

War and the Prospect of Nuclear War Call Us to Prayer and Action for the Sake of the World

Michael Ramos, Voices for a World Free of Nuclear Weapons

March 2026

“Help us lift the fog of atomic darkness that hovers so pervasively over our Earth, Your Earth, so that soon all eyes may see life magnified by your pure light.” – Rt. Rev. William Swing, “A Nuclear Prayer”

The persistent threat posed by nuclear weapons hovers over all human beings and the Earth today. The current war in Iran, as well as other ongoing wars, could, by miscalculation, escalation, use of tactical weapons, or sole authorization, ignite into a nuclear catastrophe, exposing all of us and leading to the deaths of many millions. While a stated reason for going to war with Iran was the imminent threat posed by Iran being close to having a nuclear weapon, the International Atomic Energy Agency’s Director General, Rafael Mariano Grossi said on March 2, “We don’t see a structured program to manufacture nuclear weapons” in Iran.

Reliance on war as a means to resolve international conflicts leads to incalculable suffering. Immediate efforts to reduce and eliminate nuclear weapons are necessary, including moving away from their expansion and proliferation. At the same time, the renewal and upholding of treaty obligations suggest paths for mutual cooperation that serve as an alternative to the devastation of war and as a means to fulfill the Biblical command to “seek peace and pursue it” (Psalm 34). Communications between nations, implementation and enforcement of treaties, exchanges of data on arsenals, verifiable steps of deescalation, non-enrichment, non-testing, non-trigger-hair alerts, and disarmament fulfill this moral and international law commitment to pursue peace. As the memories of World Wars and the use of atomic weapons on Hiroshima and Nagasaki teach us, again and again, we hold the power to destroy the world over and over. The only way to prevent omnicide is to follow the words of the *hibakusha*, “Never again!” by disarming our hearts and minds, restoring right relationships among peoples, and demanding of our nations’ leaders that they disinvest in weapons and solutions that perpetuate and globalize the horrific violence of nuclear weaponry. We are charged as peoples and civilized nations to return to the sanity, restorative pathways and promises of a shared, thriving humanity.

War and nuclear war are contrary to God’s will

People of different religious backgrounds perceive the Iran conflict as a “holy war.” War is not holy, even though religious people sometimes infuse the conduct of war with religious meaning or intent. War is a particularly gruesome way of causing death; while wars have continued into modernity and the industrial and now technological eras, they are the result of a failure of

nations to find negotiated means for resolving conflicts. They are inherently dehumanizing. Nuclear warfare, as a moral and human matter, is the ultimate form of violence. As such, it can never be justified; as a matter of “choosing life,” it must be prevented with all our spiritual energy through abolition as an ever-present goal.

Some Christians mis-interpret scripture in their belief that the pre-emptive war in Iran is a prelude to “the final battle” of Armageddon, the second coming of Christ and nuclear devastation. They find “signs” in the fact that Iran is a Muslim nation, that the conflict takes place in the Middle East and in the perception that the U.S. administration and president are “anointed” by God to assist in ushering in the second coming and final salvation for those who are “chosen” and slated to be taken up to heaven. This distortion of Christian teaching fails to recognize that Jesus’ criteria for authentic faith was an inclusive love of neighbor as oneself and feeding the hungry, tending the sick, visiting the prisoner, and accompanying the immigrant. Second, Jesus’ whole way of life was one of nonviolence, including the well-known but less practiced command to “love your enemies.” Rather than endorse killing, Jesus embraced the cross of reconciliation. Third, the Abrahamic religions are clear about the admonition against idolatry, “putting no other gods before God,” whose essence is steadfast love and compassion. To predict or dictate how God will act and who – exclusively – will benefit is to manipulate God in God’s “free blowing” where God wills. Pre-emptive war, particularly with the potential for nuclear weapons usage, is contrary to the will of God.

“Grant us wisdom, grant us courage, for the facing of this hour.” – Harry Emerson Fosdick, “God of Grace and God of Glory” (hymn, 1930)

The Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., reminded us that “Hate cannot drive out hate; only love can do that.” (*Strength to Love*, 1963) The ecumenical movement within Christianity and the interfaith movement aspire to a unity-through-difference among spiritually-oriented people that counters the hate, fear and violence that, taken to the extreme, can lead to war. As stated by the United Religions Initiative: “Our Purpose commits us to promoting enduring, daily interfaith cooperation, ending religiously motivated violence, and creating cultures of peace, justice and healing for the Earth and all living beings.” With the power to destroy the world over through nuclear weapon usage, nuclear war and climate change, people of spirit have a vocation, in conscience, to embrace and embody the peace that is a gift of God for us and for our planet. This means planting the seeds of peace, not war, of love, not violence, of solidarity, not demeaning or condemning “others”, or those not like ourselves.

Religions and spiritual practice throughout the world center certain values that guide the formation of who we are as human beings and shape our outlook as we sojourn on the Earth. Among them are:

- Human dignity. All lives are sacred and precious and to be preserved.
- Compassion. Compassion is both at the essence and the through-line of the power of the divine working through us, in us, among us and around us.
- Solidarity. As Dr. King noted, our destinies are intertwined. When one suffers, we all suffer. Therefore, to alleviate suffering, remove fear and promote understanding are at the heart of a peace-with-justice that results in an authentic freedom for all.
- Truth and beauty. The poet, John Keats, said, “Beauty is truth, truth beauty – that is all ye know on earth, and all ye need to know.” (“Ode on a Grecian Urn”) The open-hearted pursuit of truth and appreciation for beauty open us to hope in the co-creative possibilities for our planet.

At this hour, we must choose how we respond to these religious and spiritual foundations and weave collaborative actions for a future that is more loving without exclusions and reflects God’s dream for us.

Finally, we are social people, who belong together on this Earth, God’s Earth, not only to co-exist but also to generate greater possibilities for abundant life for all. Each of us has a part to play in making a fulfilling life possible for our generation and the next generations. With Voices for a World Free of Nuclear Weapons, we invite every person to pray, each in your own way, personally and communally, as you are so moved and inspired, for a world without the risks and harm of nuclear weapons.

Source of life, you have given us this moment to preserve, promote and protect life. You have invited us to dissolve harm, oppression, and the resort to war with the power of love and compassion. Such a calling we receive knowing that we must ask a Power beyond us to be present for such a time as this. We need your guidance to strengthen us and to see clearly how to proceed. Grant us wisdom and grant us courage for the facing of this hour. In humility, we remain confident in your abiding in our world. May we be given the hands, hearts, minds and spirits to be constructors of peace, to turn swords into plowshares and to transform the fog of atomic darkness into radiant stars of beloved communities of cooperation without the weapons of ultimate nonexistence in our midst. We ask you this in all the languages, cultures and expressions that flow through us. Amen.