

Suu Kyi meets papal envoy in church in Yangon



Aung San Suu Kyi, Vatican envoy Cardinal Martino (left) and Archbishop Charles Bo meet in the Archbishop's compound in Yangon

Opposition leader Aung San Suu Kyi met with the Vatican's envoy to Myanmar today at celebrations marking the centenary of St. Mary's Cathedral in Yangon.

The Nobel Peace Prize laureate and Cardinal Renato Raffaele Martino spoke together for several minutes ahead of the celebration, the details of which were not immediately known.

Her visit underscores her call for national conciliation to include all in society no matter their ethnic or religious background.

Speaking ahead of the ceremony the Archbishop of Yangon, Monsignor Charles Maung Bo, told Vatican news agency Fides: "It will be an important moment for the Christian community: for its history and faith, but also for its future, for the role Christians wish to play in a free and democratic country."

Also in attendance at the celebration was an official from the Ministry of Religious Affairs, who read out a letter from the minister calling on Christians to "involve themselves in the country's development as much they can" as they are also good citizens of Myanmar.

The official left following Cardinal Martino's homily in which he called on local Catholics to work with other faiths for the education, health care and social welfare of the people for the country's development.

"Catholics in Myanmar must be the light and strength of the country according to the will of God," the cardinal added.

A priest from Yangon archdiocese also read out a letter from Pope Benedict XVI in which he called on Cardinal Martino to convey his greetings to the clergy, religious and lay Catholics in Yangon archdiocese and to offer his goodwill to members of other faiths and to those who cherish religious freedom and the wellbeing of all people.

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