

**Message from Rev. Keishi Miyamoto**  
**Leader of Myochikai and President of Arigatou International**  
**Interfaith Prayer for a Peaceful World for Children**  
**December 19, 2023**

Distinguished leaders and participants,

First, I would like to express my heartfelt gratitude to all of you — including and especially the children participating today — for joining us from around the world for this interfaith prayer.

It is a heartbreaking reality that so many children in Israel and Palestine have lost their lives and so many continue to suffer due to the war between Israel and Hamas and the ensuing humanitarian crisis in Gaza.

Since this conflict erupted on October 7, Arigatou International has been standing in solidarity with GNRC members and our friends in Israel, Palestine and across the Middle East. Together, we have been making every effort to help children in the affected area. As an immediate action, on October 12<sup>th</sup>, in my capacity as Leader of Myochikai, I led a prayer for peace with members of Myochikai across Japan. Arigatou International issued an urgent call for prayer for peace, encouraging people around the world to offer prayers for peace, both individually and collectively. Today, I am very grateful that we can gather for this interfaith prayer, sharing our strong aspiration for a peaceful world for children, together with you, all the children in attendance today.

Looking around today's world, we see not only the war in Middle East, but also the prolonged war in Ukraine and many other armed conflicts which are depriving so many precious children of their lives and forcing so many others to live in calamitous conditions. Most grievous of all, in these conditions, children around the world are losing their hope for the future. We must not allow this to happen. It is the responsibility of religious leaders and their communities around the world to work together to change today's world of violence and war and help create a peaceful environment for children.

War is created by hatred and anger, which are conditions of the mind. And yet, peace also proceeds from the human mind. I strongly believe that more and more people joining together, overcoming all differences, to join in praying for peace is the beginning of the path to a peaceful world for children. I hope today's prayer, together with the voices of children, will be a small but significant step along this road.

Today and every day, I join you in prayer for peace and for all the children of the world.

Thank you for your attention.