

Burmese-American Catholics' Annual National Conference in Buffalo, NY

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Picture: Official banner of the 2016 NCBAC Annual Gathering

Buffalo, NY— “I am with you always” was the theme of the 2016 National Conference of Burmese-American Catholics at the Grapevine Banquet Hall in Buffalo, NY, July 1-4, 2016.

An estimated 1,500 Burmese-American Catholics from across the United States attended the seventh annual event. Thirty plus clergy members from Burma, Canada, Australia and Europe were also in attendance.

This year's event theme was meant as a message of encouragement to the older generation as they had to leave what little they had and begin a new life for themselves and their families in a country which in most cases is completely different from their old country. This year's theme was the follow up to last year's “Do Not Be Afraid” theme.

The theme offered similar encouragement to the younger generation of Burmese, reminding them to put their trust in the Lord as they learn new things while remembering their customs and traditions and the Lord will be with them always as they go through this adjustment.

The event officially began with Holy Mass presided by the Most Reverend Richard Malone, the Bishop of the Diocese of Buffalo and was concelebrated by the Most Reverend Peter Louis Ca Ku and all clergy and religious present. After Mass, Bishop Malone was presented with a rosary made of Burmese jade and strung into a rosary by Father Anthony Delisi of the Trappist monastery in Conyers, GA. Father Anthony passed away soon after he made the rosary for Bishop Malone.

The Most Reverend Peter Louis Ca Ku, Bishop of the Kengtung Diocese from Myanmar was the keynote speaker and he encouraged the participants not to get weary and discouraged as they try to begin a new life in this land that have adopted them. He urged the younger generation to make a mark for themselves and to never forget their Asian traditions and where they came from. He celebrated the closing Holy Mass at the church participated by the faithful on Sunday July 3rd.

Those attending the conference attended a variety of workshops covering apologetics and youth workshops on current issues and Catholic teaching.



Picture: A youth group entertaining the audience with a traditional song

The conference's roots date to September 2010 when a group of 500 Burmese laity and clergy gathered in Pennsylvania to form an organization "built on love and Roman Catholic belief" to serve the Burmese living in America and the church in Burma.

At the end of that weekend, guided by the Holy Spirit and under the advice of all clergy present, the National Conference of Burmese American Catholics was formed, and a new hope was born for all Burmese Catholics, especially the refugees who have settled here in the United States.

The Southeast Asian country of Burma, also known as Myanmar, is one of the top five nations of origin for refugees served by Catholic Charities.

The 2017 conference will be held in the Baltimore, MD.