



During my short trip to Japan, Zach and I took the shinkansen down to Hiroshima for the weekend.

It has been 30 years since I first visited Hiroshima, when Aron and I were living in Japan, and Miriam and Grace have been there on school trips, so it was Zach's first time to visit the Hiroshima Peace Memorial Park and Museum and to be sobered by the Atomic Bomb Dome.

What I also found incredibly moving was seeing the southern blue gum (*Eucalyptus globulus* subsp. *Bicostata*) that is growing inside the walls of Hiroshima Castle. Although only 740 metres from the hypocentre of the bomb, the heat of which for the first three kilometres was 40 times hotter than the sun, this tree survived the blast.

And it is not alone. It is among a group of trees are known as *hibakujumoku*, stemming from the Japanese words *hibaku*, meaning "bombed, A-bombed, nuked," and *jumoku*, meaning "trees and shrubs."

Green Legacy Hiroshima, a group of citizens, scientists, and politicians, keeps a live list of 62 [hibakujumoku located in Hiroshima](#). Along with the eucalyptus, it includes several weeping willows, giant camphor trees, fruit-bearing persimmon trees, and a Yoshino Cherry. By documenting the presence of these trees, this group hope to make a statement against war and nuclear weapons, as well as the persisting beauty of nature.

It may have been disrespectful to a tree that has survived something so unimaginable, but I took one of the leaves – as we do in Australia – and crushed it to smell the familiar

smell – which to me seemed so unusual standing in a now thriving Japanese city. It was the smell of peace.

I have been thinking about that tree since and how we are in a situation globally where real peace, peace with justice, lasting peace is unimaginable, but as God says in our reading this Sunday, *“Is anything too wonderful for the Lord?”*

Let us faithfully keep praying for – and keep living in – the peace that Jesus has brought to us.

Belinda