Opinion
Guest Voices



Activist Frida Berrigan at a 2007 antiwar rally in Newark, New Jersey (Wikimedia Commons/Next Left Notes/Thomas Good)



by John Dear

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"Nuclear weapons are not on people's hearts," activist Frida Berrigan said on this week's episode of "The Nonviolent Jesus Podcast." "We are reminding people that nuclear weapons are still here and threatening the planet. They're not going to disarm themselves. We need to do that!"

Berrigan knows something about reminding people of the threat of nuclear war. She is the daughter of legendary activists Philip Berrigan and Elizabeth McAlister, and niece of the late Jesuit Fr. Daniel Berrigan. She grew up at Jonah House, a community in Baltimore of permanent nonviolent resistance to war and nuclear weapons. They protested full time for decades. Her housemates, including her parents, were regularly arrested and jailed.

In 2015, Berrigan published *It Runs in the Family: On Being Raised by Radicals and Growing into Rebellious Motherhood,* about growing up in the Berrigan family. She has worked for years at the World Policy Institute, studying U.S. military policy and nuclear weapons. She also co-founded Witness Against Torture, a campaign calling for the closure of Guantanamo Bay detention center and the end of U.S.-backed use of torture. She continues to write, organize and speak out for justice and disarmament.

On the podcast, John Dear asks Berrigan about the upcoming 80th anniversary of the U.S. atomic bombing of Hiroshima on Aug. 6.

"This anniversary is particularly important because we need to be speaking in the voice of the Hibakusha, the atomic bomb survivors, who are dying out. We need to say with them, 'Never again.' "

"My parents never sugar-coated anything for us," she said. "They let it be known to us that any change we wanted to see in the world, we had to make ourselves. And if we didn't see the change, it was still worth doing what we could. We always knew that it was our responsibility to bear witness and resist as much as possible."

Listen to the full episode here.

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