



Classes Begin

With the beginning of June, children start preparing for classes and this year is no exception. Even though everything is supposed to be free, there are many who find it hard when it comes to the beginning of the school year. Some are charged 2500 kyats (2 US\$) and some as high as 8000 kyats (US\$8). This may not be much for most people but there were quite a number in Chanthagone who could not afford to pay that small amount. That morning of the first day of classes, Fr. Bernie went around the village and saw at least four children who were not going to school. They said that they would stop going to school because they could not afford to pay for their fees. It was not much but for them there was no way to pay for that and would end their schooling and there was nothing one could do.

Of course there was help coming from St. Vincent de Paul society for the poor children but it would take some time before they would get anything from that fund. Even though they borrow money for different things from the usurers, they would not borrow for their children's education expenses. Seeing that they were asking not much, Fr. Bernie gave out the needed cash so they could go to school.

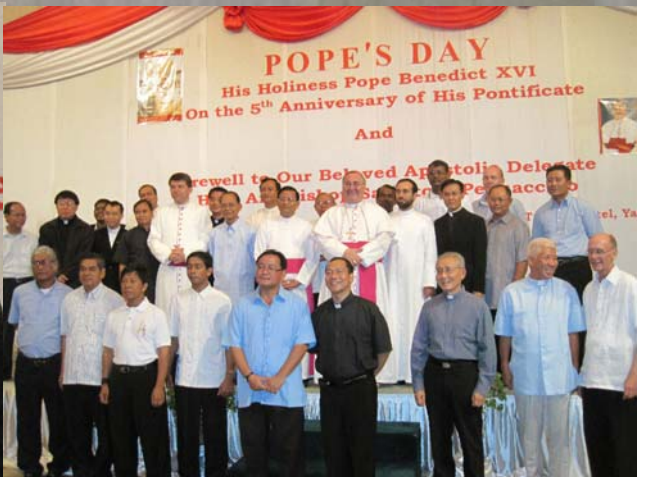
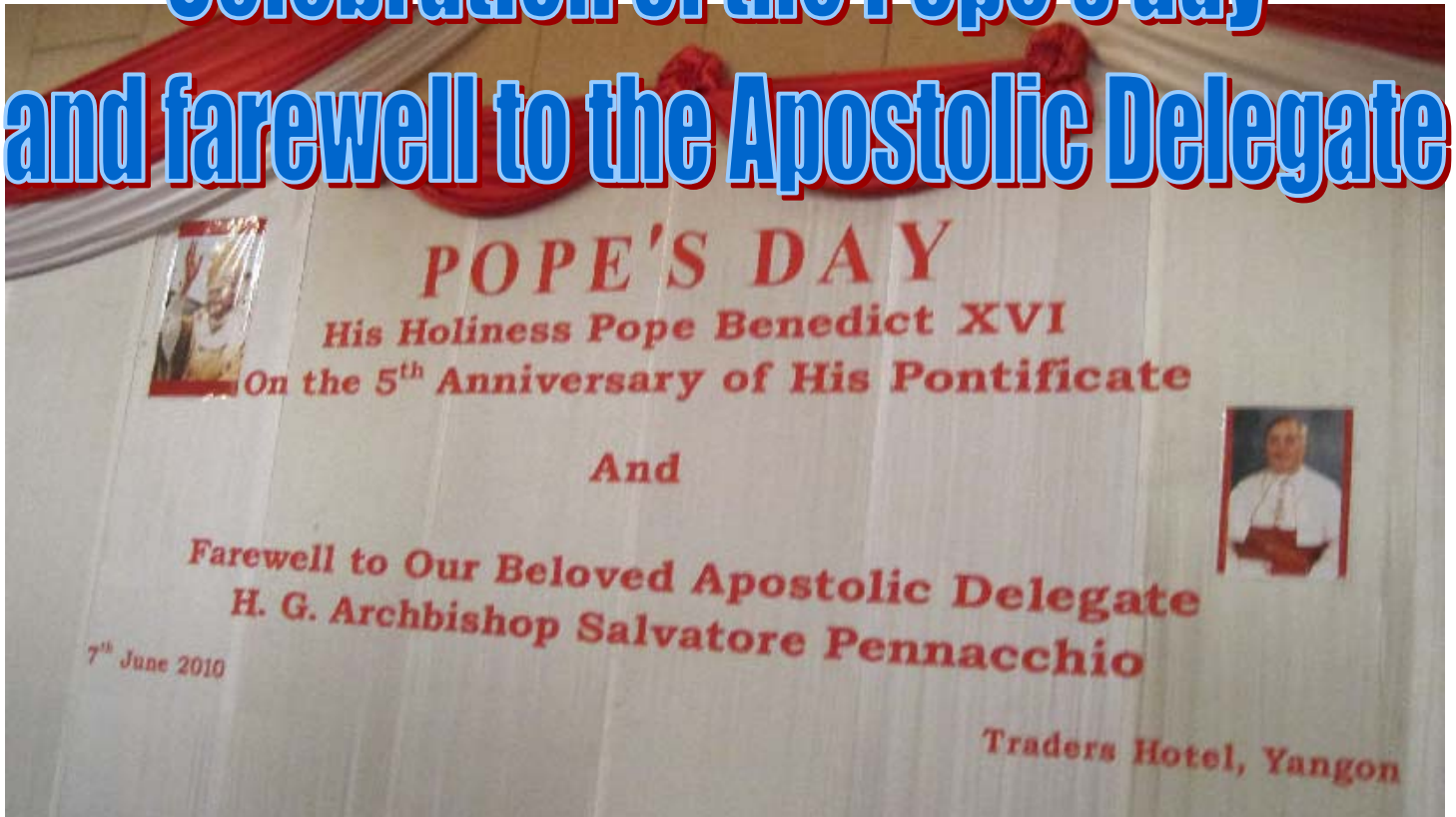
A few weeks after the results for the High School Final examinations came out. At the end of the school year for those who are finishing high school, the government gives everyone a test. Due to the lack of qualified teachers in the rural areas, many failed and almost all those from Chanthagone village failed. One passed because she went to the city and took tuition classes. That is the real problem for everyone.

Everyone who can afford it, would send their children to tuition classes from the time they start schooling. Imagine young children who are five six years old going to tuition classes. Many of the teachers do not teach in the classes but give special tutoring after class hours at a fee. So if you cannot afford it, then you will surely not get high grades and most probably you will fail at the end of the school year. That is true of all grades, most especially for those who are finishing their high school.

The study habits of the students are terrible. Imagine trying to memorize everything they hear at school. Without understanding, you surely will not be able to retain what you studied. Many would shout and scream, believing that they will retain more if they produce more sound. That is the reason why the standard of education has dived down in almost a straight line. Even the college graduates and you might even say of those who finished graduate school and even post graduate studies, do not know how to speak simple English. That is okay when English is only one subject but you have to take the examinations in English. All except Myanmar subject are in English.

The priest who is in charge of the educational program in the diocese of Pathein was trying to gather some students who failed in this government exams in Pathein and was giving them tuition and charging them very minimally. He was doing well at the beginning but the funds were low and he could not hire qualified teachers. The result of course is that many failed from that institution. So since June, classes have begun and the whole vicious circle would begin again and those who can afford may have a better chance next year. No wonder many parents are not interested in sending their children to school.

Celebration of the Pope's day and farewell to the Apostolic Delegate



Philippine Independence celebrations in Yangon



On the 12th of June, 2010, Fr. Bernie was invited to the Philippine Independence celebration at the Philippine embassy in Yangon and later at the Sedona Hotel for the reception. Her Excellency Helen Barber, the Ambassador has a very special devotion to Our Lady of La Salette and the Mass was presided by Fr. Bernie in Tagalog. Later that evening, Many priests and Religious were invited to a reception was held at the famous Sedona Hotel. The Foreign Minister of Myanmar led the diplomatic guests and local officials. There were many Filipino teachers who performed folk dances. The food was plentiful and made more unique by adding more Filipino dishes. The whole evening was very enjoyable and many stayed on for a long time. It was an occasion to celebrate the election of the New President Nonoy Aquino. Congratulations!



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Fr. Bernie's E-mail Compromised

If you have been receiving the Mandalay Notes regularly, you may have also received an email from frbernie@gmail.com and ask you for help. Bernie Taylor is in trouble as the email might have said and he had lost his wallet and important papers, etc. He needed some help in Birmingham, England, and if anyone could help him with any amount. He would pay back everything later.

The email addresses have been taken and perhaps sold and wiped out completely from the email address book. The email frbernie@gmail.com has to be used in Myanmar because most of the time all other emails could not be accessed. Someone got in and went through the emails and addresses and used that to ask for funds. Make sure that you will never give any hint or other details by email, most specially your password. They can be very convincing and would make up stories and ask for money, or your account no., or your banking details. Please never, ever give anything to anyone by email. Please be very careful in passing on sensitive details through emails especially any kind of important data. They may even change your password and like Fr. Bernie may not be able to get into ones own email. To communicate to Fr. Bernie, please use bernie@msmym.com. No matter what email he may be using always reply through this email.

Another thing is that many from Myanmar and those connected to Myanmar use gtalk to chat. If you are not using it for a time please log off because people may be able to get in from your chat program and be able to play havoc to your email. Many, especially those who are connected to the internet by broadband or other 24-hour connections, leave the computer with their gtalk on. You cannot just get out by clicking on the red x on the right. You will just minimize the icon. You have to go to the live gmail icon on the bottom right. You have to right click (click with the right button while the cursor is on that icon) and choose to exit or log off.

Try not to leave your computer idle and on line for a long time. Try to log off, hibernate, or shut down if you are going to be away from your computer for sometime. Fr. Bernie Taylor apologizes for any inconveniences you may have had because of this.



Closing of the Year for Priests Yangon 2010