



PONTIFICAL COUNCIL FOR
INTERRELIGIOUS DIALOGUE

*Buddhists and Christians:
Working Together for a World Without Nuclear Weapons*

MESSAGE FOR THE FEAST OF HANA MATSURI IN JAPAN
8 APRIL 2015

Vatican City

Dear Buddhist Friends in Japan,

1. The Pontifical Council for Interreligious Dialogue joyfully greets all of you as you commemorate the Buddha's Birthday, *Hana Matsuri*, on the 8th of April. We wish you peace, tranquillity and joy in your hearts, your families and your country.

2. Since Japan prepares to commemorate the 70th anniversary of the atomic bombing of Hiroshima and Nagasaki, we wish to reflect with you this year on the theme *Buddhists and Christians: Together Working for a World Without Nuclear Weapons*. Your country is especially aware how important and urgent peace is and has offered so much to the world for the cause of peace, especially through the struggle of nuclear disarmament. The words of Sachiko Masaki, a Hibakusha, survivor of the brutal and horrible day of the atomic bombing of Nagasaki remind us of our common mission to work together for a more secure world. "I feel an urgent need to pass on to others what happened. I want to stand before each and every person on the face of the earth and tell the madness and horror of war" (*Hibakusha Survivors of Hiroshima and Nagasaki*, p. 147). This testimony and that of all *Hibakusha* survivors, whether spoken or unspoken, sends a message to the whole world: "No one else should ever suffer as we did." To all of them, we also wish to extend our warmest greetings and gratitude.

3. Pope Francis notes that "Nuclear weapons are a global problem, affecting all nations, and impacting future generations and the planet that is our home. A global ethic is needed if we are to reduce the nuclear threat and work towards nuclear disarmament" (Message of His Holiness Pope Francis, *On the Occasion of the Vienna Conference on the Humanitarian Impact of Nuclear Weapons*, 7 December, 2014). He further emphasizes that "A world without nuclear weapons' is a goal shared by all nations and echoed by world leaders, as well as the aspiration of millions of men and women. The future and the survival of the human family hinges on moving beyond this ideal and ensuring that it becomes a reality" (*ibid.*).

4. The cornerstone of Buddhist ethics is "loving kindness to all beings". The Buddha taught: "Never by hatred is hatred appeased, but it is appeased by kindness. This is an eternal truth" (*Dhammapada* I, 5). Jesus' teachings can be summed up by the precept commonly called the Great Commandment: "Love God with all your heart, soul, mind, and strength, and your neighbour as yourself"(Cfr. Matthew 22:35–40, Mark 12:28–34).

5. Sadly, new hotbeds of tension, the arms race, terrorism and various forms of fundamentalism and fanaticism all threaten the integrity of the human family

and the peaceful coexistence of individuals and nations. Yet, peace remains the yearning of every human heart. Therefore, in the spirit of the Assisi and Mount Hiei meetings, let us continue to collaborate tirelessly to foster a climate of trust and fraternal dialogue and look for ways that we might work together toward the formulation of a global ethic that, in the words of Pope Francis, “is needed if we are to reduce the nuclear threat and work towards nuclear disarmament “

6. Dear Buddhist friends, it is in this spirit once again allow us to express our cordial greetings and to wish Happy *Hana Matsuri* to you all!

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