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ASIA/SRI LANKA - The Bishop of Galle: "Dialogue with Buddhists, no to all forms of violence. The Pope encourages us "

Galle (Agenzia Fides) - Heartfelt concern for the violence that occurs in Sri Lanka; renewed appeal of dialogue and willingness to "build social and religious harmony in the country"; "thanks for the Pope's words to the Buddhists on the occasion of the feast of Vesakh": this is the attitude of the Catholic Church in Sri Lanka, in a delicate phase of history, in which there are episodes of violence, carried out by some Buddhist radicals, such as the" Bodu Bala Sana" (BBS, "Force of Buddhist power "). This was explained to Fides Agency by the Bishop of Galle, Mgr. Raymond Wickramasinghe: "We are concerned and we are carefully observing what is happening: As religious leaders we cherish peace and harmony." The Bishop - stating that he had never used the term "Buddhist Taliban" used by some newspapers - confirms to Fides "that he appreciates Buddhism, and all those who follow that philosophy, living in peace." "We are ready to build harmony in our country – he insists - working together with the Buddhists and with all men of good will. At the moment we reiterate the urgency of peace among religious communities in Sri Lanka."
Bishop Wickramasinghe takes the opportunity to comment on the Message sent by the Holy See to the Buddhist world for the feast of Vesakh ("the feast of awakening"): "We are delighted that the Church and the Holy Father, show affection and benevolence towards the Buddhists. It is an encouraging step for us, we are with him and we continue our mission in this direction. The Buddhists are our brothers. We have always had a fruitful dialogue and a deep alliance with them. In my diocese we have also built some small monasteries in Buddhist temples and built very deep spiritual relationships. The Holy Father's words encourage us and comfort us."
The Bishop reiterates condemnation of "all forms of violence, in Sri Lnaka and other parts of the world, and towards any act against man, including the one against the unborn child. The Church teaches us to respect the dignity of every human being. We want to live in peace and harmony in Sri Lanka and defend the dignity of every human being, without any distinction of religion or ethnicity. Religions, have the vocation to be an instrument of peace among the nations: violence is a betrayal of the true religion." (PA) (Agenzia Fides 03/05/2013)

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