



**DICASTERY FOR
INTERRELIGIOUS DIALOGUE**

*Buddhists and Christians
for an “Unarmed and Disarming” Peace*

**MESSAGE FOR THE FEAST OF VESAK
2026**

Vatican City

Dear Buddhist Friends,

As in years past, we are pleased to extend our heartfelt greetings and good wishes on the joyful celebration of Vesak. This momentous festival—commemorating the birth, enlightenment, and passing of the Buddha—serves as an invitation to renew the path of wisdom, compassion, and peace.

Peace is not merely the absence of war, but a gift that seeks to dwell within the human heart: a quiet yet powerful presence that enlightens and transforms. Indeed, as Pope Leo XIV noted, “Peace exists; it wants to dwell within us. It has the gentle power to enlighten and expand our understanding; it resists and overcomes violence. Peace is a breath of the eternal: while to evil we cry out ‘Enough,’ to peace we whisper ‘Forever’” (*Message for the LIX World Day of Peace*, 1 January 2026). Even when it appears fragile—like a small flame threatened by the storms of hatred and fear—peace must be protected and nurtured. This is the peace to which we are called: an unarmed and disarming peace that does not rely on force, but flows from truth, compassion, and mutual trust.

In our time, however, we cannot ignore the shadows weighing upon the world. Wars, violence, rising ethno-religious nationalism, and the manipulation of religion continue to wound our common humanity. In a world that appears increasingly fragile and at times marked by a troubling sense of regression, the call to peace becomes ever more urgent. It is here that our spiritual traditions can offer a vital contribution. Goodness is truly disarming; it breaks the cycle of suspicion and opens paths where none seemed possible. At their best, our traditions invite us to purify our hearts of hostility, to transcend boundaries, and to recognize one another as members of a single human family.

In this light, the sayings of the Buddha offer an insightful path. The Buddha teaches: “Hatred is never appeased by hatred; by non-hatred alone is hatred appeased. This is an eternal law” (*Dhammapada* 5). And again: “Let none deceive another or despise any being... Let none through anger or ill will wish harm upon another” (*Sutta Nipata* 1.8 - *Metta Sutta*). For Christians, Jesus calls his disciples to “love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you,” (*Matthew* 5:44) and proclaims, “Blessed are the peacemakers” (*Matthew* 5:9). Both traditions converge in pointing toward a peace that is lived—one that disarms hearts before it disarms hands.

Such a path calls for more than words; it requires a conversion of attitudes and a commitment to concrete action. Religious leaders are called to be authentic partners in dialogue and true agents of reconciliation. Together with all believers, we are invited to become artisans of peace—not passive observers, but courageous witnesses capable of fostering encounter, healing wounds, and rebuilding trust.

As citizens and believers, we share a responsibility to promote peace, challenge injustice, and urge those in positions of authority not to inflame division but to pursue dialogue over confrontation. We must also guard against becoming complicit through silence or fear. Each community is thus called to grow as a place where hostility is overcome through encounter, where justice is practiced, and where forgiveness is cherished.

To foster an unarmed and disarming peace also means nurturing its deepest sources: prayer, contemplation, and inner transformation. It is a peace lived daily—in gestures of kindness, in patience, in the refusal of hatred and vengeance, and in the courage to hope. For peace is not an illusion or a distant ideal; it is a real possibility already placed within our reach, waiting to be welcomed and shared.

In this spirit, we renew our hope that, through our common commitment, Buddhists and Christians may increasingly become witnesses of this disarming peace—one that heals wounds, restores relationships, and opens new horizons for humanity.

May your celebration of Vesak be filled with serenity and joy, and may it inspire all of us to walk together on this path. We wish you a blessed and fruitful celebration of Vesak!

From the Vatican, 1 May 2026



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