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ASIA/MYANMAR - The Archbishop of Yangon: a road map of peace and fraternity for the country in 2014

Yangon (Agenzia Fides) - Peace, fraternity, democracy in Myanmar are "a common hope for all citizens": at the beginning of a new year, "Myanmar is preparing the beginning of a new era, made of freedom, justice and peace". This was stated by Mgr. Charles Maung Bo, Archbishop of Yangon, tracing, in a note sent to Fides Agency, a "road map" for the nation, which outlines the prospects for 2014.
The Archbishop recalled the many progresses the nation has made over the last two years which "has opened its doors to the world". However, he says, we are still at the beginning: "Many political prisoners remain in jail, and while peace talks are carried out, military attacks against civilians in the Kachin state continue. Although one enjoys greater freedom of speech, some have used it to incite violence against Muslim brothers and sisters. The road ahead is long, and there are many serious challenges to be faced".
Democratic reforms are not guarantees of the end of the conflict, he warns. "Peace is achieved with slow and constant process of dialogue, which involves a political solution towards ethnic minorities in Myanmar". However, notes Mgr. Bo, "true peace can only be achieved through a revolution of the heart, a renewal of minds and a rediscovery of the value of brotherhood". Mgr. Bo cites Pope Francis's message for "World Day of Peace", recalling "the irrepressible yearning for brotherhood" present in the heart of every man. And condemns the wave of hatred and violence, which broke out in the last 18 months towards the Burmese Muslims in different parts of the country, acts which, he says, "lead to the death of brotherhood".
For this reason the people of Burma "have the task of rebuilding not only the buildings destroyed, but interpersonal relationships, and his heart": due to the diversity of ethnic groups, societies, religions and cultures, the message explains, "there are the seeds of a vocation to form a community of brothers and sisters that accepts each other". The road map for the future of the country - he concludes - passes through the construction of a "rainbow nation", in which everyone, especially minorities, are treated with equal respect and equal rights: a nation florishes when it is free from wars and religious conflicts, from poverty, defined as "a wound to the soul of the nation", and from the violation of fundamental human rights. (PA) (Agenzia Fides 04/01/2014)

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