

Table of Contents

- ***Thailand recognizes Catholic churches after 93-year wait***
-

Thailand recognizes Catholic churches after 93-year wait

The recognition of worship places seeks to promote religious harmony and moral education, says culture minister

UCA News (27.08.2022) - <https://bit.ly/3pV3Rki> - The government of Thailand has officially recognized three Catholic churches after a 93-year wait in a bid to foster religious harmony in the Buddhist-majority nation, says a report.

The Ministry of Culture officially approved nine religious places of worship on Aug. 23, which included 3 Catholic Churches and 6 Buddhist temples, *the Thai Post* reported. Itthiphol Khunpluem, Minister of Culture highlighted the recognition of churches as a move to address the need for religious harmony.

"This certification of the Catholic Church is considered a way to promote and foster religions in Thailand, to appropriate them in line with the current situation," Khunpluem said.

The minister also added that the move is to encourage people to have places for their religious activities and, "receive education and instill morals that are correct according to religious principles."

The Cultural Ministry has approved Saint Thomas the Apostle Church in Bangkok, Saint Monica Church in Nan Province, and Saint Joseph the Worker Church in Phrae Province.

The kingdom recognized only 57 Catholic churches until 1929. With the latest approvals, the count has now risen to sixty.

In 2021, the Thai Cabinet approved a formal law to enable the approval of religious places of worship.

The decree states that a new parish can be established only if it has a permanent resident priest and a minimum of 200 parishioners who can support the parish.

Under exceptional circumstances, a diocese can request that the criteria – resident priest and the minimum number of faithful – be waived.

The provisions of the law state that the list of parishes thus established shall be released annually by the Religions Department and have up to 2 years to seek approval.

The Social Communication Commission of the Catholic Bishops' Conference of Thailand welcomed the new decree in 2021, stating that the recognition addresses the need of "the current situation and provides greater certainty and guarantees for the future" for the Catholic Church in the country.

As of 2019, Thailand has some 388,000 Catholics, forming roughly half a percent of some 69 million in the Buddhist-majority nation.

[Catholic Church in Thailand](#) has two archdioceses, nine dioceses, and 502 parishes.

Photo: The St. Michael the Archangel Cathedral of the Archdiocese of Tharae Nongsaeng of Thailand. The Buddhist-majority nation has officially recognized total of 60 Catholic churches so far. (File photo)
