



Office of the Bishop

DIOCESE OF LITTLE ROCK

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Ash Wednesday
March 2, 2022

To the people of the Diocese of Little Rock,


As we enter the penitential season of Lent in the midst of the completely unprovoked invasion of Ukraine by Russia, I would like to follow up on my recent statement on Just Peace by endorsing the pastoral letter on nuclear disarmament published on January 11, 2022 by Archbishop John C. Wester of Santa Fe. This is a very timely document given the invasion of Ukraine (a country which gave up its nuclear weapons following the breakup of the Soviet Union almost 30 years ago) by their nuclear weapon possessing neighbor. Can you imagine the danger to the whole world if both countries still possessed nuclear weapons? The text of his 51-page presentation can be downloaded from the website of the Archdiocese of Santa Fe at the following link:

https://archdiosf.org/documents/2022/1/220111_ABW_Pastoral_Letter_LivingintheLightofChristsPeace_Official_Reduced.pdf

Pope John Paul II, Pope Benedict XVI and now Pope Francis have all spoken repeatedly about the immorality of even merely possessing nuclear weapons, given the existential threat they pose to the whole human race, the impossibility of their moral use and the grave danger of accidents that might occur. Over time the teaching of the Holy See has moved beyond the previous conditional acceptance of “deterrence” to the moral imperative of abolition. Indeed, the Vatican was the first nation state to sign and ratify the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons. As pope Francis declared: *“We must never grow weary of working to support the principal international legal instruments of nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation, including the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons.”* As such, Pope Francis calls all of us to work toward universal, verifiable nuclear disarmament.

As we begin this Lent, let us recall Jesus’ call to be peacemakers in our families, in our communities and in our broken world. Our prayer for peace must then lead to concrete action to foster peace, that we might all live in peace as brothers and sisters, sons and daughters of the one Heavenly Father of us all. As Archbishop Wester writes in the Epilogue to his statement, *“But it is not enough that we become instruments of peace, as important as that is. No, we must take up the cause of worldwide nuclear disarmament with an urgency that befits the seriousness of this cause and the dangerous threat that looms over all of humanity and the planet.”*

Sincerely in Christ,


+Anthony B. Taylor
Bishop of Little Rock