

Profile of Myanmar Province (Update in May 2023)

Introduction:

Burma or Myanmar as it is officially called since 1989, is the largest country of mainland in Southeast Asia. In 1948, Myanmar finally achieved independence from Britain. Throughout the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries some missionaries, mostly Portuguese came to Burma, but by the nineteenth centuries Myanmar became the focus of much European and American missionary activity - Catholic and Protestant.

The arrival of the sisters of Our Lady of the Missions in Sittwe (Akyab)

In 1886, after visiting New Zealand, Euphrasie responded positively to the request of Bishop Ballsieper, Vicar Apostolate of East Bengal and left by boat for Sittwe with Marie du Sacré Coeur, prioress of Chittagong.

In 1897, St. Ann's Convent, Sittwe was opened for the education of children, and a home for orphans.

The people appreciated the sisters' work. The schools continued to flourish until 1942, when the Japanese invasion forced the school to close. The school and the boarding school re-opened in 1948. On their free days, the sisters visited the hospital, the poor and the parents of students. Most of the RNDM foundations are in the Diocese of Pyay in the Rakhine State in south-west Myanmar.

A second foundation in Buthidaung

The divisional officer encouraged the sisters to open a school. The Sisters gladly undertook to do this and in 1905, erected a school and St Edward's Convent at their own expense. Land for the buildings was given to the sisters. Sadly, on 2 March 1909, the convent was destroyed by fire, and Buthidaung was not rebuilt.

A third foundation at Thandwe (Sandoway)

In 1931, Sisters began teaching at St Margaret's School, Thandwei. The school and convent were destroyed by the Japanese, and were re-opened in 1948 and closed again soon afterwards. However, St Margaret's Convent was again opened in 1962, and the sisters took over the small school.

A fourth foundation at Pyay (Prome)

In 1956, the sisters at the request of Bishop Thomas Newman, took possession of little convent built for them by the Fathers. By 1957, the sisters took over the administration and teaching of St Paul's Primary School as well as a boarding school for girls. The numbers in both the school and boarding hostel soon increased, and a new school was built in 1959, and named St Paul's High School.

By March 1962, the original little La Salette convent, adjacent to the Cathedral, had been replaced by a much larger building, which after 1964, also served as the Regional House for Myanmar.

The nationalization of schools and departure of foreign missionaries

When it seemed as if progress was being made, the government made the decision to nationalize all schools, and to order the immediate departure of all foreign missionaries who did not have permanent visas. On 1 April 1965 all the large private schools were nationalized.

Leadership

Mid 1964, the Indian Province was divided into three regions, Myanmar (Burma), Bangladesh (EastPakistan) and India.

Local leadership and people to continue the mission work began in Myanmar

Although the religious and priests could no longer teach, it was not long before they involved themselves pastoral and social work ministries.

By the end of 1966, all foreign Sisters had departed. Sisters continued their mission despite the many political and economic hardships. The following decades were times of growth, thanks to the commitment and faith of the thirteen Burmese Sisters, left in the region. Since 1966, the number of Sisters has increased from that courageous thirteen to almost seventy. The Sisters now have the following communities from which they work among the poor.

The Grace filled History of RNDM in Myanmar

19th Century

- 1886 Euphrasie visits Sittwe, then part of the Diocese of Dhaka
- 1897 New foundation, St Ann's Convent at Sittwe

20th Century

- 1906 New foundation, St Edward's Convent at Buthidaung
- 1909 St Edward's, Buthidaung destroyed by fire – never built again.
- 1931 New foundation, St Margaret's at Thantwe, destroyed during World War II; reopened in 1948 and closed and reopened in 1962
- 1942 St Ann's Convent at Sittwe closed. it was reopened in 1948
- 1956 New foundation, La Salette Convent at Pyay
- 1959 Sisters begin teaching in St Paul's High School, Pyay
- 1962 Sisters return to St Margaret's Convent, Thantwe
- 1966 Foreign Sisters have to leave Burma. Thirteen professed local Sisters stay back.
- 1967 New foundation at Thayet, St Mary's Convent
- 1970 Novitiate opened at La Salette Convent, Pyay.
- 1975 New foundation at Paletwa, St Joseph's Convent
- 1978 New foundation at Shway Pan Taw, St. Mary's Convent
- 1980 New foundation at Oatshippin, St. Teresa's Convent
- 1981 New foundation at Pyay, St Francis Xavier's Convent
- 1981 St. Paul's preschool was open at La Salette convent

- 1986 New foundation at Yangon, Aye Myittamun Community
- 1990 Sisters relocate from Thayet to Mindon
- 1992 New foundation at Kyauk Phyu
- 1993 Provincialate is transferred to Yangon
- 1996 Novitiate and Postulate relocated to Novitiate community in Pyay
- 1997 Sisters celebrate one hundred years of life and work in Myanmar
- 1997: On the 30th of October, a piece of land was acquired outside the town of Aung San Pyi Thar Yar Quarter, Part 2. A Pyay
- 1997 New foundation in Myeik Parish, Bo Taung Island
- 1998 Closing of Kyauk Phyu Mission
- 2000 New foundation in Pyay, the Euphrasie Formation Centre for young women
- 2000 Land purchased in Yangon for agricultural and livestock breeding programs

21st Century

- 2004 New foundation at Thayet, St Teresa's Orphanage and Leper Colony
- 2004 Sophia community in Pyay opened for the senior sisters
- 2005 St. Anne's preschool in Sittwe open
- 2006 Closing of St. Joseph's Convent, Paletwa
- 2009 New mission establishments in Kawthaung and Renong
- 2010 Novices to continue their formation programme at combined novitiate in Cotabato city, the Philippines.
- 2011 House purchased in Kawthaung
- 2012 Botaung community Closed
- 2012 St. Teresa's preschool in Oatshippin, Euphrasie's preschool in Pyay, St. Mary's Preschool in Mindon open. St. Paul's preschool relocated from La Salette Convent to Meechaungye village.
- 2013 Novitiate relocated in Novitiate community in Pyay.
- 2014 St. Mary's Convent as part of St. Teresa's Community was reopened for education young women
- 2016 Built the Euphrasie Primary School at Euphrasie in Pyay
- 2017 Euphrasie Private primary school opened and became Middle school
- 2017 Collaborated with Medacross at kawthaung
- 2017 Built the New House in Kawthaung
- 2018 Built the Boarding House in Sittwe
- 2018 Built for Weaving project center at Dantalon Village, in Oatshippin parish
- 2018 Built the EPMS School office at Euphrasie in pyay
- 2019 July 2019, St. Mary's Convent was officially opened as a community
- 2019 Collaborated with Diocesan clinic
- 2020 Built the Convent for Elderly Sisters at Euphrasie in Pyay

New Missionary Initiatives

As the sisters want to be part of the response to the worsening socio-economic situation, the preschools are opened not only to help the children with education but also to provide a source of income for the sisters. We now have four preschools: in five communities of Euphrasie, Oatshippin, Mindon and Sittwe.

Across the border in Ranong in Thailand, the RNDMs Community based in Kawthaung and Marist Fathers are working primarily with the ministries of education and health particularly people affected by HIV/AIDS for the refugees from Myanmar. In Kawthaung, RNDMs involve themselves with the ministries of health particularly, people affected by HIV/AIDS, Education, of children, sewing projects for young women in order to prevent the Human Trafficking.

Initial and on-going formation

In February 1970 a novitiate was opened. In 1996, the decision was made to relocate the novitiate from La Salette Convent to another site a quiet suburb of Pyay.

Overseas Mission

Myanmar Province is now able to send Myanmar sisters to be missioned in other parts of the world. Elizabeth Kan Whai was missioned to Kenya in 2002- 2022; Patricia Kyi Kyi Win was missioned to the Philippines from 2006 to 2016. Joanna Hla Kyi was missioned to Southern Sudan from 2009- 2015. Regina Tin Moe Yee was missioned to the Philippines in 2016. Helen New Ni Oo was missioned to Canada in 2018. Regina Yu Nandar Lwin was missioned to the Philippines in 2023.

Political Situation

A military-backed civilian government took office in 2011, and pushed forward political and economic reforms. Myanmar's political transition and economic reconstruction are intimately entwined. The ethnic peace processes are also closely bound up with the political economies of those border regions. A successful Political transition and stability is required for sustainable economic improvement in the lives of ordinary people. In 2021 Military took over the country.

Present Mission involvement in Myanmar

- Main ministries in Myanmar
- Pastoral / Touring
- Catechism (Youth / children)
- St. Ann's Women Association (1000, widely in Pyay Diocese)
- Preschools (5 communities)
- Health care (HIV/AIDS, Lepers, Migrants)
- Anti-trafficking (sewing project)
- Teaching (Tuition/ English language)
- Hostel / Boarding schools
- CRCM (Catholic Religious Conference of Myanmar)
- MIRS (Myanmar Institute of Religious Study)
- MEWA (Myanmar Ecclesia Women Association)
- BBS (Basic Biblical Service)
- Caritas, Pyay Diocese (HIV Health Care)
- MCLM (Myanmar Christian Leprosy Mission)
- MIFF (Myanmar Institute of Formation for Formators)

Leadership in the province History of Myanmar



Mother Mary St. Declan Harrington(Irish)
(1964 - 1967)
(The Frist Regional Superior in Myanmar)



Mother Mary St. Agnes Thein Mya
(1967-1972)
(The First Local Regional Superior)



Sister Mary St. Stephen Sein Phyu
(Vice Provincial) &(Provincial)
(1972-1978) & (1981-1987)



Sister Mary Raphael Daw Khine
(Provincial)
1978-1981 & (1993-1999)



Sister Julia Mary Hla Wine
(Provincial)
(1987-1993)



Sister Noreen Mya Sie
(Provincial)
(1999-2005)



Sister Elizabeth Mai Pain
(Provincial)
(2005-2011)



Sister Margaret Maung
(Provincial)
(2011- 2017)



**Sister Rita Kyi Kyi Aung
(Provincial)
(2017- 2023)**



**Sister Elizabeth Kan Hwai
(Provincial)
(2023- 2026)**

Precious and Wisdom Sisters of the Province



M. Angela



M. Josephine



M. Josepha



M. Raphael



Mary Jesus



Sr. Debrosa



Sr. Noreen



Sr. Agatha



Sr. Theresa

Province Leadership team 2017-2023



Formation Team





Aspirants



Postulants



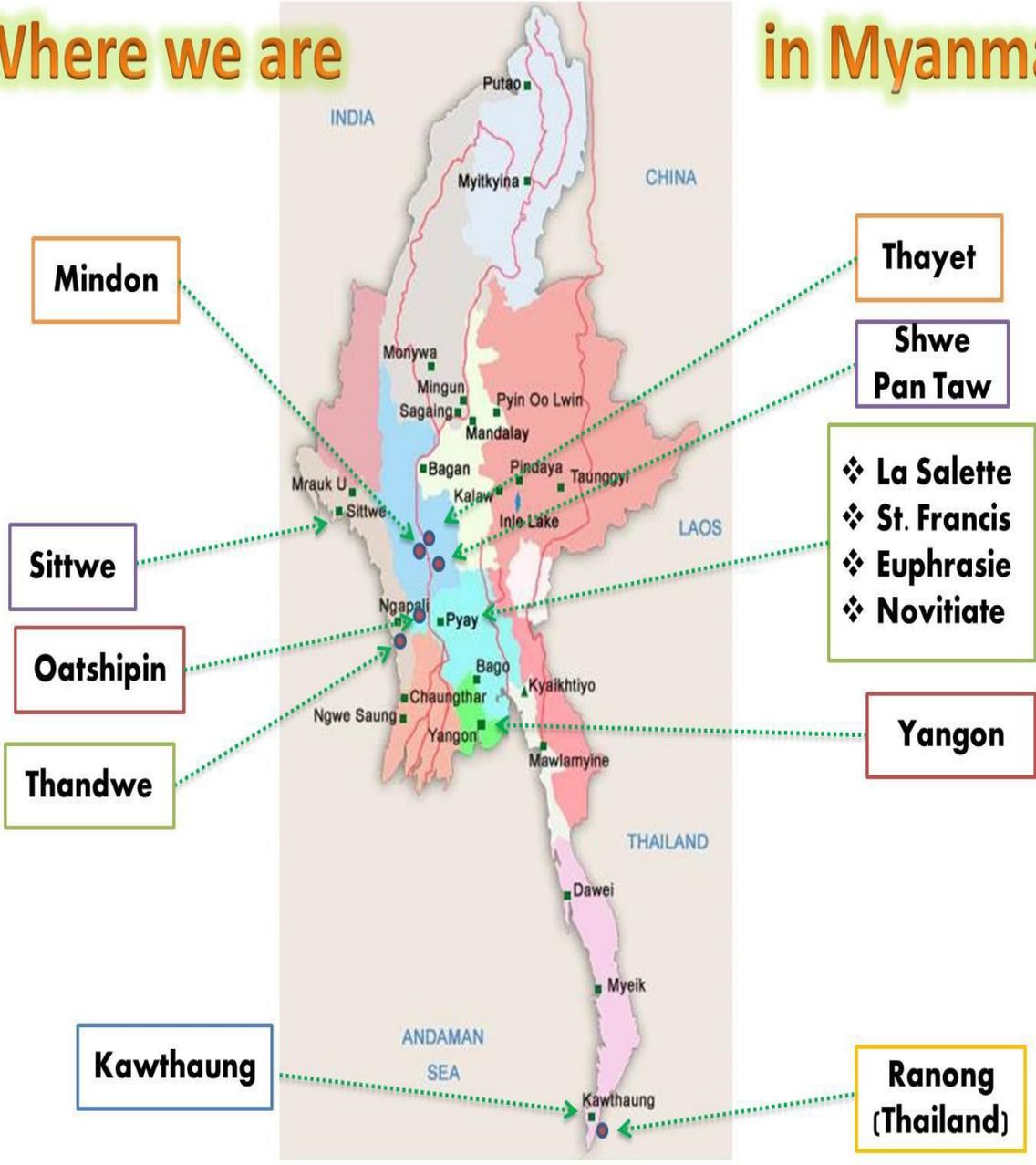
Temporary Professed Sisters



Mission Location in Myanmar

Where we are

in Myanmar



Mindon

Thayet

Shwe Pan Taw

- ❖ La Salette
- ❖ St. Francis
- ❖ Euphrasie
- ❖ Novitiate

Sittwe

Oatshipin

Thandwe

Yangon

Kawthaung

Ranong (Thailand)

Mission

Opening the Primary School



Opening the new boarding house in Sittwe



Preschool



Ranong Mission



Laudato- Si movement



Taking care of the Earth



Anti- Human Trafficking



Nutrition Support



Young women vocation Training



15 Young women on their arrival were heartily welcomed by the sisters in the community, along with self-introducing one another.





