



# MANDALAY NOTES

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## Two More Myanmar La Salettes Ordained Deacons

on Oct 26, 06  
Silang, Phil



With some Myanmar Visitors

Rev. Anton Nyo MS from Loikaw and Rev. Thomas Htan Shan Mong MS from Paletwa, Myanmar, were ordained Deacons together with another Filipino deacon and three priests on the 26th of October, 2006 at the National Shrine of Our Lady of La Salette located at Biga, Silang, Rev. Anton and Rev. Thomas are now finishing their last year of Theology at San Carlos Seminary in Makati.

They will be returning to their native land after their studies and will spend another six months re-integrating themselves to the Myanmar Culture. Hopefully they will be ordained priests on the 9th day of October 2007, marking the seventieth anniversary of the first arrival of the La Salette Missionaries in Burma (now Myanmar). The Shrine at Chanthagone, in Mandalay, where the La Salette Missionaries are based, will be the site of their ordinations.

This will be a great time to celebrate the new Mission. Please come and join us. Unless the rules change, all non-Myanmar citizens will be required to obtain a visa to get into the country. It is quite easy to get a tourist visa which is valid for 28 days. Please try to arrive at least a day before the date of the ordination as Mandalay is 420 miles from Yangon. You can take a plane, a train or a bus from Yangon to Mandalay. Please send enquires to: [bernie@myanmar.com.mm](mailto:bernie@myanmar.com.mm).



Rev. Fr. Saw Jerome Eiphan, MS has been requested to join the team at the Holy Mountain at La Salette. He will try to get his visa and leave after the feast in Feb.07

Rev. Fr. Philip Makha Naw Aung, MS is in the United States since the middle of October. He is visiting with the other La Salettes in the country and will join the team preaching at the Mission Co-op 07. Hopefully he will have a chance to prepare himself for formation.



After Fr. Jerome leaves, Myanmar will have only three La Salettes till the deacons come back. Fr. Nicodemus will take care of the parish of Myauk Kine, Fr. David is in-charge of the parish in Myitnge. Fr. Bernie will have to be responsible for Chanthagone.both the parish and the shrine.

## Episcopal Commission on the Laity Met at the Shrine

Episcopal Commission on the Laity gathered together the national leaders at the Shrine in the midst of floods. Bp. Francis Dtang, DD, bishop of Myitkyina led commission in prayer, fellowship and discussions. In spite of the difficulty of getting there, as many buses and trains were not able to ply their routes due to floods, almost all who were supposed to come came. Those who came by plane, had to take a boat ride on the way to the shrine.

They are shared the facilities with some of the evacuees from the flooded areas from the nearby villages. As many of the facilities which were used during the October feast were still there the bishops, priests, laypeople and the animals were able to enjoy the hospitality of Fr. David Kyaw Kyaw Lwin, MS.

## The Ecumenical Peace Rally in Yangon

Since Nov 2001, the CBCM (Catholic Bishops Conference of Myanmar) and MCC (Myanmar Council of Churches) have been joining hands in prayer and brotherhood to stress the need for peace in Myanmar. About 300 Catholics and Protestants prayed and sing together this year. Fr. David Saw Tin Htut from St. Mary Cathedral Catholic church was the Master of Ceremonies. Rev. Saw Margay Gyi, president of MCC welcomed all participants.

After that Fr. Tin Htut, Rev. Jenson Rajan Andrews from Lutheran church, Ywama Baptist Church choir, Br. Luois SFX, the youth Myanmar Institute of Theology (MIT), Rev. Salai David from Chin Baptist church, St. Joseph Major Seminary, Rev. Kyaw Thura, the Ecumenical youth, Fr. Francis Than Tun and Msgr Maurice Nyunt Wai from Patheingyi Diocese took different leading roles in the Prayer service. The prayer of St. Francis of Assisi, the Lord's prayer and the blessing of Msgr Joseph Daniel from the Yangon Archdiocese ended the service.

The prayer week for peace and reconciliation was organized by CBCM and MCC for the whole Myanmar. Rev. Saw Margay Gyi asked the churchgoers to pray daily at home not only during this time. Christians should pray for Peace more than ever before. We should remember the words of Martin Luther King Jr. "An eye for an eye leaves everybody blind".

## Fr. Philip Naw Aung, MS and the Retreat of the Catechists

Some of the catechists were lucky to have Fr. Philip preach a retreat before he left for the United States. It was a retreat he scheduled a long time before. He was supposed to leave for the US with Fr. Bernie to join the Mission co-op in June of 2006 but due to the delay in getting a visa, his trip was postponed.

The catechists in the country play a very great role in the evangelization process. In many places, the priests cannot go and evangelize because they are very few in numbers. So these catechists would do the routine work of preparing the people for the sacraments. Many of them have very poor educational backgrounds and their salary is not very high. But they are very dedicated and are real missionaries.

Retreats such as these, help them to recommit themselves to their mission of preaching the good news to others. It had to be Fr. Philip to give this particular retreat, because they were all Kachins and he is the only La Salette priest who speaks the language. Congratulations Fr. Philip. May you enjoy your stay in the United States of America.

## Flood Victims Take Refuge at the Shrine

There are many dams in the area. Kyauk Se (same area code for telephone as ours 066) dam is famous all over the country. Some new dams were built to supply electricity. The electricity is usually rationed out to different areas and due to brown-outs many do not get to use the electrical equipment they have. Some places would have only two three hours a day of electricity if ever they get it. So many try to complement the meager supply of electricity by buying generators.

Fuel is also very expensive. The government only allots a gallon a day for the cars registered in Mandalay. The motorcycles the Missionaries use, as they have local registrations, only get three gallons a month. So people are used to staying in the dark or go to bed early. During one of the early mornings when people were fast asleep, some officials released some water from the some of the dams. Since many live in shanties and small huts some of them were washed away in the middle of the night. Some lives were lost because there were no warnings.

Since everyone tries to supplement their diet by planting vegetables and raise livestock when the floods came the people had to worry not only of themselves and their children but also of the chickens and pigs and ducks, etc. Many would not like to leave their houses because of they still have to take care of the animals. Even though we tried to warn them and tried to evacuate them, they would stay as long as they could in their villages.

One of the main problems that people had to deal with during the floods was to get clean drinking water. Of course the wells and the pumps were submerged and it was impossible to get firewood at these times. It is a miracle that there were not too many epidemics during these days.

For more than two weeks, the water level rose. They had more rains and they had to release more water from the dams. The four catholic villages nearby were all under water except at the shrine in Chanthagone. Over a hundred from Zaw Gyi and another hundred or so flood victims from Myauk Kine came as refugees to the shrine. Due to the efforts of Fr. David Kyaw Kyaw Lwin, MS, Fr. Nicodemus Aung Than Aye, MS and Fr. Saw Jerome Eiphan, MS many found a dry place to lay their heads and shelter their animals from the pouring rain. As the feast just finished, some of the temporary shelters used a few days before were already dismantled. They had to make do with whatever shelter they could find.

There were also some groups at the shrine doing their retreats and meetings and planning sessions. The Episcopal Commission on the Laity had scheduled their first meeting nation-wide at Chanthagone and they could not change the schedule which they made way ahead of the floods. There was also another group of catechists from the north. The place was crowded. But many liked what they had. Some of them did not want to go home after the waters receded. Even though only one meal was provided by one of the local Catholics who had some means, they were very happy to enjoy the hospitality of the people of Chanthagone including the La Salette Missionaries. They had running water, toilets, electricity (most of the time because they cut the electricity when the winds get strong) and of course the regular mass and sacraments.

U Myint Way, our local benefactor, had a lot of crises himself. A few months before this, he had to get rid of 300,000 (yes this is not a typing mistake, three hundred thousand) chickens because of bird flu. He had to close down one of his restaurants because of the mismanagement of the manager. Of course with the floods he lost all the fish from the fish ponds. Yet he gave hundreds of food packages of rice and curry to all these flood victims. We supplied the diesel to go get them from his place.

Hopefully the floods are gone for good. But still it rained quite a bit in the second week of November. Many are preparing for the cold season which comes in a month. The tourists have started coming again and of course planes are over-booked. The experience of the floods brought out some of the best in some people. We thank God for giving us his love through one another.

You will make this known to all my people!



## La Salette Missions Chanthagone, Paleik Mandalay

More and more pilgrims are coming to the Marian Shrine. Celebrations are planned to be held throughout the whole year starting with January 2007. The two main celebrations will still be on February 11 - 12 and the full moon of Thadingyut: October 25 - 26. The following are the dates of the mini-fiestas. Jan. 1 Motherhood of Mary; March 25 the Annunciation; Holy Week celebrations in April 5 - 8; May devotions throughout the whole month; June 10 feast of the Body and Blood of Christ; July 2 the Visitation; Aug. 15 the Assumption; Sep 19, the feast of Our Lady of La Salette; Nov. 25 Christ the King and Dec 8 the Immaculate Conception. Hopefully it will make it more convenient for the people. Chanthagone is about 15 miles away from Mandalay, the old Capital. From Yangon one can come by bus and ask the driver to drop you off at the Paleik Junction (going to the airport) and take a trishaw. By train you have to take the rides going to Kyauk Seh. By plane you can ask the taxi driver to bring you to the shrine which is just off the access road. The telephone number at the shrine is: (country code: 95 area code 66 number 40303). The local pay phone in the village is: (95 - 2 - 54244). Try your luck for English is not a common language in the village. You may have to call back after a few minutes. Your best bet will still be to send an email hopefully someone will go down town to check his email. [Bernie@msmym.com](mailto:Bernie@msmym.com) or [bernie@myanmar.com.mm](mailto:bernie@myanmar.com.mm).

### La Salettes Plan to Celebrate 70th Anniversary

On the 9th of October 1937, the pioneering La Salette Missionaries led by the late Bishop Thomas Newman, MS, DD set foot on the Burmese soil for the first time in Rangoon. Even though they were assigned to Akyab (now Sitwe) they had to pass by the capital, Rangoon. They started the Missions in November there. It will be seventy years on October 7, 2007.

The Congregation is planning to celebrate the occasion by having the two new deacons: Rev. Thomas Htan Shan Mong, MS and Rev. Anton Nyo Ano, MS ordained to the presbyterate. Hopefully the ordinations will take place at the Shrine of Our Lady of the Rosary, in Chanthagone, Paleik, Mandalay. If you are interested, please make plans to celebrate with the La Salettes. Send enquiries to [bernie@msmym.com](mailto:bernie@msmym.com).



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