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SOUTHERN CALIFORNIA

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CLERGY AND LAITY CONCERNED

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August 29, 1983

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President Ronald Reagan
The White House
Washington, D.C.. 20500

Dear President Reagan,

On August 6, 1983, the 38th anniversary of the dropping of the first atomic bomb on human beings, eleven persons began a fast. They are citizens of France, West Germany, England, Japan and the United States. Each in their own country is a leader in the search for peace.

This is no ordinary fast. These persons have determined, if necessary, to lay down their lives in order that the world may be led to draw back from the brink of nuclear catastrophe. Theirs is a Fast for Life. They have determined to continue without food until some significant step is taken toward ending the arms race.

For our part, we have determined to do all in our power to see that their lives are not lost, and to see that this opportunity to take a step for peace is not missed. This is why we write to you.

We believe that the most immediate danger of nuclear war arises from the European missile crisis. We also believe that the crisis offers what may be our last opportunity to avert catastrophe and move toward real disarmament. If even one nation scheduled to deploy Pershing II or Cruise missiles were to cancel or delay deployment, or if the USSR were to announce the dismantling of a significant number of SS-20's, the draft to destruction would be arrested, and the impetus to arms reduction would gain momentum. Such a step would also lead, in our judgement, to a decision to end the Fast for Life.

The power to save human lives, and yes, to perhaps save the world from disaster, lies in your hands. Your personal call for a delay in deployment/dismantling can tip the scales toward peace. We urge you to call for and support such a delay.

You may reply that eleven lives are not important enough to sway national security policy. We reply that the Fasters symbolize humanity. If we and you stand by while they die, it is a pale reflection of our abdication of responsibility as the world drifts toward the final disaster.

You may protest that you will not be pressured by emotional appeals. We can assure you that the Fast for Life is not such an appeal. The Fasters have prayed and considered this step for well over a year. Nor have they any desire for martyrdom. They are patriots in the highest sense of the word, inspired no less by love of their fellow inhabitants of the planet than such past patriots as Joan of Arc, Nathan Hale, Dietrich Bonhoeffer or the Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.

We urge you to take a step now such as we have suggested. We further urge you to write the Fasters directly, expressing your concern both for their welfare and for world peace. In a real sense, their lives are in your hands.

Sincerely,

The Reverend Frederick J. Beebe, D.D.
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The fasters may be reached at Fast for Life, 942 Market St #710, San Francisco, CA 94102