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Press Release of the Pontifical Council for Interreligious Dialogue

The First International Buddhist-Christian Dialogue for Nuns
Fo Guang Shan, Kaohsiung, Taiwan
14-18 October 2018

Final Statement

1. The Pontifical Council for Interreligious Dialogue (PCID), in collaboration with Fo Guang Shan Buddhist Monastery, the Association of the Major Superiors of Religious Women in Taiwan and *Dialogue Interreligieux Monastique*/Monastic Interreligious Dialogue (DIM·MID), organized the First International Buddhist-Christian Dialogue for Nuns at Fo Guang Shan, Kaohsiung, Taiwan, from 14-18 October 2018. The theme of the conference was “***Contemplative Action and Active Contemplation: Buddhist and Christian Nuns in Dialogue.***”

Seventy nuns from Taiwan, Korea, Japan, India, Sri Lanka, Myanmar, Thailand, Singapore, Hong Kong, Cambodia, the Philippines, Brazil, Italy, Germany, Norway, and the United States participated in the conference. There was also a representative from the World Council of Churches.

2. The Most Venerable Hsin Bao, Head Abbot of Fo Guang Shan monastery, gave the welcome address. Several other representatives also offered their greetings, and then H. Ex. Msgr. Miguel Ángel Ayuso Guixot, Secretary of the PCID, delivered the keynote address.

3. The agenda of the conference focused on various items related to the main theme of the dialogue, such as: the origin, evolution and present-day situation of monastic religious life for women in Buddhism and Christianity; Buddhist meditation and Christian contemplation; the service to humanity; religious women promoting the ‘Feminine Genius’.

Ample time was devoted to plenary and small group discussions, one-on-one interaction, as well as attendance at Buddhist chanting and Catholic liturgy. The programme also included visits to the Fo Guang Shan Tsung Lin College, the Buddha Museum, and the Wanchin Basilica of the Immaculate Conception.

4. Encouraged by the fruitful outcome of the conference, the participants agreed on the following:

- we acknowledge that the First International Buddhist-Christian Dialogue for Nuns was a landmark to foster mutual understanding and friendship among us as religious women so that we may be able to build bridges connecting our different spiritual paths.
- we recognise that while remaining steadfast in our respective deepest convictions, we can learn from one another how to enrich ourselves spiritually, culturally and socially, and thereby become humble and credible witnesses for our brothers and sisters.
- we believe that our witness to a way of life that can be meaningful and joyful through detachment from consumerism, materialism, and individualism may encourage others to walk on the path of goodness.
- we stress the importance of being contemplatives in the midst of action who work together to show tenderness to those who are in need and bring hope and healing to their lives.
- we believe that interreligious dialogue is a journey that men and women must undertake together. Therefore, we encourage more and more religious women to contribute their “feminine genius” to the realization of new and creative ways of interreligious dialogue and for openness in our communities for this contribution to be received.
- we see the need of supporting students, teachers and parents and other walks of life to be ambassadors of peace and harmony and of empowering them to be a voice in the world inviting humanity to walk on the path of ecological healing and nonviolence.
- we acknowledge that “love is our common language” and that it invites us to go beyond ourselves and embrace the “other” in spite of the differences between us.
- we feel closer to one another when we join hearts and minds as we walk along our respective spiritual paths, and therefore we see the need of continuing this common journey for mutual enrichment and for the betterment of the world.

The participants express their gratitude to the organisers for creating a pleasant atmosphere and for the warm hospitality and friendship that marked this dialogue. They also thank the Civil Authorities, Fo Guang Shan Buddhist monastery, the local Catholic Church and Wenzao Ursuline University of Languages for their generous support in making the First International Buddhist-Christian Dialogue for Nuns a success.
