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## Vatican Invites Buddhists to Educate in Peace

### Note Religious Plurality in Classrooms

VATICAN CITY, APRIL 3, 2012 ([Zenit.org](http://www.zenit.org)).- Christians and Buddhists must share responsibility in educating the young for justice and peace, the Vatican says.

This was affirmed in the annual Message to Buddhists for the Feast of Vesakh, issued today by the Pontifical Council for Interreligious Dialogue. The message is signed by Cardinal Jean-Louis Tauran and Archbishop Pier Luigi Celata, respectively president and secretary of the council.

Vesakh is the main Buddhist feast and commemorates the three fundamental moments in the life of Gautama Buddha. According to tradition, the historical Buddha was born, achieved enlightenment and passed away during the full moon of the month of May. Thus Vesakh is a mobile feast which this year falls on 5 and 6 May, while in China it is celebrated on the eighth day of the fourth month of the Chinese calendar, which this year corresponds to 28 April. On those days, Buddhists decorate their houses with flowers and perfume them with incense, visit local temples and listen to the teaching of the monks.

This year's message is entitled: "Christians and Buddhists: Sharing Responsibility for Educating the Young Generation on Justice and Peace through Inter-religious Dialogue".

"Today, more and more in classrooms all over the world, students belonging to various religions and beliefs sit side-by-side, learning with one another and from one another. This diversity gives rise to challenges and sparks deeper reflection on the need to educate young people to respect and understand the religious beliefs and practices of others, to grow in knowledge of their own, to advance together as responsible human beings and to be ready to join hands with those of other religions to resolve conflicts and to promote friendship, justice, peace and authentic human development," the message noted.

The statement says "true education can support an openness to the transcendent as well as to those around us."

"Where education is a reality there is an opportunity for dialogue, for inter-relatedness and for receptive listening to the other. In such an atmosphere, young people sense that they are appreciated for who they are and for what they are able to contribute; they learn how to grow in appreciation of their brothers and sisters whose beliefs and practices are different from their own. When that

happens there will be joy in being persons of solidarity and compassion called to build a just and fraternal society giving thus hope for the future."

On ZENIT's Web page:

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