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## **PHILIPPINES: ST. HILDEGARD AWARD FOR OUTSTANDING WOMEN IN MEDIA**

St. Scholastica College's Department of Mass Communication, Manila gave the "St. Hildegard Awards for Outstanding Women in Media and Communication" to three women and a women-oriented media outfit in a ceremony held in the college campus Feb 29. The awardees include pioneer in public service, Rosa Rosal, Professor and noted journalist Flor-angel Braid, known advertiser and social advocate Emily Abrera, and Women's Feature Service, the first and only women-oriented news agency in the country. The Hildegard Award, now in its second year, was conceptualized by St. Scholastica College's Department of Mass Communication as a tribute to women who have contributed much in the field of media and communication through their "pioneering work and cause-oriented advocacies." The award was named after 16th century St. Hildegard Bingen, a German Benedictine nun. (GMA NEWS)

## **INDIA: CATECHISTS MEET IN BANGALORE**

The Indian Catechetical Association held its 12th annual general body meeting at the National Biblical Catechetical Liturgical Centre (NBCLC), Bangalore on Feb 3. In his address, Fr Adolf Washington, president of the Indian Catholic Press Association (ICPA), said retelling the story of Jesus would mean reporting the incidents that happened 2,000 years ago as happening here and now. Among other things, he suggested that catechesis should be in tune with modern styles of news reporting. "We must think of ways of reporting Jesus rather than talk about Him in conventional ways," the Bangalore-based diocesan priest said. (SAR NEWS)

## **PAKISTAN: WAVE STUDIO GOES DIGITAL**

The Board members of WAVE Studio, the national recording studio of the Pakistan Catholic Bishops' Conference (PCBC), held its first meeting for 2008 on Feb 8 at Rabita Manzil, Lahore. The meeting, chaired by Archbishop Lawrence Saldanha, PCBC president and chairman of the episcopal commission for social communications, approved the conversion of old audio/video cassettes into digital formats. It also affirmed the move to increase productions catering to children's faith formation. The body supported the production of weekly programs for the Urdu service of Vatican Radio and the creation of the studio's own website. The WAVE Board meets twice a year. (WAVE)

## **INDIA: WESTERN REGION UNDERLINES NEED FOR EFFECTIVE SOCIAL COMMUNICATION**

The 30 participants and guests gathered for the Western Region Catholic Bishops' Council (WRCBC) annual meeting at Pilar, Goa Feb 8-9 stressed the need for fearless and more effective communications by the Church in India. The Holy Father's Message for World Communication Day 2008 was also discussed. Fifteen dioceses in the states of Goa, Maharashtra and Gujarat were represented. Archbishop Filipe Neri Ferrao of Goa is the chairman of WRCBC, while Bishop Godfrey de Rozario of Baroda is the WRCBC chairman for social communications. (SAR NEWS)

## **KOREA: YOUTH EXPLORE 'ALTERNATIVE MEDIA'**

Some 15 high school students, members of the International Young Catholic Students (IYCS) from Fiji, South Korea and Taiwan, met Feb 25-March 1 in Seoul to discuss "Mass Media, a Plus or Minus in Your Life?" The discussions included media learning sessions and theological reflections on mass media. The students also studied how to use alternative media like the Internet, plays, photos, pictures, placards and video clips to counter the vested interests of multinational media corporations. IYCS Asia has 12 national movements and two collaborator movements in East Asia, Southeast Asia and South Asia. (UCANEWS)

## **SRI LANKA: CHRISTIANS JOIN CALL FOR PRESS FREEDOM, PROTECTION FOR JOURNALISTS**

The Movement Against Media Suppression (MAMS), backed by a number of trade union and Christian leaders, organized a public demonstration through Colombo's streets and held an accompanying conference in Colombo Feb 14. The demonstrators protested against media suppression and the murder of journalists in the country. They carried hundreds of placards, some of which read "Don't Kill the Media Under the Guise of War" and "Speed Up Investigations of Murdered Journalists." Some Catholic and Anglican priests joined the conference. (UCANEWS)

## **INDIA: LAY CATHOLIC MEDIA GROUP ATTRACTS YOUNG PEOPLE**

Young people from various religions have joined "Shalom Media Foundation" in Peruvannamuzhy, Kozhikode, Kerala. The group works to spread Christian values through media. The foundation had a handful of Catholic youths as members when it started in 1992. Now it has 184 young men and women, mostly in their 20s, working either full time or part time. It manages "Shalom Television," a 24-hour Gospel channel, and publishes three magazines: the bi-monthly English-language "Shalom Tidings," the Malayalam-language monthly "Shalom Times," and "Shalom Sunday," a weekly newspaper also in Malayalam. Many young people said they left good jobs to join Shalom, a non-commercial project. (UCANEWS)



## **BANGLADESH: FEW CATHOLIC PUBLISHERS AT THIS YEAR'S TOP BOOK FAIR**

Very few Christian publishers took part in this year's top book fair Feb 1-29 in Dhaka. Of the 248 stalls at the popular "Ekushey Book Fair," only those run by the Seventh-Day Adventists and the Bangladesh Bible Society (BBS) were explicitly Christian. The Catholic Church-run Christian Communication Center (CCC) took part in the fair in the last three years, but not this time. The reason was tough competition for stall space. Fr Kamal Corraya, CCC director, said he gave up hope after he heard that many well-known publishers had been rejected due to lack of space. (UCANEWS)

## **INDONESIA: MASS, QUR'AN READING LAUNCH VILLAGE THANKSGIVING RITUAL**

This year's annual "Merti Bumi," a thanksgiving celebration for the gift of nature" in Girikerto village, Yogyakarta kicked off with a Qur'an reading and a Mass. About 700 Catholics gathered at the village hall on Feb 23 for the Mass concelebrated by two priests. The village head, a Muslim, addressed the crowd from the pulpit before the Mass ended, reminding the Catholic villagers of their role in preserving village traditions. Two days before that, more than 1,000 Muslim residents gathered in the same hall to read the Qur'an. Traditionally, the Merti Bumi feast features processions and community events. This year's Mass and Qur'an reading aimed to pray for the village, a Muslim organizer said. (UCANEWS)



Some 125 media persons met for the Signis India annual assembly at Bosco Institute, Guwahati Feb 26-March 1 to discuss the theme "Culture and Communication." The participants stressed the need to preserve India's rich cultural pluralism and diversity. They also urged the media to pay greater attention to the concerns of tribals, Dalits and the marginalized, to help end communal and divisive politics, fundamentalism and attacks on religious minorities. Present at the four-day meeting were Cardinal Oswald Gracias, chairman of the India Bishops' Commission for Social Communication, and Archbishop Thomas Menamparampil of Guwahati. Signis India is the national body of the international Catholic association for communication, founded in 1928 as Unda/OCIC and renamed Signis in 2001. (SAR NEWS)

## **INDIA: CHRISTIAN COMMUNICATORS UNDERLINE NEED TO PROMOTE CULTURES, ETHNIC IDENTITY**

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## **PHILIPPINES: 'FAMILY ROSARY CRUSADE' BAGS DOMINICAN STUDENTS' CHOICE AWARD**

"Family Rosary Crusade" (FRC) bagged the Best Catholic Program Award at the 4th University of Santo Tomas-Television (USTv) Students-Judges' Choice Awards on Feb 20. Carrying the theme "Education in Integrity: Channeling Honesty and Truth through TV," the awards, organized by the Office of the UST Secretary General and student leaders, covered television programs aired July and December 2007. The aim is to recognize excellence and Christian values on television. FRC produces spiritual enriching and family-gearred programs carried by three TV networks in the country, including Gospel reflections by veteran media practitioners Fr James Reuter, SJ and Fr Larry Faraon, OP. UST in Manila is the oldest university in Asia, founded in 1611. (CBCP MONITOR)

## **TAIWAN: CATHOLICS EVANGELIZE WITH LANTERNS AT LOCAL FESTIVAL**

This year's Taiwan Lantern Festival held Feb 21-March 2 at Southern Taiwan Science Park in Tainan county marked the first time a zone was created for religions to showcase their beliefs. Catholics from Tainan displayed a four-meter-tall Christ the King lantern at the festival, as well as lanterns of St Francis of Assisi and angels. Meanwhile, Buddhists, Protestants and Taoists (Daoists) added up to the more than 100 statues of deities on display encouraging people to pray for peace and prosperity in Taiwan. In total, the festival exhibited 47,759 lanterns on a 92-hectare plot of land. (UCANEWS)

## **PHILIPPINES: DOMINICAN STUDENTS' NEWSPAPER LAUNCHES PRO-LIFE FILM FEST**

The 80-year-old student publication of the University of Santo Tomas, "Varsitarian," has hosted the 2nd annual "Cinevita 2008 Film Festival" March 5-7 at the UST Thomas Aquinas Research Center, Manila. Themed "Celebrating Life, Truth and Faith," the three-day festival showcased independent films, documentaries and short movies, upholding cinema as a tool for meaningful expressions of life. (CBCP MONITOR)

## **HONG KONG: TEACHING GUIDE ISSUED IN WAKE OF PORN SCANDAL**

The Catholic Education Office of Hong Kong issued a five-page teaching guide to 280 Catholic-run schools and kindergarten on Feb 1 to assist teachers in dealing with the possible reaction of students to pornographic pictures of teenage heartthrob Edison Chen uploaded onto the Internet in late January. The manual introduces the "Emmaus Teaching Method" urging educators to first listen to the opinions of students, as Jesus did to the two confused disciples on their way to Emmaus. It also aims to provide an alternative view amid the media spotlight concerning the controversy. (SE)

## **INDIA: TV CHANNEL ALLOWS NATIONAL BROADCAST OF CATHOLIC SERIES**

On Feb 2, the New Delhi-based Hindi-language TV channel, "Sadhana" (meditation), began broadcasting "Nutan Dhara" (new spring), a series on Bible and Church teachings. The 20-minute program, which airs at 7 p.m. on Saturdays and Sundays, comprises prayers, hymns, short plays and talks by Catholic religious leaders. Sadhana's executive producer said that, like many viewers, he appreciates the Catholic program. He also clarified that the channel broadcasts programs from all religions. The priest of the Varanasi-based Indian Missionary Society (IMS) who directs Nutan Dhara said the program aims to bring social change through spiritual awakening. Each episode "is a call to live a new life," the priest explained. "It is a new spring of spiritual consciousness and it is dedicated to all viewers of all religions and castes. (UCANEWS)

## **BANGLADESH: CHURCH MOVIE AWARD STRESSES FAMILY VALUES**

This year's 10th annual Dhaka International Film Festival held in Dhaka Jan 10-18 had for the first time a "Spiritual" category in which the Bangladeshi movie "Ghani" (cycle) and the Malaysian film "Cinta" (love) won top honors. Signis, the world association of Catholic communicators, organized the jury for this category. Fr Kamal Corraya, president of Signis Bangladesh and one of the three jury members for the Spiritual award, said both Ghani and Cinta depict the importance of family values, a subject the Church is keen to promote. (UCANEWS)