

Happy Monday to all,

On March 2, 1962, President John F. Kennedy announced in a radio and television address that the United States would resume atmospheric nuclear testing, ending a voluntary moratorium in place since 1958. This action was prompted by the Soviet Union's series of tests in late 1961. According to a Gallup poll in July 1961, the public approved of testing by a margin of two-to-one.

After the Cuban Missile Crisis in October 1962, President Kennedy and Russian Premier Khrushchev signed the Limited Nuclear Test Ban treaty on August 5, 1963. The United States now maintains a voluntary moratorium on explosive nuclear testing, having not conducted one since September 1992. However, political discussions in late 2025 indicated a potential, yet unconfirmed, shift in US federal policy.

Catholic Social Teaching firmly condemns the use, threat of use, and mere possession of nuclear weapons, deeming them immoral due to their indiscriminate nature and catastrophic, uncontrollable effects. The Church rejects nuclear deterrence as a foundation for peace, advocating for comprehensive, multilateral disarmament and the promotion of global dialogue to ensure the protection of human dignity and global security.

Pope Francis, in his Address at the Peace Memorial, in Hiroshima, Japan on November 24, 2019 stated:

*“With deep conviction I wish once more to declare that the use of atomic energy for purposes of war is today, more than ever, a crime not only against the dignity of human beings but against any possible future for our common home. The use of atomic energy for purposes of war is immoral, just as the possessing of nuclear weapons is immoral, as I already said two years ago. We will be judged on this. Future generations will rise to condemn our failure if we spoke of peace but did not act to bring it about among the peoples on the earth.”*

When considering any aggressive activity between nations, the social teachings of the Church make clear that any use of force must be proportional and discriminating, force must not cause evils greater than what it aims to achieve, and force must discriminate between combatants and civilians.

Catholic Charities and Caritas Internationalis (the umbrella organization for the church's global charitable and humanitarian outreach) are dedicated to advocating for people living on the margins, people confronting famine, and people displaced by the negative effects of war and disasters. Assistance is offered through veterans programs to assist those returning from serving in war zones, immigrant programs serving those escaping toxic and unsafe regions of the world, and other social service programs assisting those affected by natural disasters or diminished resources caused by the devastation of war or disasters.

As we enter deeper into the Lenten season, let us embrace the words from Pope Leo XIV's Lenten message:

“Likewise, our parishes, families, ecclesial groups and religious communities are called to undertake a shared journey during Lent, in which listening to the word of God, as well as to the cry of the poor and of the earth, becomes part of our community life, and fasting a foundation for sincere repentance. In this context, conversion refers not only to one's conscience, but also to the quality of our relationships and dialogue. It means allowing ourselves to be challenged by reality and recognizing what truly guides our desires — both within our ecclesial communities and as regards humanity's thirst for justice and reconciliation.”

When we are all able to follow Pope Leo's guidance, and “listen to the word of God and to the cry of the poor and of the earth”, war...especially nuclear war... will no longer have a need to exist.

Blessings,

Deacon Mike