

Stop all War! Make 2017 the Year of Peace!

Dear friends and confreres,

At the beginning of this year, I entrust all important encounters with the Salesians to the guidance and protection of our Mother. Especially the three visits and encounters with the 10th Successor of Don Bosco in our Region – in Vietnam, in Thailand and during the four days of the Team Visit in Hua Hin with our provincial councils!

During this Christmas season, celebrating New Year 2017 my heart is deeply touched by numerous war and violence (37 armed conflict zones) around the world, in the Middle East, many African countries as well in Asia. Also the Rector Major, Fr Ángel invites us in his 2016 Christmas message to pray in very concrete way for peace!

During recent visits in Myanmar I witnessed again the impact of domestic war that lasts more than 60 years. It's probably the longest civil war in the world. Not less than 75 different armed groups already signed a peace-treaty but the violent clashes are never ending. Let's take the heartbreaking invitation of our fellow Salesian bishop to our New Year Day Eucharist! May Mary, Mother of the Church help to build more peace!

Fr. Václav Klement, SDB
EAO Regional councillor

Brothers and Sisters of Myanmar, Happy New Year!

Every year we greet one another with this message. Sincerely there is no happiness in many parts of this country. War goes on in many parts. For more than 200.000 IDPs (internally displaced person) in the camps, there is NO happy new year.

The war that started 60 years ago is still raging on. Cambodia solved its conflicts and Vietnam solved its wars. All of them are in the path towards peace with prosperity. We are involved in an unwinnable war. Agony and displacement of many is the only result.

The silent majority of Myanmar was just a spectator to the chronic war in Myanmar. Let us come together for peace. It's time for us to come together – all religions, all ethnic groups – for making 2017 really Happy New Year.

Peace with Justice is possible. Peace through negotiations is possible. Armed response has failed. So we urge all religions to observe 1st January 2017 as a day of Fasting and Prayer for Peace!

Let all of us flock our monasteries, churches, temples and mosques carrying placards and flags depicting the words 'STOP ALL WARS'!

Let us spend the day in prayer for peace and a day long fast to change the hearts of all people! End all wars! Make 2017 the year of Peace!

Cardinal Charles Bo
Archbishop of Yangon