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Pope Francis: Not Using Or Possessing Nuclear Weapons Will Be Added To Catechism

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"The use of nuclear weapons is immoral, which is why it must be added to the Catechism of the Catholic Church. Not only their use, but also possessing them: because an accident or the madness of some government leader, one person's madness can destroy humanity."

In addition to repeating this strong message pronounced at Hiroshima, Pope Francis responded to many questions posed to him by the journalists during the flight bringing them back to Rome from Japan.

Now follows an unofficial translation of the in-flight press conference.



"I thank you for your work, for an intense journey with a categoric change: Thailand was one thing and Japan another. You can't evaluate these two with the same categories. Realities must be evaluated from within same category. Japan and Thailand are two completely different realities. That's why double work is needed, and I thank you for that, even on very full days, I felt close to you in this job."

Father Makoto Yamamoto, Catholic Shimbun

Thank you very much for coming to Japan from so far away. I am a diocesan priest. I live near Nagasaki. You saw Nagasaki and Hiroshima. How did you feel? Does the Church and society in the West have anything to learn from the Church and society in the East?

"I will begin with the last question. The saying *lux ex Oriente, ex Occidente lux* inspired me a lot. Light comes from the East; luxury, consumerism, come from the West. There is this type of Eastern wisdom, which is not only the wisdom of knowing, but of time, of contemplation. It would be very helpful to our Western society, which is always in too much of a hurry, to learn contemplation, the act of stopping and looking poetically at things too. This is a personal opinion, but I think the West could do with a little more poetry. There are some beautiful poetic things, but the East goes beyond. The East is capable of looking at things with eyes that go beyond. I don't want to use the word "transcendent" because some Eastern religions don't mention transcendence, but have a vision that goes beyond the limit of immanence, but without saying transcendence. That is why I use expressions like poetry, superfluous [gratuità], the search for personal perfection through fasting, penance, reading the wisdom of the Eastern sages. I believe it would do us Westerners good to stop a bit and give time to wisdom.

"Nagasaki and Hiroshima both suffered [as a result of] the atomic bomb, and this makes them appear similar. But

there is a difference: Nagasaki not only experienced the bomb, but it also had Christians. Nagasaki has Christian roots. Christianity goes way back. There was a persecution of Christians throughout Japan, but it was very strong in Nagasaki. The secretary of the Nunciature gave me a wooden facsimile with the "Wanted" sign of that time on it: Christians wanted! If you find one, turn him in and you will get a reward. If you find a priest turn him in, and you will get a big reward. This leaves an impression: there were centuries of persecution. This is a Christian phenomenon that somehow "relativises", in the good sense of the word, the atomic bomb. Going to Hiroshima, instead, was solely to commemorate the atomic bomb attack, because it is not a Christian city like Nagasaki. That is why I wanted to go to both. There was the atomic disaster in both.

"Hiroshima was a real human catechesis on cruelty. I could not visit the Hiroshima museum because time did not permit, because it was a difficult day. But they say it's terrible. There are letters from Heads of State, Generals explaining how a greater disaster could be produced. The experience was much more touching for me. And there I reiterated that the use of nuclear weapons is immoral, that is why it must be added to the Catechism of the Catholic Church. Not only their use, but also possessing them: because an accident or the madness of some government leader, one person's madness can destroy humanity. The words of Einstein come to mind: 'The Fourth World War will be fought with sticks and stones.' "

Shinichi Kwarada, The Asahi Shimbun

As you rightly pointed out, lasting peace cannot be achieved without disarmament. Japan is a country that enjoys the nuclear protection of the USA, and is also a producer of nuclear energy, which entails a great risk, as happened at Fukushima. How can Japan contribute to world peace? Should nuclear power plants be shut down?

"Returning to the possession of nuclear power plants: an accident can always happen. You experienced the triple disaster.[1] Nuclear power has limits (let's leave out nuclear weapons because they are destructive). The use of nuclear power has limits because we have not yet achieved absolute safety. You could tell me that even electricity could cause a disaster because of lack of safety, but it would be a very small disaster. A nuclear power plant disaster will be huge disaster. Safety systems have not been worked out yet. It is my personal opinion, but I would not use nuclear energy until its use is completely safe. Some say it is a risk for the care of creation and that using nuclear energy must be stopped. I stop at safety. There is no guarantee ensuring that a disaster does not happen. Yes, one every ten years in the world. Then there is creation. The disaster nuclear power causes on creation, on the human person. There was the disaster in Ukraine.[2] We have to conduct research regarding safety, both to avoid disasters and because of the environmental consequences. I believe we have breached the limit regarding the environment - with pesticides in agriculture, with raising chickens that doctors tell mothers not to feed their children because they are given hormones and are bad for your health. There are so many rare diseases today because of an incorrect use of the environment. Either care of the environment takes place today, or it never will. But returning to nuclear energy: construction, safety and care of creation".

Elisabetta Zunica, Kyoto News

Akamada Iwao is a Japanese person sentenced to death and awaiting a review of the trial. He was present at the Mass at the Tokyo Dome, but did not have the opportunity to speak with you. Was a brief meeting with you planned? In Japan, the issue of the death penalty is very much under discussion. Thirteen death sentences were carried out shortly before the revision of the Catechism on this issue. There is no reference to that in your speeches. Did you have the opportunity to discuss this with Prime Minister Shinto Abe?

"I heard about that case regarding the death penalty later. I did not know about that person. I spoke about many problems with the Prime Minister: trials, sentences that never end, either with or without death. I spoke of general problems that exist in other countries as well: overcrowded prisons, people kept waiting with preventive imprisonment

without the presumption of innocence. Fifteen days ago, I gave a speech at the International Conference on Criminal Law and I spoke seriously on this subject. The death penalty cannot be carried out, it is immoral. This must be connected to developing consciousness. For example, some countries cannot abolish it because of political problems, but they do suspend it, which is a way of sentencing someone to life in prison without declaring so. But any sentence must always allow for reintegration, a sentence without a ray of hope is inhuman. Even when it comes to life imprisonment, one must think how the person serving a life sentence can be reintegrated, inside or outside. You will tell me: but there are people sentenced because of problems of insanity, sickness, genetic incorrigibility... In that case, a way to make them feel like people must be sought. Prisons are overcrowded in many parts of the world; they are warehouses of humanity. Instead of getting better, many times they are corrupted. We must combat the death penalty slowly. There are cases that make me happy because some countries say: we will stop. Last year, before leaving office, a State Governor made its suspension almost definitive. these are steps taken by a human conscience. But some countries have not yet succeeded in incorporating themselves into this humane way of thinking."

Jean-Marie Guénois, Le Figaro

Good day, Holy Father. You said that true peace can exist be a "disarmed" peace. But what about legitimate defence, when one country is attacked by another? In that case, does the possibility of a "just war" still exist? A small question... there was talk about an encyclical on non-violence. Do you still plan such an encyclical on non-violence? Two questions... Thank you, Holy Father.

"Yes, the plan exists, but the next Pope will do it... There are other projects on the back burner. One of them is on peace. It's maturing. I feel I will do it when the time comes. For example, the problem of bullying is a problem of violence. I specifically spoke about it to the Japanese young people. It is a problem we are trying to solve with many educational programs. It is a problem of violence. I don't feel ready yet to write an encyclical on non-violence, I have to pray a lot and find the way.

There's that Roman saying, "Si vis pacem para bellum" ("If you want peace prepare for war"). We have not made progress there: international organisations don't succeed, the United Nations don't succeed. They mediate often and well: countries like Norway are always willing to mediate. I like that, but it's insufficient, we need to do even more. Take the UN Security Council: if there is a problem with armaments and everyone agrees to solve the problem to avoid a conflict, everyone votes "yes". One country with the right of veto votes "no", and everything stops. I can't judge whether it's a good idea or not, but I have heard it said that perhaps the United Nations should take a step forward and remove certain nations' right of veto in the Security Council. I heard this was a possibility. There are issues regarding the international equilibrium that I cannot judge right now. But everything that can be done to stop arms production, to stop wars, to encourage negotiation, with the help of mediators, must always be done, and it produces results. For example, the case of Ukraine and Russia wasn't about weapons, but about negotiating a prisoner exchange, and this was positive. In Donbass, they are thinking about planning a different governmental regime. Discussions are underway. This is a positive step.

"The ugly hypocrisy of the 'arms trade'. Christian countries, European countries that talk about peace and live off weapons. This is hypocrisy, a word from the Gospels: Jesus said it in Matthew, Chapter 23. We have to stop this hypocrisy. It takes courage to say: "I can't talk about peace, because my economy earns so much through arms sales". These are all things we need to say, without insulting and vilifying any country, but speaking as brothers and sisters, for the sake of human fraternity: we must stop because this is a terrible thing. A ship arrived in port from a country, that was supposed to hand over weapons to another ship that was going to Yemen, and the port workers said "no". They did a good thing and the ship returned home. That's one case, but it shows us in which direction we need to go. Today, peace is very weak but we must not be discouraged. The idea of legitimate defense is always valid; even moral theology allows for it, but as a last resort. The use of arms is a last resort. Legitimate defence must go through diplomacy, mediation. Legitimate defence with weapons is a last resort. I insist: a last resort! We are

making ethical progress of which I approve, putting all these things into question. What is beautiful about this is that it confirms humanity moves towards good, not only toward evil."

Cristiana Caricato, TV2000

People are reading in the newspapers that the Holy See has purchased properties for hundreds of millions of euro in the centre of London. People are a bit disconcerted by this use of Vatican finances, particularly when Peter's Pence is involved. Were you aware of these financial operations, and, above all, in your opinion, is the use made of Peter's Pence correct? You have often said that money should not be made with money, you have denounced the unscrupulous use of finances, but then we see that the Holy See is involved in these operations, and we are shocked. How do you view the whole affair?

"Thank you. First of all, good administration: when the money from Peter's Pence comes in, what do I do, put it in a drawer? No, that would be bad administration. I try to invest it, and when I want to give it away, when there are needs, in a year, I take it, and the capital hasn't devalued, it's stayed the same, or grown a little. This is good administration. 'Putting money in a drawer' is bad administration. What we need is good administration, good investments. Is that clear? Even what, in Argentina, we call 'widow-style' investments: the way widows leave two eggs here, three here, five there. If one breaks, there is another and nothing is ruined. It's always safe and always moral. If you invest Peter's Pence in an weapons factory, that's not where Peter's Pence should be. If you make an investment and don't touch the capital for years, it's not right. Peter's Pence must be spent within a year, or a year and a half, until the next collection is made around the world. This is good administration, a safe one. And yes, you can purchase a property, rent it out and then sell it, but always safely, taking all the necessary measures for the good of the people and of Peter's Pence. Then what happened, happened. A scandal. They did things that appear not to be clean. But the accusation did not come from outside. The economic reform, already introduced by Benedict XVI, was implemented, and it was the internal Auditor who said: something bad is going on here, something's not right. He came to me, and I asked him: 'Are you sure?' 'Yes', he said, and he showed me the figures. 'What must I do?' he asked. I told him there is the Vatican justice system and he should go and report this to the Promoter of Justice. I was pleased about this because it shows the Vatican administration now has the resources to shed light on the bad things that happen internally, like in this case. And if it is not the case of the London property - because this remains unclear - there was corruption nonetheless. The Promoter of Justice studied it, carried consultations and saw there were problems on the balance sheet. He then asked me for permission to proceed with the search. The presumption of corruption exists and he told me what he would have to do in this, that or the other office. I signed the authorisation. Five offices were searched. Today, although there is the presumption of innocence, there is capital that is not administered well, even corruptly. I believe that with a month the depositions will begin of the five people who were suspended because there was evidence. You may ask me: "But are these five people corrupt?" No. The presumption of innocence is a guarantee, a human right. But there is corruption. We can see it. The results of the search will show whether they are guilty or not. It's bad thing, it is not good for these things to be happening inside the Vatican. But they are being resolved by internal mechanisms that Pope Benedict XVI introduced, and that are beginning to work. I thank God for this. I don't thank him for the corruption, but because the Vatican's control system works well."

Philip Pullella, Reuters

In recent weeks there has been concern about developments in Vatican finances and some say there is an internal war regarding who controls the money. Most of the members of the AIF (Vatican Financial Authority) have resigned. The Egmont Group, which is the association of these financial authorities, suspended the Vatican from its secure communications after the raid of October 1. AIF's Director is still suspended, as you said, and there is still no Auditor General. What can you do or say to assure the international financial community and the faithful called to contribute to Peter's Pence that the Vatican will not once again be considered a pariah to be kept excluded and mistrusted, and that the reforms will continue and there will be no returning to past ways of doing things?

"The Vatican has made progress in its administration: for example, today the IOR[3] is now accepted by all banks and can act like Italian banks, something that was not yet there a year ago, hence there has been progress. Then, regarding the Egmont Group, it is an unofficial international group, a group to which AIF belongs, and international control doesn't depend on the Egmont Group, which is a private group even if it is highly regarded. Moneyval will do the inspection scheduled for the first months of next year; it will do it. AIF's Director was suspended because there were suspicions of poor administration. AIF's President tried to retrieve the [sequestered] documents with the help of the Egmont Group, something the [Vatican] justice system cannot do. Faced with this, I consulted an Italian magistrate of good standing about what to do. Justice in the face of an accusation of corruption is something sovereign to a country, no one can meddle in it, no one can give the papers to the Egmont Group. The papers that might bring to light that which seems to be bad administration, in the sense of bad supervision, must be studied. It seems that it was the AIF that did not control others' crimes. Its duty was to supervise. I hope that it will be proved that this is not the case. Right now there is the presumption of innocence. For the moment, the magistrate is sovereign and must study what happened, otherwise a country would be subject to a higher administration that would damage its sovereignty. The mandate of the AIF President expired on 19 [November]. I had called him a few days earlier and he wasn't aware of that, he told me later. I announced that he was leaving on the 19th. I have already found his successor, a magistrate, highly esteemed at juridical and economic levels, nationally and internationally. On my return, he will assume the office of President of AIF. It would have been a contradiction if the supervisory authority had sovereignty over the State. This is not an easy thing to understand. What has been a little worrying is the Egmont Group, which is a private group: it helps a lot but it does not have the authoritative control of Moneyval. Moneyval will study the numbers, the procedures, how the Promoter of Justice acted, and how the judge and judges determined the matter. I know that in these days the interrogation of some of the five that have been suspended will begin. It is not easy, but we must not be naive, we must not be slaves. Someone told me: "But I don't believe it: the fact about the Egmont Group that's been brought up, people are frightened that it is a bit of terrorism [psychological]. Let's leave that aside. We go ahead with the law, with Moneyval and with the new AIF President. And the director is suspended: let's hope he is innocent, I would like it to be so because it's a good thing that a person be innocent and not guilty, I hope so. But some noise was made regarding this Group who didn't want the papers pertaining to the group to be touched.

It's the first time in the Vatican that the pot has been uncovered from inside, not from outside. It has been many times from outside. They have told us many times and it was really embarrassing... But Pope Benedict was wise, he began a process that has matured, and now there are institutions. That the Auditor had the courage to make a written complaint against five people, [shows] it's working... I really don't want to offend the Egmont Group because it does so much good, it helps, but in this case, the sovereignty of the State is a question of justice, which is more sovereign than the executive power. It's not easy to understand but I ask you to understand it."

Roland Juchem, CIC

Holy Father, on the flight from Bangkok to Tokyo you sent a telegram to Carrie Lam of Hong Kong. What do you think of the situation there, with the demonstrations and the municipal elections? And when will we be able to accompany you to Beijing?

"The telegrams are sent to all Heads of State, it's an automatic greeting; and it is also a polite way to request permission to fly over their territory. This does not mean either condemnation or support. It is a mechanical thing that all planes do when they technically enter, they advise that they are entering, and we do it out of courtesy. This does not really answer your question; the telegram is only a courtesy.

"With regard to the other question you asked me: when we think about it, it's not just Hong Kong. Think about Chile, think about France, democratic France: a year of yellow jackets. Think of Nicaragua, think of other Latin American countries that have problems like this, and even some European countries. It's something general. How does the Holy See handle this? It calls for dialogue, for peace. But it's not only Hong Kong, there are various problematic

situations that I am unable to evaluate at the moment. I respect peace and I ask for peace for all these countries that have problems, Spain too. It is better to put things in perspective and to call for dialogue, for peace, so that problems can be resolved. And finally: I would like to go to Beijing, I love China."

Valentina Alazraki, Televisa

Pope Francis, Latin America is in flames. We have seen after Venezuela and Chile images we did not think we would see after Pinochet. We have seen the situation in Bolivia, Nicaragua, or other countries: revolts, violence in the streets, deaths, injuries, even churches burnt, violated. What is your analysis on what is happening in these countries? Is the Church - and you personally as a Latin American Pope - doing something?

"Someone told me this: An analysis needs to be done. The situation today in Latin America resembles that of 1974-1980, in Chile, Argentina, Uruguay, Brazil, Paraguay with Strössner, and even Bolivia I think... they had Operation Condor at that time. A situation in flames, but I don't know if it is the same problem or another. Honestly, at this moment I'm not able to do the analysis on this. It is true there are declarations that are not exactly peaceful. What is happening in Chile frightens me, because Chile is emerging from a problem of abuse that have caused much suffering, and now there is a kind of problem we don't understand well. But it is in flames as you say, and dialogue must be sought, as well as analysis. I still haven't found a good analysis done on the situation in Latin America. And also there are weak, very weak governments, who haven't been able to establish order and peace; and for this reason, we've come to this situation."

Evo Morales has requested your mediation, for example. Something concrete...

"Yes, something concrete. Venezuela has requested mediation, and the Holy See is always willing. There is a good relationship, really a good relationship, we are present there to help when necessary. Bolivia did something like that, made a request to the United Nations, which sent delegates, and someone from some European nation as well. I don't know if Chile has made some request for international mediation; Brazil, certainly hasn't, but there are some problems there, too. It's a bit strange, but I don't want to say a word more because I am not qualified and I have not studied it well, and honestly I don't understand it very well either.

"I take advantage of your question to add that you have spoken little about Thailand, which is different from Japan, a culture of transcendence, a culture of beauty too, different from the beauty of Japan: a culture, so much poverty, so many spiritual riches. But there is also a problem that wounds the heart, that makes us think of "Greece and the others". You are an expert in this problem of exploitation, you have studied it well, and your book has done a lot of good. And Thailand, some places in Thailand, are difficult in that regard. But there is southern Thailand, and there is also beautiful northern Thailand, where I was not able to go, that is tribal and has a completely different culture. I received about twenty people from that region, first Christians, first baptised, who came to Rome, with another, different culture, those tribal cultures. And Bangkok, we saw, is a big, very modern city; but has some problems different from those of Japan, and has riches different from those of Japan. I wanted to emphasise the problem of exploitation in order to thank you for your book, as I would also like to thank Franca Giansoldati for her "green" book: two women on the plane, each of whom has written a book, treating modern problems: the ecological problem and the problem of the destruction of mother earth, of the environment; and the problem of human exploitation that you have touched on. This proves that women work more than men and are capable. Thank you, both of you, for this contribution. And I still haven't forgotten Rocio's shirt.[4]"

And thank you for asking direct questions, that's good. Enjoy for me. Enjoy your lunch.

This is a working translation from a non-official transcript done by Alessandro Guarasci and Andrea

Tornielli.

[Source](#)

With thanks to Vatican News, where this article originally appeared.

[1] Editor's note: the earthquake, the tsunami and the nuclear disaster of the Fukushima power plant in 2011.

[2] Editor's note: in Chernobyl, in 1986.

[3] Editor's note: Institute for the Works of Religion, commonly known as the Vatican Bank.

[4] Editor's note: The reference is to the shirt of a murdered Mexican woman that Valentina Alazraki had given to Pope Francis during a recent video interview.