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## NEWS RELEASE

### **U.S. Catholic Bishops to Join Pilgrimage of Peace to Japan on 80th Anniversary of Atomic Bombings**

#### **Pilgrimage Will Include Cardinal Cupich, Cardinal McElroy, Archbishop Etienne, Archbishop Wester**

Albuquerque, NM — July 22, 2025 — In August 2025, during the 80th anniversary of the atomic bombings of Hiroshima and Nagasaki, four prominent U.S. Catholic bishops will travel to Japan to participate in a Pilgrimage of Peace, fostering prayer, dialogue, and global advocacy for nuclear disarmament.

Participating bishops include:

- His Eminence Blase Cardinal Cupich, Archbishop of Chicago
- His Eminence, Robert Cardinal McElroy, Archbishop of Washington, D.C.
- Most Reverend Paul Etienne, Archbishop of Seattle
- Most Reverend John C. Wester, Archbishop of Santa Fe

This will mark the third pilgrimage for Archbishop Wester and the second for Archbishop Etienne, reaffirming their deep commitment to peace, reconciliation, and nuclear disarmament.

Organized under the theme of the Catholic Church's Jubilee Year, "Pilgrims of Hope," the delegation will be accompanied by faculty, staff, and students from U.S. Catholic universities. The pilgrimage is guided by the imperative of Pope Francis to "remember, journey together, and protect," especially relevant amid today's global instability and renewed nuclear threats. Cardinals Cupich and McElroy were pleased to accept the invitation from Most Reverend Alexis Mitsuru Shirahama, Bishop of Hiroshima, and Most Reverend Peter Michiaki Nakamura, Archbishop of Nagasaki.

The Partnership for a World Without Nuclear Weapons (PWNW), a collaboration of the dioceses of Santa Fe, Seattle, Hiroshima, and Nagasaki, is coordinating the pilgrimage alongside these participants:

- Archdiocese of Chicago
- Archdiocese of Washington, D.C.
- Association of Jesuit Colleges and Universities in North America
- Georgetown University
- Loyola University Chicago
- University of Notre Dame

- Nagasaki Junshin Catholic University
- Sophia University, Tokyo

#### Key Events and Schedule Highlights

##### August 5 - Hiroshima

- Diocese of Hiroshima Peace Event  
World Peace Memorial Cathedral  
Dialogue among Catholic bishops from Japan, South Korea, and the U.S. with hibakusha (atomic bomb survivors), culminating in a joint statement and press conference.

##### August 6 - Hiroshima

- Mass for the Victims of the Atomic Bombing  
World Peace Memorial Cathedral  
Homily by Cardinal Cupich.
- Academic Symposium  
Elizabeth University of Music  
Discussions on Catholic ethics, nuclear weapons, and humanitarian and environmental consequences.
- Interfaith Peace Event and Peace Concert

##### August 7 - Hiroshima to Nagasaki

- Morning visit to the former Jesuit Novitiate in Nagatsuka, where Fr. Pedro Arrupe, S.J., led rescue efforts after the bombing, guided by Renzo De Luca, S.J.

##### August 8 - Nagasaki

- Tour of the Nagasaki Atomic Bomb Museum
- “Encounters and Hope” symposium at Esumi Memorial Hall, Nagasaki Junshin Catholic University
- Interfaith Prayer Gathering at Nagasaki Hypocenter Park

##### August 9 - Nagasaki

- Participation in the official commemoration ceremony at Nagasaki Peace Park
- Peace Mass at Urakami Cathedral, followed by a peace procession back to the park

##### August 10 - Nagasaki

- Academic Symposium and Ecumenical Dialogue at Urakami Cathedral

## A Pilgrimage for Peace, Justice, and Reconciliation

Through prayer services, academic symposia, and interfaith gatherings, the Pilgrimage of Peace seeks to advance conversations on nuclear disarmament, intergenerational justice, and peacebuilding. The delegation will critically reflect on the Catholic Church's response to nuclear legacies in both the U.S. and Japan within today's religious and geopolitical context.

Archbishop Wester, whose Archdiocese of Santa Fe is home to Los Alamos and Sandia National Laboratories, has been a leading U.S. voice against nuclear weapons. His 2022 pastoral letter, "Living in the Light of Christ's Peace: A Conversation Toward Nuclear Disarmament," continues to inspire national and international efforts for peace.

"We are pilgrims of peace and hope, crossing continents and histories to remember the past and transform the future," said Archbishop Wester. "This journey to Hiroshima and Nagasaki is not only a remembrance but a recommitment to the Gospel call for nonviolence and the abolition of nuclear weapons."

For media inquiries or to request interviews with participating bishops, please contact Leslie M. Radigan, Director of Communications, Archdiocese of Santa Fe [lradigan@asfnm.org](mailto:lradigan@asfnm.org)

