

Buddhist monk helps priest open clinic

A Catholic priest's dream to open a free clinic for the needy in Mandalay has been realized thanks to



the efforts of a Buddhist monk.

Father John Aye Kyaw, parish priest of Sacred Heart Cathedral in Mandalay said it all came about after he told a Mandalay inter-faith group what he wanted to do.

Venerable Seinnita, a Buddhist monk involved in many social projects, was at the meeting and immediately stepped forward and volunteered his services and the space to make the dream a reality.

A priest and two monks at the opening of the free clinic

The monk who runs the Asia Light foundation, which carries out social activities such as disaster relief work and blood donation drives, said another monk from Mandalay set aside space for the clinic in his monastery where small-scale vendors live by the bank of the Irrawaddy.

It opened its doors for the first time earlier this month and has 15 volunteer doctors and several nurses providing much needed care.

A committee of 13 Buddhist volunteers manages the clinic.

In the short time it has been open more than 300 patients have been treated.

The priest put up the money (around US\$7,400) to get the clinic up and running and will also continue to support the medicine expenses.

Donors also contributed around \$1,350 at the clinic's opening, according to Khin Than Myint, a volunteer worker serving as the clinic's accountant.

"The clinic is a vital project for the local community and I am really proud that religions can come together to make this happen," Venerable Seinnita said.

"We need many more of these clinics not only in Mandalay but especially in rural areas. Cooperation

between religious leaders can play a key role in achieving this,” he added.

Working together is an interesting experience, according to Fr Aye Kyaw.

“The relationship between us will develop even further through this clinic, Venerable Seinnita and I already consider ourselves as brothers,” he said.

All religions need to work with one spirit. “We all need to work and cooperate for all mankind without political intentions,” he said.

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