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## Letter of the Holy Father to the Bishop of Hiroshima on the occasion of the G7 Summit

The following is the letter sent by the Holy Father Francis to Bishop Alexis-Mitsuru Shirahama, P.S.S., of Hiroshima, on the occasion of the G7 Summit taking place in Hiroshima, Japan, from 19 to 21 May 2023:

### Letter of the Holy Father

*To the Most Reverend Alexis-Mitsuru Shirahama*

*Bishop of Hiroshima*

As the G7 Summit meets in Hiroshima to discuss urgent issues currently facing the global community, I wish to assure you of my spiritual closeness and my prayers for the fruitfulness of the Summit. The choice of Hiroshima as the site of this meeting is particularly significant, in light of the continuing threat of recourse to nuclear weapons. I recall the overwhelming impression left by my moving visit to the Peace Memorial during my 2019 visit to Japan. Standing there in silent prayer and thinking of the innocent victims of the nuclear attack decades ago, I wished to reiterate the firm conviction of the Holy See that “the use of atomic energy for purposes of war is, today more than ever, a crime not only against the dignity of human beings, but against any possible future for our common home” (*Address at the Peace Memorial*, 24 November 2019).

It is to that future to which responsible men and women now look with concern, particularly in the wake of our experience of a global pandemic and the persistence of armed conflicts in various regions, including the devastating war now being fought on Ukrainian soil. The events of the past few years have made it clear that only together, in fraternity and solidarity, can our human family seek to heal wounds and build a just and peaceful world.

Indeed, it has become increasingly evident that in the multipolar world of the twenty-first century, the pursuit of peace is closely related to the need for security and reflection on the most efficient means for guaranteeing it. Such reflection must necessarily consider the fact that global security needs to be integral, capable of embracing

issues including access to food and water, respect for the environment, health care, energy sources and the equitable distribution of the world's goods. An integral concept of security can serve to anchor multilateralism and international cooperation between government and nongovernment actors, on the basis of the profound interconnection between these issues, which makes it necessary to adopt, together, an approach of responsible multilateral cooperation.

Hiroshima, as "a symbol of memory", forcefully proclaims the inadequacy of nuclear arms to respond effectively to today's great threats to peace and to ensure national and international security. We need but consider the catastrophic humanitarian and environmental impact that will result from the use of nuclear weapons, as well as the waste and poor allocation of human and economic resources involved in their development. Nor should we underestimate the effects of the continuing climate of fear and suspicion generated by their mere possession, which compromises the growth of a climate of mutual trust and dialogue. In this context, nuclear arms and other weapons of mass destruction represent a multiplier of risk that offers only an illusion of peace.

Assuring you of my prayers for you and for those entrusted to your pastoral care, I join you in praying that the G7 Summit at Hiroshima will demonstrate farsighted vision in laying the foundations for lasting peace and stable and long-term sustainable security. With gratitude for your efforts in the service of justice and peace, I cordially send my blessing.

*Rome, Saint John Lateran, 19 May 2023*

FRANCIS

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