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VESAK DAY 2017 MESSAGE

10 May 2017

Dear Buddhist Friends,

The sacred observance of Vesak Day is a great occasion for us to renew the warm relations we share between our faiths. On behalf of the Catholic community here in Singapore, we wish you and your families, peace, unity and joy on your holy day.


As you share the teachings of Buddha at your temples with devotees the nation over, let us unite in our efforts to further promote peace and harmony among people of all religions and faith traditions.


Indeed, in these precarious times, understanding, respect, tolerance, accommodation of differences and appreciation of our unique faith traditions are all the more important as we work to protect our peaceful co-existence on which our livelihood depends.

Whereas the world seeks peace by overcoming opposition, oftentimes by forceful means, both Buddhism and Christianity share a common preference for the way of compassion for all, including our enemies, nonviolence to peace, beginning with the conquest of evil desires in our hearts. Buddha taught that "Though one may conquer a thousand times a thousand men in battle, yet he indeed is the noblest victor who conquers himself" (*Dhammapada*, no. VIII, 4). In the same vein, Pope Francis also noted in his 2017 Message for the World Day of Peace, *Non-Violence: A Style of Politics for Peace*, no.3 that "Jesus himself lived in violent times. Yet, he taught that the true battlefield, where violence and peace meet, is the human heart: for 'it is from within, from the human heart, that evil intentions come' (Mk 7:21)"

As leaders of our faiths, it is incumbent on us to form our people in conscience to adopt a way of life that seeks justice and truth over lawlessness and falsehood, compassion and forgiveness over hatred and revenge, respect over intolerance and division. Following the footsteps of our forefathers who made it their life-long commitment to build a harmonious multi-racial, multi-religious Singapore, let us join hands to continue the work that they have begun, and through the teachings of our faiths, conquer the evils in our hearts and in our society for a peaceful Singapore.

On behalf of the Catholic community in Singapore, I sincerely wish you a fruitful and spiritually refreshing Vesak Day.


Most Rev. William Goh
Archbishop of Singapore


Msgr. Philip Heng, S.J.
Vicar General (Interreligious Relations)