

Profile of Myanmar Province

(Update in August 2015)

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By March 1962, the original little La Salette convent, adjacent to the Cathedral, had been replaced by a much larger building, which after 1964, also served as the Regional House for Myanmar.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

- St. Ann's Convent, Sittwe (Akyab), 1897
- St. Margaret's Convent, Thandoway, 1931
- La Salette Convent, Pyay. 1957
- St. Mary's Convent, Thayet, 1967- 1990 and reopened in 2014
- St Mary's Convent, Shwe-pan-taw, 1978
- St Teresa's Convent, Oatshippin, 1983
- St Mary's Catholic Mission, Mindon, 1990
- St Francis Xavier's Church, Pyay 1981
- Bo Taung Mission, Yae Aye, Mon State, 1997-2012
- St Teresa's Orphanage and Leper Colony, Thayet 2004
- Euphrasie Formation Centre, 2000
- St Joseph's Convent, Paletwa, 1975-2006
- Kyauk Phyu, 1992-1998
- Aye Myittamun, Yangon, 1986 (It is now the Provincialate; a base for those Sisters attending ongoing formation and education programmes.)
- Kaw Thaung, 2010
- Ranong, (Thailand) 2011

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 five preschools: in five communities of La Salette Convent, 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.

In formation, we now have (11) Temporary professed sisters, (5) Novices, (1) Postulant and (8) Aspirants.

Overseas Mission
















Myanmar Province is now able to send Myanmar sisters to mission in other parts of the world. Elizabeth Kan Whai, missioned to Kenya in 2002; Patricia Kyi Kyi Win, missioned to the Philippines in 2006; Joanna Hla Kyi was missioned to Southern Sudan from 2009- 2014 December.

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.

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)

Leaders in the Province History of Myanmar



Mother Mary St. Declan Harrington
(Irish)
(1964 - 1967)
(The 1st Regional Superior)



Mother Mary St. Agnes Thein Mya
(1967-1972)
(The 1st Local Regional Superior)



Sister Mary St. Stephen Sein Phyu
(Vice 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)

Precious and Wisdom Sisters of the Province



M. Angela



M. Josephine



M. Josepha



M. Raphael



Mary Jesus

Who said “Goodbye” to us in recent years!



Sr. M. Angelica Mya Tin
22 Apr 2011
(RIP)



Sr. M. Fatima Tin Shwe
8 Aug 2012
(RIP)



Sr. Julia Mary Hla Wine
16 Dec 2012
(RIP)

Province Leadership Team



Formation



Novices & Postulant!





Aspirants!



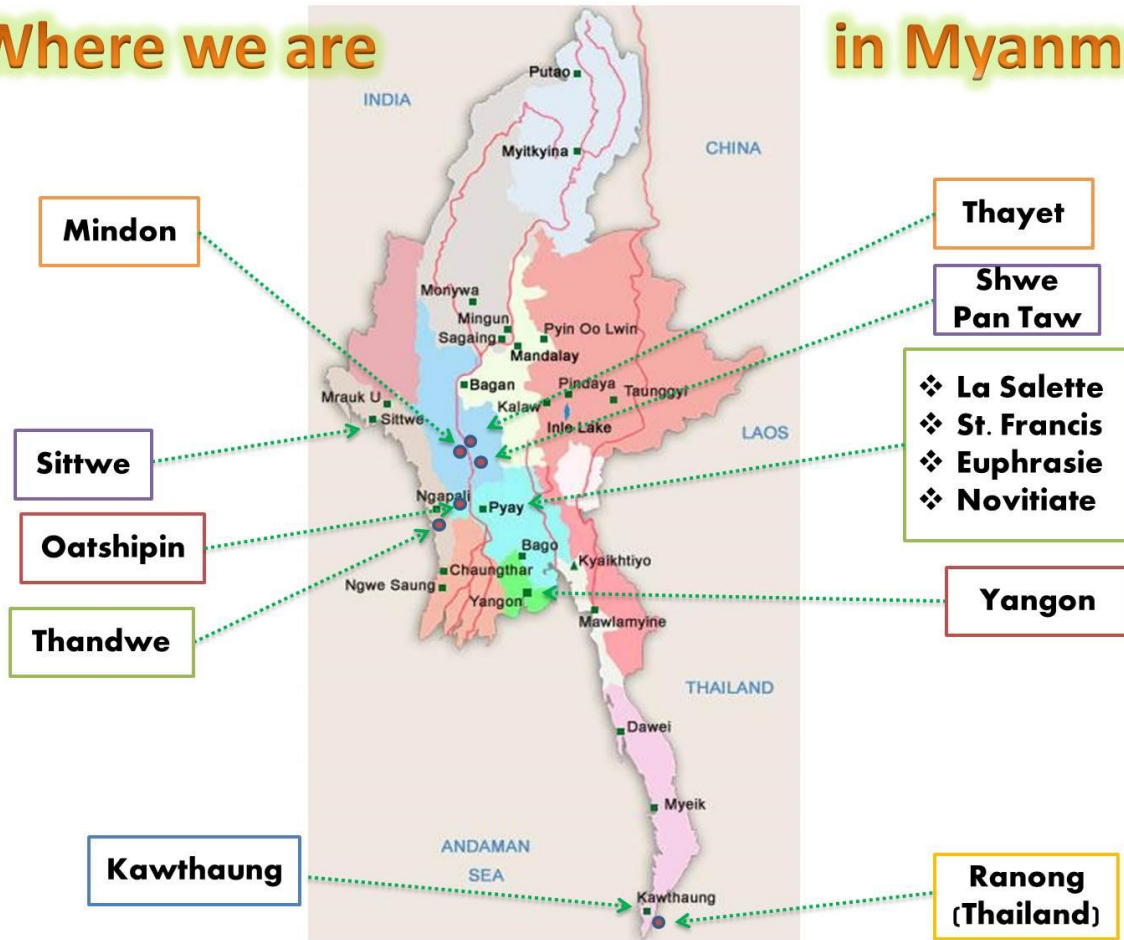
Temporary Professed Sisters



Mission Location in Myanmar

Where we are

in Myanmar



65 Sisters, 11 Temporary Professed Sisters, 5 Novices, 1 Postulant and 8 Aspirants in 13 Communities in 3 Dioceses of Pyay, Yangon & Mawlamyine

Missions

PASTORAL



Youth & Children



Preschool



Working with women



Collaboration with Marist Fathers in Ranong, Thailand Health Care (HIV/AIDS) & Education for Migrants



Human Trafficking



Health Care, Nutrition & Free-Tuition





Orphanage
& Families
who are
effected
with leprosy



