

# MANDALAY NOTES

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# The Lord is Risen

Jesus came down to save us so that we may have hope. He does this by putting himself in a hopeless situation. Hopelessness abounds in many areas. The credit crunch has pushed even the rich ones to tighten their belts. The wars claimed a lot of lives. When one seems to come to an end another one emerges. "They have taken the Lord from the tomb!" Mary of Magdala laments. The empty tomb seems to be the only picture we can imagine. Our lives seem to be empty. The principle of emptying is in the center of our faith. Just as the wine went dry at a marriage in Cana, we need to feel the pinch. Mary invites us to do "whatever he tells us". We may need to fill the empty jars with whatever water we can find. He may ask us to bring this out to the head waiter. May this Easter bring us to hope in God, and hope in others and most specially hope in our selves. Happy Easter to all.

# Centenary in Chaungtha



In Chaungtha, Frs. Weselak MS and Doherty MS were buried. The mission was taken over by the La Salette Missionaries from the Holy Cross Fathers. Because of the lack of personnel the mission was served from Thandwe some fifty miles away. At the invitation of Bp. Gregory, Fr. Mya Thein, MS was able to recall some of the experiences of the La Salette Fathers. The remains of the founding Holy Cross priest was brought back from Akyab to the village. The village is not far from the beautiful beach with white sands. Since the beginning the roads were awful. One of the bridges gave way and more than two hundred of those attending the affair had to squeeze in the small chapel. They had to ask the bishop to walk across and hire one truck so he can get back home. The people still fondly remember the dedication of the Missionaries who planted the seed of the faith. May God continue to bless the missions.

# Ordinations in Pyay: March 22, 2009

His Grace Salvatore Pennacchio had never been to Pyay before this trip. He wanted to visit all the places he is taking care of as a Nuncio or an Apostolic Delegate. Since the La Salette Missionaries gave the diocese over to the Diocesan clergy in 1976, the local priests have been trying their best to take care of their people. The legacy left by the La Salette Missionaries was never lost. They continued the devotions to Our Blessed mother of La Salette. The feast of Our Lady of La Salette is celebrated very solemnly. Every year the priests try their best to make it a real feast. The annual retreat is usually scheduled soon after that. When Fr. Mya Thein, MS found out about the ordinations, he tried to see if the last group of deacons finishing their studies in the Philippines would be able to join them. Very Rev. Fr. Dennis Loomis, MS, the Superior General of the La Salettes could not make it on that date but he promised that he would send his Vicar General to join in the celebrations. Unfortunately, the academic requirements could not be met on time. All three of them are from Pyay. To join in the celebrations the three La Salette Deacons skipped their graduation ceremonies in Manila. Welcome back, Brothers!



# Special English Classes

The wife of Ret. Lt. General Kyaw Than took off a few weeks from her busy schedule to come to Chanthagone to help out with the English program. Even though the members of the family are staunch Buddhists, they have been very close to Fr. Mya Thein, MS. When he was in the Philippines studying to become a La Salette Priest, he was adapted by the family. Her mother even attended his ordinations in Imus, Cavite, Philippines to represent his relatives and the Myanmar community. Since any kind of help is appreciated to improve the English of our students, Fr. Mya Thein invited her to come and give some English lessons. Even though her stay was very short it was well appreciated by the students. What the students need is contact with those who are familiar with the English language. Culture is one of the basic foundation of any language. Being familiar with different cultures, she was a real help to them. She not only taught English, but helped them out with the protocol and customs. For our students, it was an eye opener. Her sister and her daughter is presently staying in the United States of America. Thank you very much Cherry, for helping our students.



## Myanmar La Salettes Meet

Missionaries of Our Lady of La Salette arrived in 1937. Since then the Missionaries have tried their best to make the message of La Salette known. Due to difficulties beyond their control, they had to hand over the missions to the diocesan clergy in 1976. The spirit of La Salette continued to grow in the hearts and minds of the priests and people.

In 2005, the La Salette Missionaries started taking care of the Diocesan Marian Shrine in Chanthagone together with three small parishes. Now the last group has come back to the country after being ordained to the diaconate last October in Silang, Cavite. Every member of the district is called back to come to the study days from April 20 - 23 in Anisakhan, a summer vacation spot in the middle part of the country. The Salesians have built a very good retreat house and they will meet and pray and build up community during these study days. This will be a good time for the community to come up with a rule of life, establish priorities and share the dreams with one another.

Even though there are three priests out of the country, they will be around to contribute in their own way the building of the community. Fr. Jerome, MS is being assigned to the Shrine at La Salette, France. Fr. Philip, MS and Fr. David are preparing themselves for the ministry of Formation in India and the Philippines. These three priests will serve as facilitators. They each will take one day. At the end of the sessions everyone will go to a restaurant and celebrate the anniversaries as all of them had taken their vows on May 1. After that they will meet with the Archbishop Paul Grawng, DD of Mandalay to discuss the details of the commitment in the apostolate in the Archdiocese. May all be filled with the Holy Spirit and continue to be committed members spreading the message of reconciliation to all.

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# Special Breakfast to the Orphans

The Operating Manager of the famous Sedona Hotel in Mandalay with some of his staff and trainees came one morning to give breakfast to some of the orphans and poor children in the area. They came well organized. A few weeks of preparation was needed for them to organize this outreach. They had a similar one at Zaw Gyi a few months ahead. Not only that they came with food and drinks, they came to entertain the young audience with songs and dances. Even though that is not the kind of food they usually eat, the children had a nice time. The girl orphans from Amarapura were fetched by the hotel van early in the morning. It is encouraging to know that the business sector is still interested in serving the poorest of the poor. They had a short meeting with their managers after that at the shrine. Almost all of them are Buddhists and so it was quite an experience for all of them. Thank you people of Sedona for your love and care. May your kind increase!

