

THE POPE AND THE BOMB: GETTING BEYOND DETERRENCE

Georgetown University
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GREETINGS FROM H.E.M. CARDINAL PETER K.A. TURKSON

Prefect of the Dicastery for Promoting Integral Human Development

3-5 minutes

Esteemed President and Professors,

Revered Excellencies,

Prestigious Speakers,

Dear Friends,

I wish to convey you the most heartfelt greetings from Cardinal Turkson, Prefect of the *Dicastery for Promoting Integral Human Development*. His Eminence asked me to assure you all of his deepest sentiments of esteem and gratitude.

Between the winter of 2016 and the spring of 2017, many Members and Consultors of the former *Dicastery of the Roman Curia, the Pontifical Council for Justice and Peace*, recommended the holding of a high level seminar and a study session on the issue of “Disarmament”. By hindsight the *Pontifical Council* found the proposal to be a very prescient and important for discerning the “*signs of the times*”. Paradoxically, after the end of the “Cold War” (when many thought that with the collapse of the Soviet Union the humanity would finally live in a unified and peaceful world) and especially in the last two decades, international stability and security have rapidly deteriorated. It seems, unfortunately, that political friendship and international concord increasingly cease to be the supreme good that nations desire and are ready to commit to. In a non-exhaustive way, we could recall that:

- The legal framework for non-proliferation and disarmament within governments and regimes is weakening (some would say disintegrating) and this is especially true in relation to nuclear weapons.
- New means and methods of warfare (especially the application of artificial intelligence to new armaments) are emerging which are strategically transformative.
- Conventional weapons progressively increase their destructive character and, in any case, continue to occupy the most important position in modern warfare and its hybrid, low intensity, asymmetrical and intra-state conflicts.
- On international relations and within the new multipolar order, a climate of fear, mistrust and opposition is clearly prevailing and multilateral systems are shaky. With respect to defense policies, especially evident in the ongoing trillionaire arms races, the constant use of aggressive rhetoric and the development of increasingly threatening military doctrines clearly emphasize this point.
- The danger posed by non-State actors and terrorist groups is more and more concrete, especially if we consider the damage of potential uses of new and sophisticated chemical and biological weapons.

Consequently, at this moment of difficulty in the international community, the Holy See has intensified its bimillennial diplomatic and pastoral commitment toward the implementation of the evangelical beatitude: «*Blessed are the peacemakers, for they will be called children of God*» (Matthew 5:9). From our humble perspective, when the aforementioned “Pontifical Council for Justice and Peace” merged together with the three other former Pontifical Councils (*Pastoral Care of Migrants and Itinerant People*, *Pastoral Assistance to Health Care Workers*, and *Cor Unum*) to constitute the *Dicastery for Promoting Integral Human Development*, one of the first priorities of the new entity was the holding of the international Symposium “Perspectives for a nuclear free world and for an integral disarmament”. This was held in the Vatican on 10-11 November 2017. On that occasion, *Georgetown University* proved once again to be a precious ally, being one of the most important theoretical and practical supporters of the event.

Together we were blessed by the words of the Holy Father who, addressing the participants to the *Symposium*, spoke out strongly against nuclear weapons, stating “the threat of their use, as well as their very possession, is to be firmly condemned,” thus becoming the first Pope to reject the “doctrine of deterrence”. More in general, the Pope noted that, until recently, arms control policies were mainly handled by interstate diplomacy or by international accords. Today, we are witnessing a growing awareness that each individual person, and all people collectively, are involved in *arms control*. Thus the concept of “humanitarian disarmament” which is spearheaded by civil society groups, with membership spanning the globe, is a people-centered approach to disarmament. It focuses on preventing and remediating human suffering and environmental harm, rather than on advancing national security. To contribute to this disarmament *momentum*, our *Dicastery* proposes to frame the dialogue on disarmament within the broader context of peacebuilding. This comprises the concept of “integral disarmament”, which, as explained by St. Pope John XXIII, does not only refer to State armaments. Rather it calls on every person to disarm his or her own heart and to be a peacemaker everywhere (*Pacem in terris*, §113). In this regard, Pope Francis never ceases to emphasize the need for accompaniment and discernment in order to explore alternative courses of action while exercising in-depth moral responsibility for recovering international trust and promoting peace for individuals, communities and States. Such an integral disarmament involves a process of the acknowledgement of guilt and mistakes, the acknowledgement of omission for failing to act in favour of peacebuilding, and for failing to recognize and stop suffering caused by weapons and violence and duly repairing the harm. Integral disarmament can move us to transform a culture of injustice and violence to a culture of fraternal peace and advancement of human rights, because it takes us beyond peace conventions and treaties to personal and communal conversion and change of heart. Integral disarmament takes us beyond

the mentality of finding security only in armament and the readiness for war, and nurtures a culture of encounter for a *civilization of love* and political friendships for the development of the whole person and for all peoples (*Populorum Progressio*, §14); a development that cares deeply about God's creation in its totality (*Laudato Si'*, §§ 14, 42).

Furthermore, I would like to recall that the Holy See is going down this path, hand in hand, with both the international community and civil society. In this sense, another "light of hope" is the UN Secretary General's announcement, in May of 2018, of his Agenda for Disarmament, "Securing our Common Future". The Agenda outlines a set of practical measures to promote disarmament in the areas of weapons of mass destruction and conventional arms, and to discourage the development of weapon technologies for the future. As to the second point, another providential sign became evident when the *International Campaign to Abolish Nuclear Weapons (ICAN)* was awarded the Nobel Peace Prize in October 2017. This award recognized *ICAN's* role in shedding light on the catastrophic consequences of the use of nuclear weapons, and for its huge campaign in support of the UN "*Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons*", supported by the Holy See, which became one of the leaders in the drive to adopt, sign and ratify the text.

I think that for all people and institutions I have cited, it has been a source of pride to follow Pope Francis' recent visits to Hiroshima and Nagasaki. I am fairly confident that both believers and non-believers can uphold His heartfelt appeal to faith based communities, political leaders and ordinary citizens to explore together new ways to enhance mutual understanding, human fraternity and harmonious coexistence on earth, our common home (*Laudato si'*, 49)!

Finally, invoking the blessing of the Lord on your gathering, I would like to single out for a special expression of gratitude Fr. Drew Christiansen s.j., for his tireless effort over the past two years to coordinate the editorial work of the volume containing the proceedings of the above-mentioned 2017 Symposium on integral disarmament organized by our *Dicastery*. My hope is that this Georgetown conference on getting beyond deterrence will represent another step in our mutual and fruitful cooperation. Evidently, this is only a part of my broader and heartfelt gratitude to President De John J. DeGioia and his collaborators for the numerous collaborative projects between *Georgetown University* and our *Dicastery*, on topics such as the Amazon, the leadership formation, the seminars with Centers on the Social Doctrine of the Church and so on. You have my best wishes for a blessed new year!