



ASIA/MYANMAR – During the Week of Unity, Christians ask the government for the return of lands and schools

Yangon (Agenzia Fides) - "Today, we are baptized in the Jordan of the new Myanmar. After baptism Jesus began his mission. Today, as a nation, we face a new era with all its opportunities. For decades we suffered. Today we have an important mission to carry out in the country": says Archbishop Charles Maung Bo, Archbishop of Yangon, in a pastoral letter published for the "Week of Christian Unity". By virtue of the mission to be carried out - notes the text sent to Fides by the Archbishop - the Churches ask the government for the return of lands and schools confiscated in the past by the military regime.

Inspired by the exhortation of Pope Francis "Evangelii Gaudium", Msg. Bo invites to "see the world through the eyes of the poor and most vulnerable", wondering who these people in Burma are: "They are Burmese refugees in Malaysia, Thailand, India. Ours is a nation with three million refugees and displaced persons who need our aid", he says.

Another fact to consider is human trafficking, in a nation plagued by the phenomenon: "Our young people are sold in modern forms of slavery, for sex trade or business". One should pay more attention to young people affected by drugs and AIDS.

A problem that challenges Christians - notes the letter - is the confiscation of lands. We, as Christians are among the victims of land grabbing".

The complaint of the Bishop touches a key point: "As Church today we ask the government for the return of our lands and schools. The Church has done a great job in the field of education and health. Many schools in Myanmar were started by Christians. Not recognizing such valuable contribution, the former regime confiscated our properties and our schools. To contribute to the development of the nation, we ask that such structures are given back to us. It is our cultural right". The text concludes: "There is a new hope in Myanmar. Let us join together in serving our country. Christian unity is not only within churches or in theological speeches, but for a new Myanmar". (PA) (Agenzia Fides 20/01/2014)