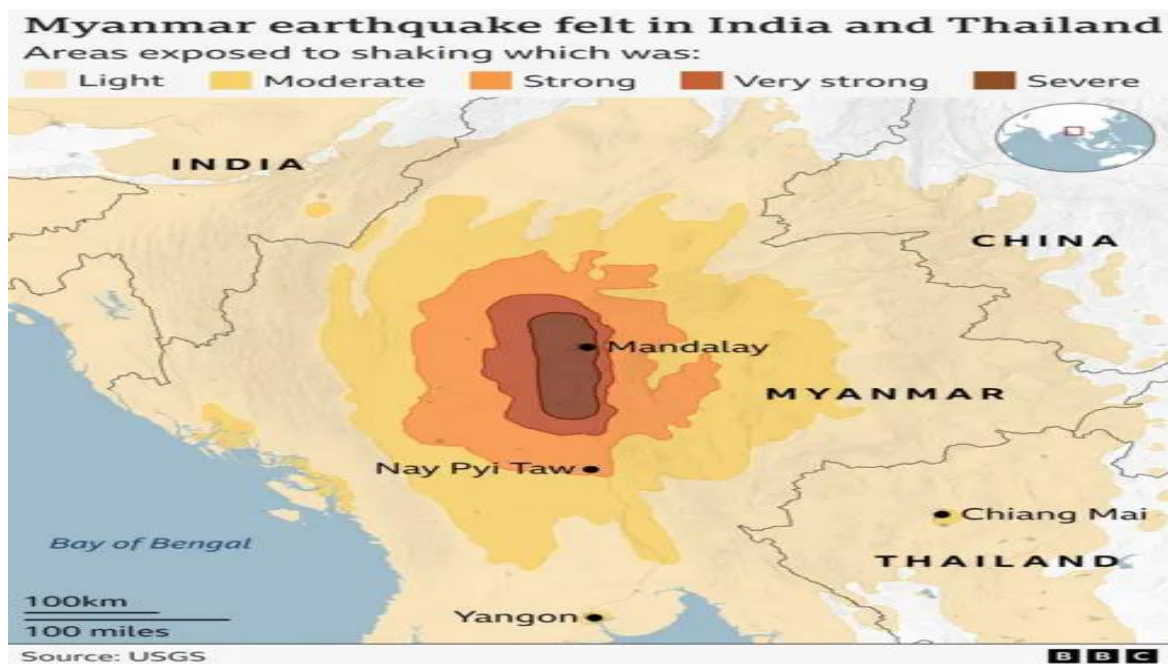


Myanmar Earthquake: Impact on the SJA Sisters' Convent

Recently, Myanmar experienced a series of earthquakes, including a strong one near Sagaing, close to Mandalay. The first quake struck at 12:50 local time (06:20 GMT), followed by an even stronger one approximately 12 minutes later. Aftershocks have continued, with a particularly strong tremor felt near Mandalay on Sunday.

It is concerning to hear that some of our SJA sisters have described this as the strongest aftershock since March 28, and their convent has been affected by the tremors.



Given the proximity of these earthquakes to major cities like Mandalay—which has a population of around 1.5 million—it is crucial to consider both the immediate impacts and the longer-term risks posed by ongoing aftershocks. The epicentre of the first earthquake was located near Sagaing, just 16 km away, and the second quake struck 18 km south of Sagaing. This indicates that the region is experiencing significant seismic instability. The area has been severely affected, with continued earth vibrations and crustal activity. Notably, our SJA sisters' convent is situated within this unstable zone, raising serious concerns about their safety and the structural impact on the convent.

ZawGyi is home to an orphanage and a clinic, where many people come seeking care and entrust their health to our SJA sisters. Unfortunately, this area was directly affected by the recent earthquakes. The convent and the boarding hostel collapsed due to the tremors, deeply impacting both the children and the sisters. The traumatic experience left them shaken, and sadly, Sr. Laetitia sustained injuries during the earthquake.





Right after the earthquake, the sisters at ZawGyi convent began giving medication. Some villagers were badly injured, and the sisters responded quickly to help.

This is the second convent severely affected by the earthquake—Amarapura Elderly Home, located in Mandalay, Sagaing. The convent was damaged, with parts of the interior ruined and walls collapsing. Thankfully, our elderly sisters are safe.



At the Mandalay convent, almost all buildings—including the chaplain's house and chapel—were damaged. The partition between the community room and the dormitory collapsed, a cupboard fell, and bricks from both the old and new buildings were broken. The chapel ceiling above the altar was also damaged, along with cracks in the new building and shattered window glass.

During the strong and powerful earthquake, the statue of St. Emilie miraculously turned toward the chapel. The sisters of the Mandalay community invited the parish priest to bless the statue, pray together, and gently return it to its original position.



The boarding girls and sisters are afraid to stay inside the buildings—and understandably so. After such powerful earthquakes and ongoing aftershocks, it's natural to fear weakened structures and the possibility of further tremors. This kind of uncertainty brings not only physical challenges but also emotional and mental stress, especially for the children.



But we always thank God for being with us. We believe St. Emilie and St. Joseph continue to protect us, especially in the midst of unpredictable natural disasters. We are deeply grateful to our SJA sisters around the world for their prayers and support in so many ways. May God bless us all.

Sr. Mary San Pang SJA