

Religious Leaders Pray for the World in the Vatican

Taiwan's United Association of Humanistic Buddhism Meets Pope Francis

VATICAN, CA, VATICAN, March 20, 2023 /EINPresswire.com/ -- In recent years, the world has been marked by rapid changes, including, climate change, the Covid pandemic, and the Ukraine-Russia war, all of which have greatly affected humanity and the planet. This intensified reality has also affected religious life, culture and more.

On March 16, an interreligious meeting was held at the Vatican, where Pope Francis met representatives of the United Association of Humanistic Buddhism of Taiwan to promote cultural exchange and world peace. This delegation, led by the Most Venerable Hsin Bau, abbot of [Fo Guang Shan](#), visited Rome for an "educational pilgrimage."



Most Venerable Hsin Bau, abbot of Fo Guang Shan, meets Pope Francis in Vatican

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Religious exchanges helps promote tolerance and harmony between Eastern and Western religions.”

Head Abbot of Fo Guang Shan, Venerable Hsin Bao

The Buddhist delegation and the Vatican both agreed that interreligious educational pilgrimages are a source of great enrichment, since they offer opportunities for people to meet, learn from one another, and appreciate various experiences. In addition, these cultural encounters can build bridges and open windows to the sacred values and convictions that inspire others, and at the same time can tear down the walls that divide people and keep them

prisoners of preconceptions, prejudices, or indifference.

During the meeting, Pope Francis highlighted the crucial role of religions in fostering fraternity by promoting cultural encounters. “Reality affects religious life and culture, and calls for a fitting formation and education of the young in timeless truths and in tested methods of prayer and peacebuilding,” stated the Pope.

The Pope also took the opportunity to express his condolences on the recent passing of Venerable Master Hsing Yun, the founder of Fo Guang Shan, who had not only met St. John Paul II in 1997 and Pope Benedict XVI in 2006, but also spearheaded friendly religious exchanges between Taiwan and the Vatican. Speaking of Venerable Master Hsing Yun, the Pope remarked, "World-renowned for his contribution to Humanistic Buddhism, he was also a master of interreligious hospitality."

The head of the Taiwan delegation, Most Venerable Hsin Bau, presented the Pope with two presents. One was a scrabble mosaic painting of the Pope made by a disabled Taiwanese young girl, and the other was a portrait of the Pope created by the children of the Fo Guang Shan Daci Children's Home. Most Venerable Hsin Bau said that the two portraits symbolize the Pope's great love for the world and blessings from Taiwan. He also expressed his hope that religious exchanges between Taiwan and the Vatican, like this one, will help to promote tolerance and harmony between Eastern and Western religions.

The Pope gladly accepted the gifts and invited the delegation to join in a three-minute silence prayer for world peace and for the perseverance to resolve international conflicts and illuminate the darkness in the world.

After meeting with the Pope, the Taiwanese delegation further discussed climate related topics including Fo Guang Shan's reforestation initiative "T-Earth", which aims at restoring healthy and bio diversified eco-systems, and "Vege Plan A", another global initiative dedicated to promoting a vegetarian diet. Both initiatives were highly welcomed and recognized by the Vatican.



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The Taiwanese delegation were later invited to attend a Pontifical Council for Interreligious Exchange seminar hosted by the Holy See. The delegation also joined an exhibition celebrating the tenth anniversary of the Pope's inauguration and visited the Pontifical University of Saint Thomas Aquinas.

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