affiliations, or economic condition. Help us to respect the human dignity of every person and to treasure the diversity of gifts that together serve the common good of all.

August 26—Women’s Equality Day



Women in the United States were given the right to vote on August 26, 1920 when the 19th Amendment to the United States Constitution was signed after 72 years of struggle. In 1971 Congresswoman Bella Abzug introduced a resolution by designating August 26 of each year as Women's Equality Day. This day is now

celebrated around the world to honor women and to demand full participation in the political, religious, economic and social life of all countries. This is a special day to thank women in our lives for the emotional, spiritual, and physical support that they have provided for us throughout our lives. It is a day to support women owned companies and social organizations that mentor young women leaders of the future. Finally, this is a day to urge women everywhere to register to vote and to let their voices be heard in the public squares, in political and social arenas of life, and in the boardrooms and religious institutions where so many decisions affecting women are made.

God, we pray for women and girls throughout the world who still struggle to have their voices heard. Give us all the courage to support the women in our lives who continue to work for full equality. Help us all to stand up, to speak out and to demand justice not only with our voices and our votes, but with our actions and our lives.

August 29—International Day Against Nuclear Tests



The Castle Bravo test created the worst radiological disaster in the United States' testing history. Bikini Atoll, Marshall Islands, 1 March 1954. Photo: CTBTO

The history of nuclear testing began early on the morning of 16 July 1945 at a desert test site in Alamogordo, New Mexico when the United States exploded its first atomic bomb.

In the five decades between that fateful day in 1945 and the opening for signature of the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty (CTBT) in 1996, over 2,000 nuclear tests were carried out all over the world.

- **The United States** conducted **1,032** tests between 1945 and 1992.
- **The Soviet Union** carried out **715** tests between 1949 and 1990.
- **The United Kingdom** carried out **45** tests between 1952 and 1991.
- **France** carried out **210** tests between 1960 and 1996.
- **China** carried out **45** tests between 1964 and 1996.

Since the CTBT was opened for signature in September 1996, 10 nuclear tests have been conducted:

- **India** conducted **two** tests in 1998.
- **Pakistan** conducted **two** tests in 1998.
- **The Democratic People's Republic of Korea** conducted nuclear tests in 2006, 2009, 2013, 2016, and 2017.

Banning nuclear weapon testing around the world is the first step to ridding the world of nuclear weapons. We know that even underground nuclear testing has resulted in the contamination of Mother Earth with radioactive contamination that will last hundreds of years. There is only one reason to continue to test nuclear weapons and that is the intent to use such weapons in the future. Neither offensive nor defensive use of nuclear weapons can be justified since their use in any circumstance would have the ability to destroy our planet. Knowing what we know today renders them obsolete, both morally and practically. Why is it so hard to give up that which we know can never be used? Why do we continue to squander billions of dollars of our world's resources on developing, deploying and stockpiling these weapons while people around the world need food, housing, healthcare and education, all of which would cost a mere fraction of what is spent on these useless weapons of mass destruction?

God, we ask for an end to our idolatry of nuclear weapons. Embolden us to demand an end to their existence. Motivate us to call on governments around the globe for an immediate end to nuclear weapons testing and an end to all production, deployment and possession of nuclear weapons. Help us to turn our attention and resources to caring for the worldwide needs of the human family and to caring for creation.

August 30—International Day of Victims of Enforced Disappearances



In 2010 the UN declare 30 August the International Day of the Victims of Enforced Disappearances. Enforced disappearance is defined as *the arrest, detention, abduction or any other form of deprivation of liberty by agents of the State or by persons or groups of persons acting with the authorization, support or acquiescence of the State, followed by a refusal to acknowledge the deprivation of liberty or by concealment of the fate or whereabouts of the disappeared person, which place such a person outside the protection of the law.* Many times these disappearances are aimed at community leaders and organizers, in order to send a message that working on behalf of human rights will not be tolerated. Enforced disappearances have been

used by governments and paramilitary groups to intimidate and terrorize entire populations. This is a violation of human rights and of international law.

Let us pray for all victims of forced disappearances, for their families and for their communities. Let us also pray for government leaders that engage in such tactics of oppression and intimidation. May they listen to the people that they serve and respond to their cries for justice, safety and dignity. We pray also for those who carry out forced abductions and secret arrests on behalf of others. May their hearts be converted and may they be touched by the plight of their brothers and sisters and refuse to participate in this form of terrorism.