

# PEK aktuell

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## Day of Prayer for democracy and peace in Myanmar

**The (arch)dioceses of Cologne, New York, Tokyo and Regensburg call for prayer for Myanmar on Holy Thursday.**

Cologne - New York -Tokyo - Regensburg. The situation in Myanmar continues to deteriorate. Christians there, like all other religions, are affected by the military junta's coup. More than 230 people have already died in the protests. NGOs and aid organizations based there are under increasing pressure and are forced by the military government to disclose all financial transactions from abroad.

Cardinal Charles Maung Bo, the Archbishop of Yangon in Myanmar and President of the Federation of Asian Bishops' Conferences has given an urgent appeal to the universal church asking for prayer and solidarity. The Archdiocese of Cologne, together with the (arch)dioceses of Tokyo, New York and Regensburg, are responding to this request by proclaiming April 1<sup>st</sup>, 2021, Holy Thursday, as a special day of prayer for Myanmar.

Archbishop Rainer Maria Cardinal Woelki of Cologne had already addressed Cardinal Bo in a personal letter on March 15<sup>th</sup>, expressing support and prayer: "You have asked for prayer for Myanmar and especially for the Burmese. I would like to assure you of my solidarity from the bottom of my heart and promise you that I include the Church of Myanmar and the people of this country in my prayers," Cardinal Woelki said. This promise also applies to the entire archdiocese, he said.

As part of the Holy Thursday liturgy, prayers for the people of Myanmar will be offered in the (arch)dioceses of Cologne, New York, Tokyo and Regensburg. "May God help that Myanmar will find its way back to democracy and freedom and again become the "Golden Land" that the Burmese are

The Archdiocese of Cologne is part of the Catholic Church and the largest diocese in Germany in terms of number of members. About two million Catholics live in 180 groups of parishes on both banks of the River Rhine. Over 2,000 people work in the pastoral ministry. Together with a host of unpaid volunteers, they shape life in the diocese's parishes and approximately 800 churches. The seat of the archbishop is in Cologne, which is almost exactly in the middle of the archdiocese, which stretches from Bonn in the south to Düsseldorf and Wuppertal in the north. The archdiocese is led by the Archbishop of Cologne, Cardinal Rainer Maria Woelki.

so proud of. I will also ask our parishes to include Myanmar in their prayers," assured Cardinal Woelki.

The (arch)dioceses thus also join the Pope's concern. Pope Francis had repeatedly - most recently at the general audience on March 17<sup>th</sup> - pointed to the extremely difficult situation. "It is with great concern that I find myself once again referring to the tragic situation in Myanmar, where so many people - especially young people - are giving their lives to give hope to their country."

The American bishops had joined his urgent appeal to Myanmar for "a return to democracy." "I join with our Holy Father, Pope Francis, my brother bishops here in the United States and around the world, and all people of good will, in praying for a peaceful end to the current crisis in Myanmar," said Cardinal Timothy M. Dolan, Archbishop of New York.

The Archbishop of Tokyo, Tarcisio Isao Kikuchi had pledged his prayer support in a personal letter to the bishops in Myanmar: "I would like to assure you of our prayer in solidarity, with the Church of Myanmar, her role in serving the weak and her striving for peace."

The diocese of Regensburg has been funding a scholarship program for young people from Myanmar since 2001, which is why there are close ties between Regensburg and Myanmar. Bishop Rudolf Voderholzer asks all Christians in the diocese of Regensburg to stand by the side of the oppressed people: "So many people in Myanmar are currently losing everything that belongs to their lives: freedom, the protection of the law and their livelihood. Our prayers and sympathy are for them like a source of hope and courage to live in a desert of violence, injustice and anxiety to survive the next day. I ask all of you to pray for these people and with you on Holy Thursday and beyond."(pek210329-bue)

*Intercession text: Let us pray for our sisters and brothers in Myanmar at this time of crisis in their country. May justice and dialogue overcome the darkness and division now present in Myanmar. That all will work together to build a truly reconciled community of hope and peace. Lord hear us.*

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