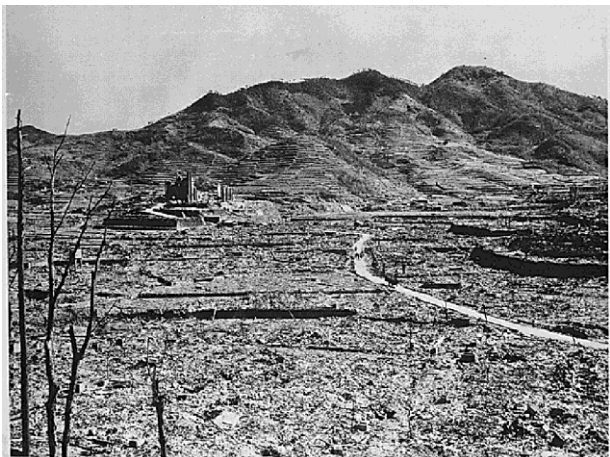


International Solidarity Days—August 2021

August 6 and 9—World Remembrance of Hiroshima and Nagasaki—76th Anniversary



These days are for remembering the only two times that nuclear weapons have been unleashed during warfare. We also remember the horrendous immediate human cost, and the continuing long-term effects on global societies. These weapons of mass destruction instantly obliterated Hiroshima and Nagasaki, 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. Many more continued to suffer and die from the long-term effects of radiation exposure over the next 20-40 years. Since those two awful days in August 1945,

untold trillions of dollars and scientific talent have been spent building more powerful and deadly nuclear weapons. Nuclear contamination of Earth and its people from nuclear weapons testing and development stretches from the Bikini and Enewetak Atolls in the Marshall Islands, to Alamogordo NM and the Nevada desert, to Tahiti in French Polynesia, to Maralinga in South Australia, to Semipalatinsk, Kazakhstan. The development of ever more sophisticated weapons and delivery systems continues to consume resources that are desperately needed to care for Earth and to provide water, sanitation, housing, education, and food for people.

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. Pope Francis has also condemned the possession of such weapons. Let us demand that national leaders take active steps to rid our world of these weapons of mass destruction that have the power to destroy all life on earth. Instead, let us use our limited global resources to protect biodiversity, eradicate global poverty, and address climate change.

Holy One, 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 and for the protection of Earth, our common home. Lead us away from the idolatry of nuclear weapons, as if they have the power to protect us. Instead, let us build loving relationships with each other and with all of creation so that together we can live in peace.

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 born to wealth and privilege, 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 prayer. As a co-founder with St. Francis of the Franciscan Order, Clare's leadership made it possible for women to join this Franciscan way of life. She was determined to chart her own course for her new community of women. She insisted that her small community of women live at San Damiano, outside the protective walls of the city of Assisi, in order to be with and to serve the poor. She and her sisters provided counsel and care to all who came to their doors. Contrary to the monastic practices of the time, all Sisters were treated equally, whether they were of noble or poor

birth. 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. 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. Like her, we pray to be people of integrity, never compromising on what we know to be true, but always open to new understanding and new relationships. May we live as sisters and brothers to one another and to all of creation, reverencing the divine presence that we encounter every day. Like Clare, keep us open to recognize the needs of our times and to respond with generosity, steadfastness, love and compassion.

August 19—World Humanitarian Day

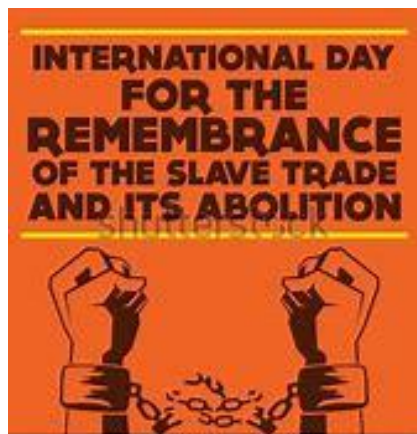


As natural disasters, disease and violence continue to wreak havoc around the world, aid workers respond by personally bringing whatever relief they can, often at the risk of their own lives. World Humanitarian Day honors these selfless heroes who reach out to those in need of rescue, food and water, shelter, or medicine. They also bring a listening ear and caring hearts, comforting the suffering and offering hope to those experiencing devastation. Rebuilding lives involves much more than rebuilding homes. It requires rebuilding hope in the midst of despair,

trust in the midst of betrayal, love in the midst of hatred and violence, and peace in the midst of conflict. Humanitarians leave family, friends, security, and all that is comfortable and familiar to them in order to respond to crises around the world. They rebuild lives one person and one day at a time. This day, we honor them!

God, we pray for all humanitarian workers many of whom risk their lives while reaching out to relieve the suffering of others. Protect them from harm as they bring hope and healing, compassion, and comfort, listening and love to those whose lives have been turned upside down by disease, natural disasters, violence, or war. Inspire us to assist these aid workers in whatever way we can through our prayer and our giving.

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.

Slavery was only “justifiable” by denying that all people were fully human. By fostering the idea that certain races of people were superior to others, white supremacy was able to flourish and dominate cultures, religions, societal structures, and the law. Today, we continue to live with slavery’s legacy of racism that affects so many people around the world. As we celebrate the official end of the transatlantic slave trade, we honor

the innate dignity of every person. We also recognize that there is much to do to free ourselves from the lingering racism and attitudes of white supremacy that continue to “enslave” both the oppressor and the oppressed.

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. Move us to recognize the human dignity and the divine presence in each person. Open our hearts to be a presence of peace and reconciliation. Help us to actively work to end racism within ourselves, in our communities, in our countries and in the world.

August 26—Women’s Equality Day

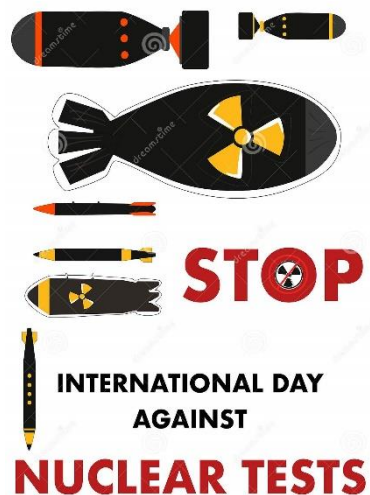


Women in the United States were given the right to vote on August 26, 1920, when the 19th Amendment to the United States Constitution was signed after 72 years of struggle. In 1971 Congresswoman Bella Abzug introduced a resolution designating August 26 of each year as Women's Equality Day. This day is now celebrated around the world to honor women and to work for the rights of women to participate equally with men in all aspects of family, community, religious, social, and political life. On this day we honor those who tirelessly work for equal rights for women. Many of these brave people risk their lives to educate women and girls and to empower them

to achieve their dreams. The United Nations’ Sustainable Development Goals recognize that equal rights for women are essential to eradicating poverty and advancing the development of struggling communities. By women developing their full potential, global transformation and sustainable development are possible.

God, we pray for women and girls throughout the world who still struggle to have their voices heard. Help us to stand with our sisters through word and action, so that they can live without fear and break the bonds that hold them down. Change the hearts and minds of all people so that women are respected and educated in order to develop their full potential. We thank you for the many wonderful and heroic women who have gone before us. We stand on their shoulders as we reach for the stars!

August 29—International Day Against Nuclear Tests



The history of nuclear testing began early on the morning of July 16, 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 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.

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. Radioactive contamination, which can last thousands of years, would make earth uninhabitable for humans. Knowing what we know today renders them obsolete, both morally and practically. Why do we continue to squander billions of dollars of our world’s resources on developing, deploying, “modernizing” and stockpiling these weapons which can never be used? Only North Korea continues to test

nuclear weapons. It is now time to go beyond test bans and outlaw even the possession of such weapons. Our planetary life depends on it!

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 August 30 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 victims are never heard from again. Others are later found tortured and killed. Enforced disappearances are meant to intimidate those working for justice on behalf of the poor and oppressed. Such disappearances terrorize entire populations with the intention of suppressing any attempts towards societal changes on behalf of justice. These extrajudicial actions are a violation of human rights and of international law.

Let us pray for all victims of forced disappearances, and for their families and communities as they cry out for justice, safety, and respect. Let us also pray for government and military leaders who engage in such tactics of oppression and intimidation. May they listen with their hearts to the people that they are supposed to serve. We pray also for those who carry out forced abductions and secret arrests on behalf of others. May their hearts be moved to refuse to participate in the suffering of others and may they have the courage to do what is necessary to stop such practices. Strengthen international efforts to bring perpetrators of these crimes to justice and protect all those witnesses, prosecutors, and judges who risk their lives in this effort.