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## VATICAN STRESSES COMMON VALUES WITH BUDDHISTS

### Sends Message for Feast of Vesakh

VATICAN CITY, MAY 17, 2010 ([Zenit.org](http://www.zenit.org)).- The Pontifical Council for Interreligious Dialogue is underlining the common values of Catholics and Buddhists, such as respect for the nature of all things, contemplation, humility, simplicity, compassion, and generosity.

"We recognize that we hold in common a regard" for these values, stated a message sent by the council to all Buddhists on the occasion of the feast of Vesakh.

Vesakh is celebrated on different days depending on the calendars used by various Buddhist groups. It marks the birth, enlightenment and passing away of Buddha.

The message, signed by the council's president, Cardinal Jean-Louis Tauran, and secretary, Archbishop Pier Luigi Celata, expressed the desire of strengthening "our existing bonds of friendship and collaboration in service to humanity."

"Let us take this opportunity to reflect together on a theme of particular relevance today, namely, the environmental crisis that has already caused notable hardship and suffering throughout the world," the prelates stated.

They affirmed that "the efforts of both of our communities to engage in interreligious dialogue have brought about a new awareness of the social and spiritual importance of our respective religious traditions in this area."

The values held in common by both religions "contribute to a life of nonviolence, equilibrium, and contentment with sufficiency," the council noted.

Natural law

It added that "the Catholic Church considers the protection of the environment as intimately linked to the theme of integral human development."

"Our responsibility to protect nature springs, in fact, from our respect for one another," the message affirmed. "It comes from the law inscribed in the hearts of all men and women."

"Consequently," it added, "when human ecology is respected within society, environmental ecology also benefits."

The council leaders acknowledged that "both Christians and Buddhists have a profound respect for human life."

"It is crucial therefore that we encourage efforts to create a sense of ecological responsibility," they added, "while at the same time reaffirming our shared convictions about the inviolability of human life at every stage and in every condition, the dignity of the person and the unique mission of the family, where one learns to love one's neighbor and to respect nature."

"By enhancing our efforts to promote ecological consciousness for serenity and peaceful coexistence, we can give witness to a respectful way of life that finds meaning not in having more, but in being more," the message affirmed.

It concluded, "By sharing the insights and commitments of our respective religious traditions, we can contribute to the well-being of our world."