



Myanmar Council of Churches
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Your Grace, dear sisters and brothers,

In the Gospel reading from last Sunday (John 20: 24-29), Jesus greets the apostles with the words: "Peace be with you". We would like to repeat this greeting wholeheartedly to you but also realise that it may ring hollow in the context of the developments which your country is going through these days. "Peace, peace,' they say, when there is no peace" (Jeremiah 6:14).

In effect, peace is a far cry from the daily reality in your country. It is with growing dismay and grave concern that the United Protestant Church in Belgium follows the situation in Myanmar since the military take-over in February. Every day we hear about violence and brutal attacks by military and security forces against peaceful protesters who demonstrate against the coup. These protesters, we understand, come from different and broad sectors in society and include Buddhist monks as well as Christians and Muslims. They are united in their opposition to the military junta who turn back the clock after a relatively peaceful situation of civilian rule during the past decade or so.

Many hundreds of people have already died because of the brutal and lethal force of a cynical military regime. Many more have been gravely wounded. Others 'disappeared'.

We have also heard the disturbing news about the army raiding numerous Christian churches of all denominations whereas raids have also targeted Buddhist monasteries and temples across the country.

In all this we hear the echo of the lament of David in Psalm 13: "How long, o Lord...?"

We urge the military government to step back from the brink and fully return the country into the hands of a civilian and duly elected government so that the suffering may end and peace with justice can be established.

In last Sunday's Scripture reading, it is told that the apostle Thomas recognises Jesus by His wounds. This reminds us of the fact that the Lord of our Church is a wounded Lord, a Lord who walked the path of the Cross, a God who suffers with His people. It is in His name that we pray for worldly peace in your country as well as for the peace in our hearts that only our Lord can give us.

Yours in the wounded but risen Christ,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'S. Fuite', with a long, sweeping underline that extends to the right.

Revd. Steven H. Fuite
President