



The Consequences of the Use of Nuclear Weapons



On October 7 and 8, 1981, under the presidency of Prof. Carlos Chagas, President of the Pontifical Academy of Sciences, a group of 14 specialist scientists met at the headquarters of the Academy (Casina Pio IV, Vatican City), from various parts of the world to examine the problem of the consequences of the use of nuclear weapons for the survival and health of humanity.

Although most of these consequences seem obvious, it seems that their severity is not sufficiently appreciated. The living conditions following a nuclear attack would be so difficult that the only hope for humanity lies in the prevention of any form of nuclear war. By disseminating and receiving such knowledge all over the world, it could be highlighted that nuclear weapons should never be used in case of war and that their number should be progressively reduced in a balanced way. The above-mentioned group discussed and unanimously approved a number of fundamental points that were subsequently developed in a declaration.

The Declaration on the consequences of a nuclear conflict was presented by Delegations from the Pontifical Academy of Sciences sent by the Holy Father to the Heads of State of the United States of America, the Soviet Union, France, Great Britain, as well as to the President and the Secretary General of the United Nations General Assembly.

The Delegations from Washington and Moscow had been announced to Presidents Reagan and Brezhnev by the personal Letters that the Holy Father had written to the two Heads of State on November 25, the eve of the Geneva talks on the reduction of nuclear weapons in Europe.

The Delegations from Paris, London and New York handed over to the Heads of State of France

and Great Britain and to the President of the UN General Assembly, personal Letters from the Holy Father.

Everywhere the Pope's messengers were received with deep respect, thanks to the consideration attributed, by the peoples and their rulers, to the high spiritual authority of the earth.

The Heads of State and Government as well as the President and the Secretary General of the United Nations General Assembly, agreed to recognize the need for action aimed at raising awareness of the problem of peace in the universal conscience of men and women.