



World Council of Churches

General Secretariat

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World Council of Churches (WCC) General Secretary's Vesak Message

Dear Buddhist friends,

On behalf of the World Council Churches (WCC) I send cordial greetings to you as you, the Buddhist community around the world, celebrates the Vesak festival. This is an important festival to remember Buddha's life, his practices and teachings. You commemorate on this day three auspicious moments of Buddha's life: birth, enlightenment and death. May the inner movement that the Buddha shared with his disciples flow and nurture relationships among humans and all beings: compassion, loving kindness, empathy and equanimity.

From within our faith tradition we can see resonance with such spiritual disposition, as we Christians enter into such movement through Christ's love for the world. Both, Christians and Buddhists are called to more deeply understand and live out what it means to be human in light of our faith and spiritual traditions. In a world marked by stark injustice, by de-humanising suffering and exploitation, by bloody conflict and war, by violence in homes and in streets, against children, women and men, people of faith are called to work for justice and peace, to care for the afflicted and downtrodden and to dismantle the structures, mindsets and systems that have nurtured these appalling realities.

Last year, in September 2022, the Eleventh Assembly of the WCC at Karlsruhe (Germany) has underlined the importance of interreligious dialogue and cooperation. We affirmed that we want to join hands to respond together to the serious challenges which humanity and indeed the whole earth faces: «We also invite all people of faith and goodwill to trust, with us, that a different world, a world respectful of the living earth, a world in which everyone has daily bread and life in abundance, a decolonized world, a more loving, harmonious, just, and peaceful world, is possible.»

I especially want to highlight our efforts in responding to the climate emergency which we describe in the statement "The Living Planet: Seeking a Just and Sustainable Global Community" which urges us to change our mindset, our lifestyle and our practices: "A narrow anthropocentric understanding of our relationship with Creation must be revised to a whole of life understanding, to achieve a sustainable global ecosystem."

As we pursue a “pilgrimage of justice, reconciliation and unity” we invite Buddhist friends and partners to journey with us, to build interreligious solidarity together, and to work for peace and wellbeing of all.

In the spirit of loving kindness and peace, I wish you a blessed feast of Vesak.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Jerry Pillay". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name "Jerry" being more prominent than the last name "Pillay".

Rev. Prof. Dr Jerry Pillay
General Secretary
World Council of Churches