

10th Annual Gathering of the National Conference of Burmese-American Catholics (NCBAC)

by Jean Aung, Treasurer, National Conference of Burmese-American Catholics (NCBAC)

Then he said to all, “If anyone wishes to come after me, he must deny himself and take up his cross daily and follow me.” (Luke 9:23)

The 10th Annual Gathering of the NCBAC was held from August 30th to Sept 1st, 2019 in Harrisburg, PA, enthusiastically attended by hundreds of Burmese Catholics from across the country.

On August 30th, the Friday of the Labor Day weekend, hundreds of faithful Burmese Catholics from across the United States started arriving in Harrisburg for this highly anticipated event. Trinity High School in Camp Hill, Harrisburg welcomed various ethnic groups from Burma celebrating their Catholic identity. Mr. John Sailon, the current President and Founder of NCBAC, officially opened the conference. His introductory welcome on the first evening was followed by several traditional dances and songs.

On August 31st, Saturday morning, the Bishop of Pathein, Myanmar, Most Reverend John Hsane Hgyi was celebrant and homilist for the Holy Mass concelebrated by 25 Burmese priests and in attendance were 10 religious sisters and approximately 700 devout faithful.

After the Mass, Brother Duylinh Tran from Divine Word College offered a presentation about the College which was followed by an address from Sr. Myrna Tordillo, MSCS, regarding “Encountering Christ in Harmony.”

The three break-out sessions helped the audience grow deeper in fellowship while enhancing their knowledge of the tremendous value of the faith. Rev. Linh Hoang, OFM met with the vibrant young people in the gym to share insights on Encountering Christ in Harmony focusing on Identity, Generations, Leadership and Cultural Encounter and Dialogue, while Rev. Michael Lian shared on the topic of “Suffering in the Family” with a general audience in the main hall. Meanwhile, in another room, the Francis Xavier sisters from Jacksonville kept the children excited and engaged with songs and dances. In the late afternoon, Rev. David Michael discussed about the Sacrament of Penance and heard confessions with the other priests.

After dinner, Bishop John Hsane Hgyi, in his talk encouraged the audience to remain faithful followers of Jesus. Though the praise and worship session led by Rev. David Michael lasted for two hours, the audience did not seem to be tired after a long day. The Holy Spirit touched all the participants in many different ways and the hall remained calm and quiet.

On Sunday morning, Most Reverend Ronald W. Gainer, Bishop of Harrisburg, celebrated the Holy Mass. The presence of the local Bishop made everyone feel at home and a part of the universal church. Immediately after Mass, the groups took pictures with the two Bishops and religious sisters. Rev. Paul Thun Khaing spoke on the topic of “The Mystery of Holy Mass” before everyone travelled to the National Shrine Grotto of Our Lady of Lourdes for the Stations of the Cross.

The third night ended with a Bible recitation contest from James 2:14-26 on “Faith and Works” followed by a question and answer session.

After this fruitful and inspiring conference, attendees are eager to meet again for next year's conference in Dallas, Texas.

To view pictures and videos of the gathering, please visit the [NCBAC Facebook page](#).