

Three months before I was ordained, Pope John Paul II visited Japan and the site of the first use of a nuclear bomb. In his talk he repeatedly said: "To remember the past is to commit oneself to the future." Thirty seven years later, our and thus the church's commitment to the future may seem unclear. Since the 1980's I've made many trips to Offutt AFB near Omaha. Thanks to the leadership of the Des Moines Catholic Worker, many of us remembered the presence of nuclear weapons and reflected, prayed, studied, witnessed, and sometimes crossed the line. The evil of nuclear weapons was not tens of thousands of miles away as if nuclear destruction unknown is no threat to our future.

In recent months, with the development of long range missiles by North Korea, people in the US seemed to have just a passing thought that nuclear weapons may be a threat to us. There seems to be no connection that US subs, planes and missiles, carrying nuclear weapons, are a constant threat to most other people on the face of the earth at any moment.

Last summer the UN gathered the nations of the world to support a treaty to ban nuclear weapons. As the nuclear powers refused to participate, there was little coverage of the 122 to 1 vote of nations to join the treaty to ban nuclear weapons. In November, Pope Francis addressed an international symposium on a world free of nuclear weapons. He said: "if we take into account the risk of an accidental detonation as a result of error of any kind, the threat of their use, as well as their very possession, is to be firmly condemned."

NOW IS THE TIME for me to make the walk up the inclined drive at Offutt AFB and say that my spiritual leader has condemned the work of nuclear war planning. After decades of statements from the church about the evil of the use of nuclear weapons and the loopholes of working toward disarmament, I can now be a local moral agent to communicate the condemnation of the existence of all nuclear weapons. I invite you to join me at the entrance to Offutt AFB, Kinney Gate at 11:00 am August 6. Come and pray and reflect and announce that nuclear weapons are evil and need to be condemned. Bring or send me a letter/email to Col. Michael Manion or STRATCOM commander Gen John Hyten and I will attempt to deliver these letters.

Feel free to contact me for further details: jimmurphy@centurylink.net or 608-617-7379.