

Reflection from the Superior General

The city of Mandalay in Myanmar, a country already ravaged by four years of bloody civil war, was destroyed by a series of terrible earthquakes last week. To aggravate the situation, the heartless and ruthless military regime continues to bomb their own people while they are reeling from the shock of the earthquakes. It is yet another international crisis to add to so many others. However, this one is closer to home. We have two seminarians from Mandalay – Daniel and John – who are presently studying philosophy in Davao in the Philippines. We remember them and their families at this critical time.

We can feel overwhelmed with crises as we seem to be entering an age of “polycrisis”.

Even in our own very small and local milieu of the Society of Mary, some confreres sense a crisis as we continue to close cherished ministries and struggle to find leadership to guide us into the future and confreres available to continue and develop our ministries.



Last Wednesday Pope Francis prepared a meditation which he presented from his sick-bed: "Dear brothers and sisters, let us not lose hope! Even if our history appears burdensome, complicated, perhaps even ruined to us, we always have the possibility of consigning it to God and setting out anew on our journey."

Our sense of crisis is aggravated when we lose trust in the goodness of God and the fundamental goodness of our sisters and brothers. We retrieve this trust in the goodness of God and of others in our sustained, faithful prayer with the Word of God. In faith and trust

we avoid defeatism and, shaped by silence and wonder before the living God, we live lives that manifest God's abundant life to our sisters and brothers in their struggles.

This month we celebrate the Feast of our confrere, Saint Peter Chanel. He reached the depths of sacrifice, dying violently and mostly abandoned. Yet his martyrdom continues to bring abundant grace to the people of the Pacific and to all of us.

As we pray through the profound and beautiful liturgy of Holy Week we ourselves remember the violent death of Jesus who assumed our sinfulness and corruption and we learn to trust more profoundly in the God of new life. When we trust in God, whom we know through our participation in the death and resurrection of his Son, we can no longer allow ourselves or others to escape into defeatism. There is no crisis so severe that it destroys the new life in Christ. This is our Easter faith.

A blessed and fruitful Holy Week and every blessing for the New Life of Easter!

John Larsen s.m.

If any of our units or any benefactors you know of would like to contribute financially to the "Emergency Relief Fund" of the Archbishop of Mandalay, +Marco Tin Win, you could contact our General Bursar, Fr. Pat Brophy. We would be confident that the money will reach the Archbishop.