

REPLY TO POPE'S MESSAGE TO BUDDHISTS

By L. Jayasooriya

On the occasion of Vesak, Cardinal Poupard in a letter addressed to Buddhists in all Asian countries mentioned below tells them that

“We, Catholics and Buddhists, enjoy a good relationship and our contacts, collaboration and implementation of diverse programmes have helped to deepen our understanding of each other. Dialogue is the sure path to fruitful inter religious relations. It deepens respect and nurtures the desire to live in harmony with others. The Second Vatican Council teaches that the entire human race shares a common origin and a common destiny: God, our Creator and the goal of our earthly pilgrimage”.

There is no harm in any organization sending greetings to anybody or to any other organization, no matter with what motive, provided the text in the greetings is restricted to greetings only but if any other material that is offensive to the recipient is sandwiched in the message it no longer is a message of greetings but becomes a provocation. Also your relentless well organized, well funded programs of proselytizing poor Buddhists to **Christianity through unethical conversions using money and other financial inducements can never lead to “fruitful inter religious relations” that you mention in your letter.**

In the name of Buddhism not a drop of blood, animal or human has been shed throughout the long period of our civilization extending over a period of $2551 + 45 = 2596$ years. We lived in self sustaining ecological systems which included massive feats of irrigation engineering as are found in Sri Lanka today. We developed our own art and architecture and lived peacefully without harming anybody.

We Buddhists never told anybody what to believe in and what not to believe in (Described in Kalama Sutta) . We minded our own business and we still mind our own business in the full knowledge that we know where exactly we stand in relation to the Catholic Church.

On the basis of what I have just said we Buddhists want to ask you what relevance the teachings of the Second Vatican Council has to Buddhism because you know very well that the teachings of the Buddha are the very absolute and total antithesis of all religions. **The Buddha has explained to us the complete phenomenon of human existence without bringing in a God and a soul. Your letter takes it for granted that we Buddhists have accepted the concept of God which to us is highly offensive. To us God is a superstition.**

It does not require much intelligence for any ordinary person to realize that there is no such being called a God. Just consider this.

Everything we see with our eyes is a part of ourselves because without that our vision does not exist. Everything we hear with our ears is a part of ourselves because without our faculty of hearing does not exist. The same reasoning applies to what we smell, taste and feel on the body due to external impact or touch. A person without these faculties is not a normal human being that interacts with others in society.

Since others see what we see, hear what we hear etc. they are a part of what we are a part of. Hence a soul that is unique to a person with nothing in common with any other soul does not exist. They are all interconnected. **Since the soul by definition is unique to every individual with no connection to other souls such a soul does not exist. If the soul does not exist then its creator the God also does not exist.**

If the Catholic Church admits that all the souls are linked together and that is the way how God made them then it follows that God has given souls to animals as well and their souls are linked to human souls because animals too can see what we see, hear what we hear etc.