



JUST ACT FEBRUARY 2008

"Itinerant Dominican women, committed to collaboration, link their energy, resources, and personnel to preach the gospel."



Dates to Observe with Prayer and Action during February

- Feb. 1-29 Gandhi-King Season
- Feb. 2 Presentation
- Feb. 4 Send a Peace Message Week
- Feb. 6 Ash Wednesday
- Feb. 11 World Day of the Sick
- Feb. 12 NAACP founded, 1909
- Feb. 18 Presidents Day (date changes each year)
- Feb. 21 Campaign for Nuclear Disarmament, 1948



Disarmament

Catholic Social Teaching and Disarmament

"The Holy See thinks that nuclear disarmament is a part of the general and complete disarmament. Nuclear disarmament-like nuclear nonproliferation-is indispensable for the elimination of the risk of nuclear war. However, it must be accompanied by the elimination of all weapons of mass destruction and a limitation on conventional weapons."

Nuclear Weapons

How many Nuclear Weapons are there in the world today?

There are more than 20,000 nuclear weapons in the world. The Nuclear Threat Initiative, an organization that monitors the status of the nuclear threat worldwide, lists nine countries with nuclear weapons as of April 2004.

India -6; North Korea - 8; Pakistan-40; Britain-200; China-400; France-350; Israel - 250; Russia -8,400; and the United States -10,455. In some cases, the numbers are estimated (Israel, India, North Korea and Pakistan).



Birthdays of Women on Death Row

- Feb. 17 Blanche Kiser Moore on death row in North Carolina
- Feb. 24 Celeste Simone Carrington on death row in California

Let's Continue our Dialogue for Disarmament of Nuclear Weapons

by Carol Gilbert, O.P. and Ardeth Platte, O.P.

Dominican sisters Carol Gilbert and Ardeth Platte will speak at the Martin de Porres on February 7, 2008 from 7:00 PM-9:00 PM. They will share about their spiritual journeys that led them to a non-violent stance against nuclear weapons. Carol and Ardeth will also join the Motherhouse community for Thursday evening prayer.

The disarmament of nuclear weapons and a ban on all wars forever have become our "call to conscience". We recognize, as Dominicans, the necessity for intense study of documents of our Church, of Scripture and God's laws which stand as our creed for all of our non-violent actions in this cause.

Our study of the laws of the land, laws of war, customary law, international law incorporated into the Constitution (Supremacy Clause, Art. 6) and the treaties along with the United Nations Charter confirms that this body of laws form the directives for government officials regarding nuclear weapons and war. We concur with Richard McSorley, S.J. who identified nuclear weapons as the "taproot of all violence". When the nation becomes lawless, defies God and national laws, and refuses to become a mutual partner with other countries and peoples, it awakens and challenges us to new and creative measures to speak out, teach and preach for the good of humankind and Earth.

Under the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT) of 1970, "Each of the Parties of the Treaty undertakes to pursue negotiations in good faith on effective measures relating to cessation of the nuclear arms race at an early date and to nuclear disarmament, and treaty on general and complete disarmament under strict and effective international control."

In July, 1996 the International Court of Justice offered, "It is illegal to threaten to use or to use nuclear weapons." This is interpreted by Francis Boyle in his book, *Criminality of Nuclear Deterrence*, "Nuclear weapons, their components and delivery systems are nothing more than instruments of international criminal activity that are condemned, repudiated and prohibited by international law, including and by the Nuremberg Charter, Judgment, and Principles." (p.74)

Yet, the United States has not adhered to the Non Proliferation Treaty, nor has it respected the International Court of Justice. Instead the U.S. is developing a plan to increase nuclear weapons. This plan is known as Complex 2030, Complex Transformation or Bomplex. This producing, testing and certifying of new nuclear weapons is called Reliable Replacement Warhead (RRW). This U.S. nuclear posture undermines the nonproliferation goals and it places the country in more grave danger as it appears as a new threat against other nations. The claim by the United States that the arsenal is not reliable and needs replacement is not true.

Let us continue to work together for strengthening and implementing the present policy which is total nuclear disarmament.

Editor's note:

Complex 2030 is a \$150 billion program that would upgrade the entire U.S. nuclear weapons complex by 2030. The driving force behind Complex 2030 is the "Reliable Replacement Warhead" program. This program would re-design and re-build essentially every nuclear weapon in the U.S. stockpile. To do this would also require new nuclear weapons plants. The RRW program was eliminated from this year's budget, but the Defense Department's desire for the programs insures the request for funding will continue.

Questions for Lenten Reflection

- Do you agree with this statement by President Bush's press secretary, Dana Perino? "A credible deterrent remains an essential part of the U.S. national security, and nuclear forces remain key to meeting emerging security challenges."
(Columbus Dispatch Section A 12 Dec.16, 2007).
- How would you expect our new president to deal with security issues?
- Does the Gospel offer another vision of "security?"