



CATHOLIC BISHOPS' CONFERENCE OF ENGLAND AND WALES  
39 Eccleston Square, London SW1V 1BX

The Buddhist Community in England and Wales

Dear Friends,

It is my pleasure to forward to you the message for the Feast of Vesakh/Hanamatsuri 2010 that has been sent by Cardinal Jean-Louis Tauran, President of the Pontifical Council for Interreligious Dialogue.

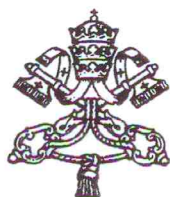
As you will see it deals with the vital themes of respect for all life and for the whole of the environment of which we are part. I am sure that this is a concern around which Christians and Buddhists can support and collaborate with one another.

I commend these reflections to you and am happy to add my own good wishes and those of the Catholic Church in England and Wales,

With sincere greetings,

Yours sincerely,

Archbishop Kevin McDonald  
Department for Dialogue and Unity



**PONTIFICAL COUNCIL  
FOR INTERRELIGIOUS DIALOGUE**

CHRISTIANS AND BUDDHISTS RESPECT HUMAN LIFE  
AS THE BASIS OF RESPECT FOR ALL BEINGS

MESSAGE FOR THE FEAST OF VESAKH/HANAMATSURI  
2010

**Vatican City**

CHRISTIANS AND BUDDHISTS RESPECT HUMAN LIFE  
AS THE BASIS OF RESPECT FOR ALL BEINGS

Dear Buddhist friends,

1. On the occasion of your feast of Vesakh, the Pontifical Council for Interreligious Dialogue extends congratulations and heartfelt best wishes for peace and joy to all of you around the world. May this message help strengthen our existing bonds of friendship and collaboration in service to humanity.
  
2. 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 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. We recognize that we hold in common a regard for values like respect for the nature of all things, contemplation, humility, simplicity, compassion, and generosity. These values contribute to a life of nonviolence, equilibrium, and contentment with sufficiency.
  
3. Pope Benedict XVI, has noted that “the various phenomena of environmental degradation and natural disasters... remind us of the urgent need to respect nature as we should, and to recover and value a correct relationship with the environment in everyday life” (*General Audience, 26 August 2009*). The Catholic Church considers the protection of the environment as intimately linked to the theme of integral human development; and for her part, she is committed not only to promoting the protection of land, water and air as gifts destined for everyone, but also to encouraging others to join the efforts to protect mankind from self-destruction. Our responsibility to protect nature springs, in fact, from our respect for one another; it comes from the law inscribed in the hearts of all men and women. Consequently, when *human ecology* is respected within society, environmental ecology also benefits (*cf. Encyclical, Caritas in Veritate, n. 51*).
  
4. 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, 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 neighbour and to respect nature.

5. May we together promote a healthy relationship between human beings and the environment. 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. By sharing the insights and commitments of our respective religious traditions, we can contribute to the well-being of our world.

Dear Buddhist friends, once again allow us to express our sincere greetings and to wish all of you a Happy Feast of Vesakh.

*Jean Louis Card. Tauran*

*Jean-Louis Cardinal Tauran*

President

*Pier Luigi Celata*

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Secretary

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