



## **Pax Christi International Statement On the Occasion of Pope Francis' Visit to Japan, 23-26 November 2019**

The Pax Christi International movement joins the Japan Catholic Council for Justice and Peace in welcoming the visit of Pope Francis to Hiroshima and Nagasaki. During his papacy, Pope Francis has spoken strongly against nuclear weapons. It is therefore fitting that during his visit to these two cities he would call for concrete steps towards complete nuclear disarmament.

Pax Christi International (PCI) looks forward to this pastoral visit as one that will highlight not only the immorality of nuclear weapons but also the importance of nonviolence as a foundational ethic for building cultures of peace and sustainable development.

In 1945, Japan suffered a tragedy that must never happen again, but the danger that others may suffer the fate of Hiroshima and Nagasaki remains great today. Hence, PCI notes with joy Pope Francis' exhortation that states should reject the very possession of nuclear weapons as well as their use. We also commend the Holy See for being among the first states to sign and ratify the new Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons.

As people of faith and as a global Catholic movement for peace, Pax Christi International is inspired by the powerful nonviolent witness of the hibakusha as well as other people of goodwill in Northeast Asia, the Asia-Pacific region and elsewhere who continue to work nonviolently for peace and justice.

May this visit enable governments including Japan to take to heart Pope Francis' words: "Weapons of mass destruction, particularly nuclear weapons, create nothing but a false sense of security. They cannot constitute the basis for peaceful coexistence between members of the human family, which must rather be inspired by an ethic of solidarity."

With all this in mind, PCI earnestly requests Pope Francis to call on the government of Japan and all states in Northeast Asia to join the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons. Japan has a unique challenge to take this leadership role having suffered the nuclear attacks of 1945. Northeast Asia and the world face growing nuclear threats.

May the journey of Pope Francis catalyze a change of heart in many, and for this intention Pax Christi International holds the Pontiff's visit in prayer.

