

# Pope renews call for peace in Myanmar

VATICAN CITY (CNS) – Pope Francis called on the international community to come to the aid of the people of Myanmar who continue to suffer from violence, displacement and starvation.

After praying the Angelus prayer June 20 with pilgrims in St. Peter's Square, the pope expressed his support for an appeal by Myanmar's bishops, "calling the entire world's attention to the heart-rending experience of thousands of people in that country who are displaced and have been dying of hunger."

"We plead with all to kindly allow humanitarian corridors and that churches, pagodas, monasteries, mosques, temples, as well as schools and hospitals be respected as neutral places of refuge," he said. "May the heart of Christ touch the hearts of everyone, bringing peace to Myanmar!"

The Southeast Asian country has been rocked by violence since Feb. 1 after the military seized power and overthrew the elected civilian government. Myanmar had been ruled by the military for more than 50 years before Aung San Suu Kyi's elected government took office in April 2016.

Commemorating the World Day of Refugees, Pope Francis also used his Angelus appointment to call on everyone to "open our hearts to refugees."

"Let us make their sorrows and their joys our own; let us learn courageous resilience from them! And in this way, all together, we will make a more human community grow, one big family," he said.

In his main address, the pope reflected on the Sunday Gospel reading from St. Mark, in which Christ, after calming the sea during a raging storm, questions the disciples about their

faith.

“Why are you terrified? Do you not yet have faith?” Jesus asked the disciples.

The pope said that much like the disciples, people today are often “beaten by the trials of life” or “drowning in problems or lost in the middle of the sea of life, with no course and no harbor.”

Also, much like the disciples, Christians “suffocated by fear” often forget that “even if he is sleeping, Jesus is there, and he shares with his own all that is happening.”

Recognizing one’s loneliness when “we are unable to stay afloat” is the “beginning of our faith,” Pope Francis said.

“Faith begins from believing that we are not enough for ourselves, from feeling in need of God,” he said. “When we overcome the temptation to close ourselves off, when we overcome the false religiosity that does not want to disturb God, when we cry out to him, he can work wonders in us.”