

Pax Christi UK Remembering Hiroshima and Nagasaki 67 years on 6 and 9 August 2012

67 years after the bombings of Hiroshima and Nagasaki in Japan in 1945, Pax Christi members will commemorate the events with vigils, prayer times, and exhibitions - urging that governments around the world and the UK in particular, commit to the abolition of nuclear weapons.

Nine states have nuclear weapons, USA, Russia, China, France and the UK have all signed the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty, others India, Pakistan, North Korea and Israel have not. Pat Gaffney, General Secretary of Pax Christi said: "We continue to press the UK government to lead by example and live up to agreements it has made within the NPT framework. Instead we see a government that is ready to replace Trident, a submarine-based nuclear weapons system, committing us to another 50 years of nuclear weapons as a cost of billions."

In London Pax Christi UK will have a stall and vigils outside Westminster Cathedral on 6th and 9th August. This year they will share their message of peace and disarmament in eight languages through leaflets they have produced for other nationalities in London for the Olympic Games. The message reads:

"Two nuclear bombs dropped on Japan in 1945 killed hundreds of thousands of innocent people. We must not risk nuclear weapons being used ever again. Pax Christi invites you to work and pray for peace in our world. 'Hear my voice, for I speak for the multitudes in every country and in every period of history who do not want war and are ready to walk the road of peace' Pope John Paul II, Hiroshima, Japan 1981"

Other activities organised by Pax Christi members around the country include exhibitions on Hiroshima and Nagasaki planned in parishes in Hitchin, York and Southampton, an interfaith service of prayer and readings at the Chapel of Unity in Coventry Cathedral and an evening prayer vigil on 9th August at Aylesford Priory in Kent.

Pax Christi in New Zealand are hosting two Hibakusha (survivors of the bombings in Hiroshima and Nagasaki) on a speaking tour; in Austria, members of Pax Christi will hold vigils in Vienna on 6th & 9th August and in the USA Pax Christi Metro New York have organised a seminar on the theme "Nuclear lies, nuclear truths" which will be followed by a procession and public witness.

Meanwhile, the Catholic Bishops' Conference of Japan have issued a statement on the occasion of their annual Ten Days for Peace. Speaking of the on-going crisis caused by the Fukushima Nuclear Plant disaster of 2011 they say: the path to peace is precisely the path to cherish and respect life. Therefore, let us make every effort to appeal anew to abolish nuclear plants immediately and to create a society where people protect life and seek peace.

See here for details of events <http://www.paxchristi.org.uk/events1.php>

London, 3 August 2012

2012-0307-en-gl-SD