

Translation of an Article by Maximilian Mizzi, OFM Conv. in  
“San Francesco – Patrono d’Italia” November 2005



*Fr. Max Mizzi OFM Conv. ©*

*Launch of the peace project at the Sacro Convento in October 2002.  
As part of the congress there was an inter-religious prayer meeting  
with representatives from Christianity, Hinduism, Buddhism, Islam, Baha’i and Brama Kumaris*

## **Sacro Convento (the Sacred Convent) for Peace - The Conversion of Nuclear Weapons to Help the Developing Countries**

*by Fr. Maximilian Mizzi, OFM Conv.  
translation by Bente Wolf*

In case of an armed conflict between some nations of the world the danger of a nuclear intervention is not yet eliminated. Until all nuclear warheads have been eliminated the danger exists. It seems that people are somewhat dormant as regards this serious problem, and that they don't think so much about it. It is thus necessary to wake up the conscience, and to let people understand, particularly the governments, that nobody should be able to sleep calm until this problem has been eliminated.

Nuclear energy could be used to destroy creation, including the human family, but it could also be used to create beneficent energies of development which could lift

humanity from the sufferings of poverty, from hunger and thus create an equilibrium among the nations of the world. This could be possible if the governments agree to convert nuclear energy into projects of peace instead of destruction.

As always we Franciscans of Assisi are not insensitive to this problem, and we want to give our contribution to create a new era for humanity. In collaboration with "***Il Comitato per una Civiltà dell'Amore***" (The Committee for a Civilization of Love) we Franciscans of the Sacro Convento in Assisi have accepted Pope John Paul II's and Pope John XXIII's challenge about "Globalization and Solidarity, from Disarmament to Development."

In collaboration with "il Comitato per una Civiltà dell'Amore" on October 15, 2005 a symposium on the conversion of nuclear weapons into a project of help to developing countries was held at the Sacro Convento in Assisi. This symposium was the third of two previous international conferences on the subject. The first one was held at the Sacro Convento on October 18-20, 2002 with the theme "Conversion of weapons into projects of development in the poor countries" and the second symposium "The Commitment of Europe to Peace" was held On November 11, 2004 in Rome in premises of the Italian Parliament.

In 2002 a program on nuclear disarmament for the benefit of the developing countries was launched in Assisi. With this program the participants wanted to reach three principal objectives: 1) to destroy dangerous instruments of war; 2) to help the countries that need help; 3) to safeguard creation from large scale devastation. The scientific and technological fields in Italy have been engaged in this issue since the first agreement on nuclear disarmament between USA and USSR on December 8, 1987. We Franciscans in Assisi could not overlook the issue and thus we want to contribute to nuclear disarmament and to a more stable and lasting peace.

Till now more than 9.000 nuclear warheads have been converted into fuel cells creating energy of peace, particularly through the project USA-USSR according to the motto "Megatons to Megawatts", but there are still about 50.000 nuclear warheads, which are awaiting a conversion in order to liberate the human family from the danger of a terrifying nuclear catastrophe.

Together with the "il Comitato per una Civiltà dell'Amore" we are making pressure on governments not only to reach this objective of eliminating nuclear weapons but also to help countries in need with money earned from this conversion. Today we have received the full support of the Italian Government, and recently a petition has been submitted to the Senate for its support. The Senate has already shown an openness to our petition, and a motion introduced on September 22, 2005 to the senate in session No. 867 has been signed by seventy three senators. Apart from this some representatives of the Italian government are putting pressure on the European Parliament, and the European Parliament seems very prepared to collaborate in a matter so important for the good of humanity.



*Fr. Max Mizzi OFM Conv. ©*

*Symposium: "The Nuclear Peace and Development in the Poor Countries"  
at the Sacro Convento on April 13-14, 2007*

*Inter-religious Round Table with representative from Christianity, Tendai, Judaism and Islam*

Europe also disposes of the technology of conversion of military plutonium. This would reduce the risk of planetary destruction, it would create a new mentality as regards safety and defense of people, and at the same time it would liberate the mind of mankind from fear of war and from the psychosis of such danger.

To reach the various governments of the world we thought that the best method was to invite ambassadors to the recent symposium in Assisi. As a first step ten ambassadors participated in the meeting, and they all remained enthusiastic about the initiative.

Father Vincenzo Coli OFM Conv., Custos of the Sacro Convento, opened the symposium with a warm greeting to the participants particularly to the ambassadors expressing a sign of hope. *"This day gives rise to a great hope. The hope is about two billion Euro to further development all over the world"*, Father Coli said. After this opening Father Max Mizzi thanked Mr. Guiseppe Rotunno, engineer and animator of the initiative, for having asked for Franciscan collaboration in this project for life.

Considering that the initiative of inviting the ambassadors has been successful Father Mizzi made another opening proposal, i.e. to call on the religions of the world. *"Religion, politics and science can collaborate together very well for peace and for improving the conditions of humanity,"* Father Mizzi said. Since Pope John Paul II assembled the world religions in Assisi on October 27, 1986, the religions have assumed the role of contributing to create a better world based on social justice and on peace. The religions of the world cannot be passive when there is a serious danger threatening humanity.

The success of the symposium must be attributed to the precious contributions given by speakers as Mrs Maria Romana De Gasperi, Professor Francesco Bistoni, Rector of the University of Perugia, Dr. Franco Mangialardi, President of the Committee of Experts, H.E. Mons. Gianpaolo Crepaldi, General Secretary of the Pontifical Council for Justice and Peace, H. E. Giuseppe Balboni Acqua, Ambassador of Italy to the Holy See, Mr Angelo Papa, Engineer and Manager of Tecnologia e Ambiente SOGIN, Mr Roberto Adinolfi, Engineer and Director of the Nuclear Division ANSALDO ENERGIA, Prof. Stefano Neri, Attorney and President of T.E.R.N.I. Research, and Dr. Carlo De Masi, Secretary General of Flaei CISL. Mrs Augusta Lagostena Bassi, Attorney, presided over the symposium.

Before concluding the symposium H.E. Seong Youm, Ambassador of South Korea to the Holy See, took the word. *"We intend to bring this project to the attention of the participants at the meeting about disarmament scheduled for November this year in Peking. The meeting will take place with participants from USA, Russia, China, Japan and North and South Korea"*, the South Korean ambassador concluded.

The dialogue about conversion of nuclear weapons into projects of development for the poor countries does not end here. We have already made an appointment for next year. We expect to have the support of the world religions.



*Fr. Max Mizzi OFM Conv. ©*

*Final Message from Assisi at the Symposium on April 13-14, 2007 at the Sacro Convento*

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