

His Eminence Cardinal Bo – Christmas Message 2019

To all my brothers and Sisters,

All blessings on this great day of Christmas. Special prayers and blessings to my country men and women, let the coming year be year of Good News.

Christ is the center of Christmas. His message is the blessing of Christmas. On that cold, beautiful night, when the Son of Man chose to take our flesh and was born in a poor manger, the angels sang “Peace to all men of Good Will”. Yes the message of Christmas is simple :

PEACE TO ALL MEN AND WOMEN OF GOOD WILL.

More than any time in history, Myanmar stands at the cross roads of history today, seeking peace and reconciliation. This grace and gift we ask as a nation, as a family. The Bible claims that Christ came to reconcile and rebuild the broken relationship between God and human beings. His emptiness was the fullness of humanity. His poverty was the rich in reconciliation, his powerlessness was the empowerment of the whole human family.

As members of Myanmar family, we stand with outstretched hands, with prayer in our lips and hope in our hearts with a single prayer :

**LET THE SUN OF PEACE AND RECONCILIATION RISE
IN OUR LAND!**

I pray that each and every one of my Myanmar brothers and Sisters become the ambassadors of peace and reconciliation. Yes, countries and international community can do their part. But

Christmas is the challenge to every one to play our part in bringing peace. On that silent night the message of peace was not preached to the powerful, the kings and rich. It was preached to the simple, powerless shepherd. Let us hear that message of first Christmas in our hearts. People of Myanmar :

LET EACH ONE OF US BECOME THE AMBASSADOR OF PEACE

Christ came at the most challenging times of Jewish history. His coming was a healing moment. The Jews were looking for a messiah who can reconcile everyone – the various tribes, the various rulers. War and subjugation was their lot.

Myanmar too stands at crossroads of history. It faces many challenges. There are chronic wars, there is huge displacement, unsafe migration of thousands of our youth, climate change and need for reconciliation among various people.

God is so indulgent to Myanmar. The graceful people from every tribe, the plentiful natural resources, the spiritual wealth of Myanmar : all these are envy of others. This is indeed a golden land, God's own favorite country.

Despite all these great blessings, Myanmar is today known in the world for wrong reasons. Myanmar is dragged to international court. Big words are used against this country. Christmas calls for conversion and repentance. Conversion from hatred, repentance from all kinds of sins committed against God or fellow human beings.

Myanmar needs to understand the world's concern about the suffering of people from Myanmar. It wants a peaceful resolution and return of the affected people. At the same time,

the world needs a greater understanding of Myanmar. Myanmar as a nation has its own legitimate reasons for security. Countries all over the world take security precautions. The world needs to understand struggle democracy faces in this country. International community needs to accompany this nation of fledgling democracy. All stakeholders are trying to recast a new Myanmar. Any sanctions will adversely impact our simple people.

The world wishes good for the people of Myanmar. The world knows the long journey of the people of Myanmar. Every person in this nation holds a great dream in his heart. The world community needs to make this dream a reality. The people of Myanmar can afford no more night mares. Their heart holds a pregnant dream. Christmas is the story of a dream of a better future. Let that dream be a reality in Myanmar of today.

The international events involving Myanmar today can force a relapse. Another relapse would be a shattering journey through a slippery rock. The people of Myanmar need understanding, advising, accompanying by the international community, not condemnation. Any sanction without consideration for the welfare of ordinary people will be a sad commentary on world's concern for our people. That is the message of Christmas. Understand Myanmar people, their dreams, their tears.

The rulers of this nation need to engage the international community. No man is an island. No country is an island. Myanmar needs more international friends. There are many countries that wish well for the people of Myanmar. Individuals like the late Kofi Annan engaged with Myanmar in a constructive way. His recommendations can be a

starting point of healing and building trust. He was an ambassador of peace to our nation. There were painful events in our country and we must have the courage to accept the unkind acts and seek reconciliation with the international community and the affected people of this nation.

Christ was the Prince of Peace. His birth in a simple manger brought powerful streaks of hope amidst the engulfing darkness of hatred and conflict. We are in such situation. Every long night of suffocating darkness ends in glorious dawn. Let Myanmar rise to a new dawn of Hope and Reconciliation.

Come Lord Jesus! Let this nation be blessed with the everlasting peace. Let every son and daughter of this great nation believe in a new Myanmar of Hope, Peace and prosperity.

Peace is Possible, Peace is the only way. Peace to all men and women of Good Will.

Have a blessed Christmas and a New Year of all graces.

+ Charles Cardinal Bo., SDB

Archbishop of Yangon

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