



## Archdiocese of Santa Fe

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### NEWS RELEASE

**Most Reverend John C. Wester and Most Reverend Paul D. Etienne  
Join Bishops of Hiroshima and Nagasaki in  
Urging the International Group of Seven To Take Steps Toward Nuclear Disarmament**

ALBUQUERQUE – Wednesday, May 17, 2023 – IMMEDIATE RELEASE – Most Rev. John C. Wester, Archbishop of Santa Fe, NM, Most Rev. Paul D. Etienne, Archbishop of Seattle, WA, Most Rev. Peter Michiaki Nakamura, Archbishop of Nagasaki, Japan, and Most Rev. Alexis Mitsuru Shirahama, Bishop of Hiroshima, Japan, issued a joint letter to the G7 leaders emphasizing the need for immediate action to prevent further proliferation and to pave the way for a world free from the looming specter of nuclear warfare. The letter resonates with the voices of millions worldwide who yearn for a future defined by peace and disarmament. Their appeal to the G7 leaders carries the weight of moral responsibility and represents a unified call for concrete steps toward a safer and more secure world. Please see a copy of the letter below:

Dear G7 Leaders,

We, the undersigned spiritual leaders of the Roman Catholic Church, urge you to use the upcoming summit of the International Group of Seven to undertake concrete steps toward global, verifiable nuclear disarmament.

We commend Prime Minister Fumio Kishida for choosing the City of Hiroshima, the first victim of nuclear war, as the summit venue. That alone is a powerful message. We enthusiastically welcome the meeting between G7 leaders and the *hibakusha* - the survivors of the atomic bombings of Hiroshima and Nagasaki – as a step toward recognizing the long-lasting horrors of nuclear warfare.

As the Roman Catholic spiritual leaders of the diocese with the most spending on nuclear weapons in the United States (Santa Fe, NM), the diocese with the most deployed strategic nuclear weapons in the United States (Seattle, WA), and the only two dioceses in the world to have suffered atomic attacks (Hiroshima and Nagasaki), we are compelled by providence to speak out.

As Prime Minister Kishida observed, the summit presents a unique opportunity “to deepen discussions so that we can release a strong message toward realizing a world free of nuclear weapons” and to “demonstrate a firm commitment to absolutely reject the threat or use of nuclear weapons.”

We strongly agree. We, therefore, urge you to use the summit to center international attention on the importance of nuclear arms control and disarmament and demonstrate a global commitment to nonproliferation efforts. Rather than viewing the war in Ukraine as an overwhelming impediment toward making substantial progress, we view it instead as a clear demonstration of the absolute need to do so.

Specifically, we encourage G7 leaders to:

- acknowledge the tremendous, long-lasting human suffering the Hiroshima and Nagasaki atomic bombings inflicted upon the *hibakusha*;
- acknowledge the tremendous, long-lasting human suffering that nuclear weapons production and testing caused to downwinders around the world;
- reiterate a nuclear war cannot be won and must never be fought, as well as emphasize that, as the G-20 agreed to in November 2022, the use and the threat of use of nuclear weapons are “inadmissible”;
- reaffirm the goal of a future world free of nuclear weapons;
- announce and commit to concrete steps to prevent a new arms race, guard against nuclear weapons use, and advance nuclear disarmament;
- reiterate that serious talks should be restored between the United States and Russia to renew full implementation of the New Strategic Arms Reduction Treaty and to negotiate a follow-on treaty; and finally,
- honor the international mandate to enter into serious multilateral negotiations leading to nuclear disarmament, pledged more than a half-century ago in the 1970 Non-Proliferation Treaty.

Throughout the years, world leaders have spoken about the need to eliminate the threat of nuclear weapons, prevent a new nuclear arms race, and avoid the ultimate catastrophe, which is potentially civilization-ending nuclear war. These calls have long been echoed by many notable world leaders, such as Mikhail Gorbachev, Ronald Reagan, and Pope Francis. But it is now time to translate rhetoric into action.

We believe today’s new nuclear arms race is more dangerous than the first arms race, given multiple nuclear actors and the advent of new cyber and hypersonic weapons and artificial intelligence. Former U.S. Defense Secretary Robert McNamara asserted that humanity survived the Cuban Missile Crisis only by luck. Luck is not sufficient to ensure the continuing survival of the human race.

We strongly urge world leaders at the G7 Summit to show by example how international leadership is ready, willing, and able to work with nuclear weapons and non-nuclear weapons states to ensure no country or city ever suffers the horrors of nuclear war again.

*End of letter.*

With the looming threat of nuclear conflict, the bishops advocate for a comprehensive approach that includes transparency, dialogue, and cooperation among nations. Their plea highlights the moral imperative of prioritizing human security, fostering trust-building measures, and investing in peaceful alternatives.

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