



*To the Most Reverend Alexis M. Shirahama  
Bishop of Hiroshima*

I offer cordial greetings to all gathered to commemorate the eightieth anniversary of the atomic bombings of Hiroshima and Nagasaki. In a particular way, I express my sentiments of respect and affection for the *hibakusha* survivors, whose stories of loss and suffering are a timely summons to all of us to build a safer world and foster a climate of peace.

Though many years have passed, the two cities remain living reminders of the profound horrors wrought by nuclear weapons. Their streets, schools and homes still bear scars—both visible and spiritual—from that fateful August of 1945. In this context, I hasten to reiterate the words so often used by my beloved predecessor Pope Francis: “War is always a defeat for humanity.”

As a survivor from Nagasaki, Dr. Takashi Nagai wrote, “The person of love is the person of ‘bravery’ who does not bear arms” (*Heiwato*, 1979). Indeed, true peace demands the courageous laying down of weapons—especially those with the power to cause an indescribable catastrophe. Nuclear arms offend our shared humanity and also betray the dignity of creation, whose harmony we are called to safeguard.

In our time of mounting global tensions and conflicts, Hiroshima and Nagasaki stand as “symbols of memory” (cf. Francis, *Letter to the Most Reverend Alexis-Mitsuru Shirahama, Bishop of Hiroshima*, 19 May 2023) that urge us to reject the illusion of security founded on mutually assured destruction. Instead, we must forge a global ethic rooted in justice, fraternity and the common good.

It is thus my prayer that this solemn anniversary will serve as a call to the international community to renew its commitment to pursuing lasting peace for our whole human family—“a peace that is unarmed and disarming” (*First Apostolic Blessing “Urbi et Orbi”*, 8 May 2025).

Upon all who mark this anniversary, I willingly invoke abundant divine blessings.

From the Vatican, 14 July 2025

Leo PP. XIV