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BURMA

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Roman Catholics for democracy

THE Roman Catholics Association of Burma, in one of its pamphlets distributed throughout Burma, and received by *The Nation* yesterday, openly supports democracy for the Burmese people.

"Other nations need to reform certain unjust structures, and in particular their **POLITICAL INSTITUTIONS**, in order to replace corrupt, dictatorial and authoritarian forms of government by **DEMOCRATIC** and **PARTICIPATION** ones," says the pamphlet.

It continues: "This is a process which we hope will spread and grow stronger (in Burma). For, the **'HEALTH'** of a political community — as expressed in the free and responsible participation of all citizens in public affairs, in the rule of law and in respect for and promotion of human rights — is the **NECESSARY CONDITION AND SURE GUARANTEE** of the development of the whole individual and of all people."

The Christian association, comprising an estimated five per cent of the 38 million people in Burma, also states in the pamphlet that "It must also be restated that no social group, for example a political party, has the right to usurp the role of sole leader, since this brings about the destruction of the true subjectivity of society and of the individual citizens, as happens in every form of totalitarianism. In this situation the individual and the people become 'objects', in spite of all declarations to the contrary and verbal assurances."

Despite Burma being a Buddhist country, the Roman Catholics are quite prominent. The church runs several famous schools throughout the country, such as St Paul's in Rangoon, de Lasalle in Twante, St Patrick's in Moulmein, St Peter's in Mandalay, and St Albert's in Maymyo.

HOLDING placards that "Jesus Loves Democracy" members of Burma's Christian minority join a mass demonstration last Thursday to demand the end of a quarter century of authoritarian rule.

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