

Catholic nonviolence in Myanmar

A one-hour discussion session

Kneeling before them in the dust of a northern Myanmar city, Catholic Sister Ann Rose Nu Tawng, SFX, begged a group of heavily armed police officers to spare “the children” and take her life instead. The image of the Catholic nun in a simple habit, her hands spread, pleading with the forces of the country’s new junta as they prepared to crack down on a protest, has gone viral and won her praise in the majority-Buddhist country. “I knelt down ... begging them not to shoot and torture the children, but to shoot me and kill me instead,” she told AFP on 9 March 2021. Her act of bravery in the city of Myitkyina on 8 March came as Myanmar struggles with the chaotic aftermath of the military’s ouster of civilian leader Aung San Suu Kyi on 1 February. So far, more than 600 people have been killed in anti-coup demonstrations around the country, according to Assistance Association for Political Prisoners.



Session

Watch the two-minute video (link below)

Read the two brief articles from Myanmar and Bangladesh and “Ten Elements of Nonviolence”

Discuss

- What is our response to seeing Sr. Ann Nu kneel before the armed police?
- What do we observe happening around her?
- Since Christians are a minority in predominately Buddhist Myanmar, how does this impact her action and its reception?
- How do we understand Sr. Ann Nu’s actions in light of our faith?

Act

- Visit [Support Myanmar](#) to see a list of projects that need assistance
- Offer financial support through the [Global Movement for Myanmar Democracy](#)
- Sign [international statements of support](#) to advocate for nonviolence in Myanmar
- Follow Myanmar news on Twitter: #CivilDisobedienceMovement #WhatsHappeningInMyanmar #JusticeForMyanmar
- Use this study to prepare your community for [Catholic Nonviolence Days of Action](#) and making the [vow of nonviolence](#) (available in several languages).

What you need

VIDEO This [two-minute video](#) tells the story of Sr. Ann Rose Nu Tawng and the Sisters of St. Francis Xavier. Note how the sisters are embedded in the community, their relationship with the youth, that Sr. Ann Nu asks permission of her community to possibly “sacrifice herself” (communal discernment, prayer, shared risk), that others of her order accompany her (communal action), and that they interpose themselves between police and protesters more than once.

READINGS

- [The nation is entrusted to God’s mercy](#) (Fides.org, in several languages)
- [Solidarity of Catholics toward the Church and people of Myanmar](#) (Fides.org, in several languages)
- “Ten Elements of Nonviolence” (pages 319-322) in *Advancing Nonviolence and Just Peace in the Church and World* available in [print](#) or [eBook](#) (available in English)

LEARN MORE

- Learn more by reading Pax Christi Asia-Pacific’s [statement on Myanmar](#).
- [Intensifying widespread, systematic slaughter by Myanmar military must be halted](#) (UNHCR)
- [How oil and gas majors bankroll the Myanmar military regime](#) (Justice For Myanmar)
- [Sanction Myanmar military, not Myanmar people](#) (Justice For Myanmar and Burma Campaign)
- [How to squeeze Myanmar’s military without hurting its people](#) (Southeast Asia Globe)