



SALA STAMPA DELLA SANTA SEDE **BOLLETTINO**

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BIURO PRASOWE STOLICY APOSTOLSKIEJ دار الصحافة التابعة للكرسي الرسولي

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Audience with a delegation of Buddhist Monks from Thailand

This morning, in the Vatican Apostolic Palace, the Holy Father Francis received in audience a delegation of Buddhist monks from Thailand, to whom he delivered the following address:

Address of the Holy Father

Your Eminence,

Your Excellency,

Venerable Monks,

Dear brothers and sisters,

It is a great pleasure to welcome your delegation on this occasion that strengthens our enduring friendship.

I recall with gratitude my trip to your country from 20 to 23 November 2019, and the extraordinary welcome and hospitality you extended to me. I warmly remember the Supreme Patriarch of Thailand and kindly ask you to convey my affectionate greetings to him.

Speaking of recent events that have invigorated our established friendship, I was delighted to hear about the Seventh Buddhist-Christian Colloquium held in Thailand last November, which brought together more than 150 participants from various parts of Asia to reflect on the theme “Karuna and Agape in Dialogue for the Healing of a Wounded Humanity and the Earth”. Today humanity and the Earth, our common home, are indeed wounded! So many wars, so many people who have lost everything and have been forced to flee. So many children affected by violence. Yet, as you pointed out during the gathering, “we strongly believe that in the midst of dark clouds, those who are deeply rooted in their respective religious traditions and willing to work together with

everyone can bring a ray of hope to a desperate humanity” (*Final Statement of the Dicastery for Interreligious Dialogue, Seventh Buddhist-Christian Colloquium*, 16 November 2023).

During the Colloquium, you emphasized three key points that I would like to reiterate: first, you stated that “no one is saved alone; we can only be saved together, since we are interconnected and interdependent”. In light of this truth, I urge you to work together with everyone: civil society, members of other religions, governments, international organizations, academic and scientific communities and all other interested parties to promote a friendship that sustains peace and fraternity and builds a more inclusive world. Second, you stressed the importance of educating everyone, especially young people and children, “in caring and sharing relationships with one another and the environment”. Finally, you stated, “we believe that prayer and meditation can turn things upside down by purifying our hearts and minds; generating loving-kindness, mercy and forgiveness where there is hatred and vengeance creating a spirit of respect and care for the other and the earth”. I am very pleased that you will pray for peace tomorrow in the Basilica of Santa Maria in Trastevere.

I sincerely thank you for the kind gesture of coming to the Vatican and encourage you to continue fostering dialogue and cooperation, especially with the Catholic Church in Thailand, in a spirit of lasting friendship. Upon you and upon all the people of your noble country I invoke abundant divine blessings. Thank you very much!
