



THE HOLY SEE

Buddhists and Christians: Together Fostering Fraternity

Vatican Message for Vesakh 2014

FEAST OF VESAKH, 2014

Buddhists and Christians: Together Fostering Fraternity

Dear Buddhist Friends,

1. In the name of the Pontifical Council for Interreligious Dialogue, we wish to once again extend to all of you, throughout the world, our heartfelt best wishes on the occasion of Vesakh.
2. Our cordial greetings this year are inspired by Pope Francis' Message for the World Day of Peace 2014, entitled *Fraternity, the Foundation and Pathway to Peace*. There, Pope Francis observes that "fraternity is an essential human quality, for we are relational beings. A lively awareness of our relatedness helps us to look upon and to treat each person as a true sister or brother; without fraternity it is impossible to build a just society and a solid and lasting peace..." (n. 1).
3. Dear friends, your religious tradition inspires the conviction that friendly relations, dialogue, the sharing of gifts, and the respectful and harmonious exchange of views lead to attitudes of kindness and love which in turn generate authentic and fraternal relationships. You are also convinced that the root of all evil is the ignorance and misunderstanding born of greed and hatred, which in turn destroy the bonds of fraternity. Unfortunately, "daily acts of selfishness, which are at the root of so many wars and so much injustice", prevent us from seeing others "as beings made for reciprocity, for communion and self-giving" (*Message for World Day of Peace 2014*, n. 2). Such selfishness inevitably leads to seeing others as a threat.
4. As Buddhists and Christians, we live in a world all too often torn apart by oppression, selfishness, tribalism, ethnic rivalry, violence and religious fundamentalism, a world where the "other" is treated as an inferior, a nonperson, or someone to be feared and eliminated if possible. Yet, we are called, in a spirit of cooperation with other pilgrims and with people of good will, to respect and to defend our shared humanity in a variety of socioeconomic, political and religious contexts. Drawing upon our different religious convictions, we are called especially to be *outspoken* in denouncing all those social ills which damage fraternity; to be *healers* who enable others to grow in selfless generosity, and to be *reconcilers* who break down the walls of division and foster genuine brotherhood between individuals and groups in society.
5. Our world today is witnessing a growing sense of our common humanity and a global quest for a more just, peaceful and fraternal world. But the fulfilment of these hopes depends on a recognition of universal values. We hope that interreligious dialogue will contribute, in the recognition of the fundamental principles of universal ethics, to fostering a renewed and deepened sense of unity and fraternity among all the members of the human family. Indeed, "each one of us is called to be an artisan of peace, by uniting and not dividing, by extinguishing hatred and not holding on to it, by opening paths to dialogue and not by constructing new walls! Let us dialogue and meet each other in order to establish a culture of dialogue in the world, a culture of encounter!" (Pope Francis, *To Participants in the International Meeting for Peace, Sponsored by the Community of "Sant' Egidio"*, 30 September 2013).
6. Dear friends, to build a world of fraternity, it is vitally important that we join forces to educate people, particularly the young, to seek fraternity, to live in fraternity and to dare to build fraternity. We pray that your celebration of Vesakh will be an occasion to rediscover and promote fraternity anew, especially in our divided societies. Once again allow us to express our heartfelt greetings and to wish all of you a Happy Feast of Vesakh.

Jean-Louis Cardinal Tauran
President

Rev. Miguel Ángel Ayuso Guixot, MCCJ
Secretary