

# SMbulletin

Friday, 26 March 2021

## LET'S PRAY FOR MYANMAR

Myanmar is a country dear to the Society of Mary because we had a missionary presence there in former years and continue to serve Myanmar people today. We wish to share some of our Myanmar history and two personal stories as we pray for the people of Myanmar in their current struggles.

### HISTORY

Marist connections with the diocese of Myitkyina go back to the 1990's. At that time the Bishop sent young people from Myitkyina to study at the Jesuit University in Davao, Philippines. Our Marist seminarians in Davao, for their pastoral work, helped these young students with their



English language. The Bishop heard of this and invited the Marists to come and work as missionaries in Myitkyina. A small team of two Marist priests, one seminarian and one Lay Marist Missionary went to the Myitkyina diocese in the year 2003. After a couple of years, the Marists were denied visas by the military government and were forced to leave the country, along with many other foreigners. The Marists went to Thailand where they continued to work with migrant workers from the South of Myanmar. This is the origin of our present mission in Ranong, Thailand. From the beginning the dream was, once we had established a strong Marist base in Thailand, we would return to Myanmar.

### MYANMAR PRIEST IN ROME

Fr Peter Naw Lawt, a diocesan priest from the diocese of Myitkyina, has been staying with the General House Community while finishing Canon Law studies in Rome. He left the community a few weeks ago, to return to Myanmar. Amidst the political turmoil he felt he needed to be with his people, to be with the 'little ones' of his diocese, in a poor and remote parish. For the General House community it has been a blessing to host Peter, and to listen to his many, enriching stories.



### A PRAYER FROM MYANMAR

A friend of the Marists wrote recently to Fr John Larsen who spent several years both in Myanmar and Ranong. We give here some extracts of his letter.

“For me, day and night, it has been terrible here in Myitkyina. There were two men shot and killed by the snipers near our place. Some days we had to bear shooting all day. I do not know what to hope for our future, especially at night when I think of our young people. I try to pray and believe that this thing will be over and we will be okay, but on the ground the reality is telling me the exact opposite (...). Many young protesters have been arrested and sent to the jail. Right now, the police and the soldiers are guarding the places where two peaceful protesters were killed this month and where people want to offer solemn prayers for the souls of those who have been killed (...). Again, please remember us in your prayers. And let us pray for a new and better dawn.”