

Ten Days of Prayer for Peace

Pray that God bring the peace we are incapable of building and commit ourselves to be the means by which God does so



From August 6, the feast of the Transfiguration, to August 15, the feast of the Assumption, the Catholic Church in Japan marks an annual Ten Days of Prayer for Peace. The practice has nothing to do with the liturgical calendar. August 6 is the anniversary of the 1945 atomic bombing of Hiroshima. On August 15, Japan's Emperor Hirohito made a radio broadcast, saying that, "After pondering deeply the general trends of the world and the actual conditions obtaining in our empire today, we have decided to effect a settlement of the present situation by resorting to an extraordinary

measure.

"The "extraordinary measure" was surrender, though the emperor did not use the word. Until the Covid pandemic curtailed most public activities, the Ten Days of Prayer for Peace each year was marked with Masses, prayer services, lectures, seminars, processions and other activities meant to increase awareness of peace and justice issues. The focus, especially after the first few years, has not been so much upon history, but instead has emphasized the threats to peace and justice in the world today. This year, there are many such threats. Of course, the Russian invasion of Ukraine and the ongoing war there are an obvious case. The "special military operation" (as the Russian ruler Vladimir Putin commands that it be called) has caused tens of thousands of casualties, massive destruction and drawn many Western powers to the aid of Ukraine short of directly engaging in the conflict. The war has curtailed shipments of grain from Ukraine, threatening food supplies in many countries. In Asia, the military rulers of Myanmar continue a genocidal war against the Rohingya minority in that country. China practices an invasion of Taiwan because an American politician visited there, and those war games envelop some Japanese territory. And there is the ever-present conundrum in northeast Asia: What will North Korea's Kim Jong-un do to gain attention since he has been superseded by others in the news? So, what of this year's Ten Days of Prayer for Peace? What does it mean to set aside time for prayers for peace in a time of violence? In his message for this year's observation of the Ten Days, Archbishop Isao Kikuchi of Tokyo, president of the Catholic Bishops' Conference of Japan, set the theme "Peace is possible; peace is a duty," a quote from Pope Francis. Few, if any, would deny that peace is a duty. But is it possible?

Read more at: <https://international.la-croix.com/news/religion/ten-days-of-prayer-for-peace/16495>