



Deep Faith. Courageous Spirit. Action for Justice.

## Remembering Hiroshima

*By Angela Hibbard, IHM*



Aug. 6, 2014, was the 69th anniversary of the bombing of Hiroshima. In 1984 I was there at 8:16 a.m., attending the annual commemoration of that horrible moment. I'll never forget the sounds, the solemnity, the feeling of walking among hundreds of people -- both Japanese and foreigners -- streaming across the Ōta River to the island which had been ground zero in 1945. Our folding chairs sat in the shadow of a domed building, now just bare girders, which had been directly under the bomb.

After dark I returned to the park to set a colored paper lantern into the river. Each one is lighted in memory of someone whose life was destroyed by the bomb. As the lanterns enter the river, a monk rings a prayer bell and chants the name of Amida, Buddha of Infinite Light. I can't begin to tell you how beautiful it is. As the bell rings, hundreds and hundreds of lanterns become a river of slowly moving many-colored light. It is both sad and hopeful.

I've always found it ironic that the first atomic bomb fell on the feast of the Transfiguration. Our world was surely "transfigured" that day. We humans demonstrated how dangerous we had become to one another and to our planet. As I remember the river carrying all those

beautiful lanterns, I hope that we can recognize sooner rather than later the limits to our power. May we lay down our arms. May we use creation wisely and share its bounty generously.