

Friday, 16 June 2023

To: U.B.I. (Italian Buddhist Union)
Vicolo dei Serpenti 4/A - 00184 Roma

I first met Mario in 1977 when I came with Luang Por Chah to London. He was very helpful as a layman while we lived in London. He later ordained as a samanera and then as a bhikkhu with Venerable Dr Saddhatissa, who was then the chief incumbent of the London Buddhist Vihara.

In 1979 we left London to go live in West Sussex and established a forest monastery near the village of Chithurst. He lived and practiced there and later in New Zealand with Ajahn Viradhammo until 1990, when we were invited to Italy by the Sri Lankan Ambassador, who was interested in establishing a branch monastery in Italy. There we met Vincenzo Piga who was very eager to support our efforts. We first established the monastery in Sezze Romano. I asked Ajahn Thanavaro to be the resident bhikkhu. He was important in helping to found the Vihara in Sezze.

Later he left the Sangha to become a lay meditation teacher in Italy. He has shown tremendous insight and loyalty to the Theravada tradition. He has been a faithful follower of the Sangha.

Mario Thanavaro has my trust in his capacity of teaching Buddha Dhamma. He had been the president of the Italian Buddhist Union for three years. He later also supported Vincenzo Piga for several years as vice president of the Maitreya Foundation.

He founded the Maha Bodhi association in September 2021 to present the teaching of the Buddha to those interested. Mario Thanavaro has my full trust and my blessings as a teacher. I recommend him in his application to be part of the Italian Buddhist Union — the U.B.I.

Venerable Ajahn Sumedho

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