

Vatican Notes Common Quest for Truth With Buddhism

Sends Message for Feast of Vesakh

VATICAN CITY, MARCH 31, 2011 ([Zenit.org](http://www.zenit.org)).- The Pontifical Council for Interreligious Dialogue is underlining the quest for truth shared by Christians and Buddhists and strengthened by religious liberty.

The council sent a message to all Buddhists on the occasion of the feast of Vesakh, which is celebrated on different days depending on the calendars used by various Buddhist groups.

This year it will be celebrated April 8 in Japan, May 10 in Korea, China, Taiwan and Vietnam, and May 17 in Thailand, Sri Lanka, Cambodia, Burma and Laos. The feast marks the birth, enlightenment and passing away of Buddha.

The message, titled "Seeking Truth in Freedom: Christians and Buddhists Live in Peace," was publicized today by the Vatican.

In it, the council's president, Cardinal Jean-Louis Tauran, and secretary, Archbishop Pier Luigi Celata, offered prayers that this feast "may bring serenity and joy to Buddhists throughout the world."

They spoke about "the relationship between peace, truth and freedom," noting that "in the pursuit of authentic peace, a commitment to seek truth is a necessary condition."

"All persons have a natural duty to seek truth, to follow it and freely to live their lives in accordance with it," the prelates affirmed.

The added that "this human striving for truth offers a fruitful opportunity for the followers of the different religions to encounter one another in depth and to grow in appreciation of the gifts of each."

Golden way to peace

"In today's world," the statement noted, "marked by forms of secularism and fundamentalism that are often inimical to true freedom and spiritual values, interreligious dialogue can be the alternative choice by which we find the 'golden way' to live in peace and work together for the good of all."

It affirmed that this dialogue "is also a powerful stimulus to respect for the fundamental human rights of freedom of conscience and freedom of worship."

"Wherever religious freedom is effectively acknowledged, the dignity of the human person is respected at its root," the prelates affirmed. "By the sincere search for what is true and good, moral conscience and civil institutions are strengthened, and justice and peace are firmly established."

They concluded, "Dear Buddhist Friends, we pray that your celebration of Vesakh will be a source of spiritual enrichment and an occasion to take up anew the quest of truth and goodness, to show compassion to all who suffer, and to strive to live together in harmony."

On ZENIT's Web page:

Full text: www.zenit.org/article-32181?l=english