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PHILIPPINES: DIOCESAN NEWSPAPER LAUNCHED

The Public and Media Affairs Office of Pasig Diocese launched a bi-monthly newspaper called "Daloy" (flow) in December 2005. The publication aims to disseminate news on happenings in the 27 parishes, 2 chaplaincies, 15 Catholic schools and 8 religious houses in Pasig's circumscription. Pasig is situated along the eastern border of Metro Manila. In a congratulatory message, Pasig Bishop Francisco San Diego says the publication is "appropriately called" because the municipality is where the historical "Pasig River" flows. The river facilitated trade during Spanish-colonial times but industrialization led to its demise. Efforts are now expended for its rehabilitation and just as the river is foreseen to give life anew to Pasig, Bishop San Diego also hopes that "Daloy" will also give life to the diocese. Pasig diocese is two years old, and the newspaper will "truly connect us with one another," the bishops says. (DALOY)

MACAU: DIOCESAN COMMUNICATIONS CENTRE CELEBRATES 40TH ANNIVERSARY

The Diocese of Macau celebrated its 430th founding anniversary and 40 years of service of the Macau Diocesan Communications Centre on January 23, 2006 with an exhibit on the history of the Church in Macau entitled "Respect life, live in harmony, protect the environment." Macau Bishop Joseph Li Hong Sheng opened the exhibit which highlighted the works of different bishops since the diocese's creation in 1576. The diocesan communications centre was started 40 years ago by Pauline Sister Pia Cantieri and since then has helped in evangelization, youth formation and coordination between the different ministries in Macau through audio-visual means. (FIDES)

INDIA: DIOCESES IN SOUTHERN STATE DRAFT PASTORAL PLAN FOR COMMUNICATIONS

Catholic dioceses in the southern state of Andhra Pradesh have prepared a five-year pastoral plan aimed at making their social communications more effective. The plan was drafted January 18, 2006 at the end of a three-day workshop organized by the national bishops' Commission for Social Communications in Hyderabad. About 30 diocesan communications directors, bishops, nuns and priests joined the workshop. The plan proposes to set up a Regional Communication Center for Communications by the end of June to coordinate programs in the state's 12 dioceses. At least one pastoral communications program is also planned every year for Church leaders and Religious major superiors, and another one for Clergy, religious and lay leaders in their respective dioceses. (UCAN)

HONG KONG: CATHOLIC FESTIVAL DRAW CROWDS, NON-CHRISTIANS IN PARTICULAR

A Catholic Festival organized by the Catholic Students' Association (CSA) at Hong Kong City University in late 2005 drew crowds, especially non-Christian students from the university. The festival aimed to inform students about the Catholic faith and gain new members for the association. CSA is a voluntary association of students whose goal is to share the Catholic faith with non-Catholic members. (FIDES)

JAPAN: 'JAPAN CATHOLIC NEWS' GOES ONLINE

After 57 years of service to the local church and elsewhere, the monthly newsletter of the Japanese bishops' conference "Japan Catholic News" (JCN) will cease its printed version and go online. To continue serving English speaking readers, news from the "Katorikku Shimbun" will still be translated and compiled in a section called "Japan Scene." The decision was made at the November 10, 2005 meeting of the Standing Committee of the Catholic Bishops' Conference of Japan. The online newsletter will be available at the CBCJ website <<http://cbcj.catholic.jp>> free of charge. JCN was

first published on June 5, 1948. (JCN)

TAJIKISTAN: CHRISTMAS PLAY BRINGS STORY OF SALVATION TO THOSE UNFAMILIAR WITH IT

Tajiks who attended Mass at St Joseph's parish church saw the salvation stories from Adam, Moses and Abraham down to the coming of the Messiah. The stories were presented in a play conducted after Mass on Christmas Day on a stage adorned with pasteboard decorations. Sr Maria Pocs, director of the play, said she hoped the presentation touched people's hearts and helped them appreciate the full meaning of Christmas. (UCAN)

INDONESIA: INCULTURATED MASS FEATURES WATER, SUPPER AND TRADITIONAL THEATER

The Christmas Eve Mass at the Lor Senowo mission station on the western slope of Mount Merapi incorporated various elements of local culture to deepen reflection on the meaning of the season. Jesus, "Spring of Life," was represented not as Child-in-a-manger but as earthen vessels filled with water. After Communion, there was "mangan kuwi sembahyang" (eating as prayer) where the people ate rice from banana-leaf containers. This practice, says Mass presider Fr Vincentius Kirjito, reminded people to respect every grain of rice as God's gift. The special Christmas Eve Mass also included a 15-minute play from the story of Raden Parikesit, a character from Javanese folklore. The performance was held after the Scripture readings to highlight the similarity between the character's story and the story of Jesus' birth. (UCAN)



THAILAND: CHURCH COMMUNICATIONS OFFICE GAINS OUTLET FOR PROMOTING CHRISTIAN VALUES

The nationwide daily "Lok Wan Nee" (world today) launched a religion page on December 5, 2005 featuring the Catholic faith on Mondays and different religions on other weekdays. The Catholic Social Communications of Thailand (CSCT), communications arm of the Thai bishops' conference, maintains the Catholic page and has published so far a photo of Thai Monarch King Bhumiphol Adulyade meeting with the late Pope John Paul II, and a story about the apostolic nuncio to Thailand meeting with a local Muslim leader. Bishop George Yod Phimphisian, CSCT chairman, also maintains a Bible reflection column on the page. (UCAN)

KOREA: BISHOPS' NEWSLETTER GIVEN A NEW LOOK

The monthly newsletter of the Catholic Bishops' Conference of Korea (CBCK), "Samok," was updated and given a new look confirming the Korean Church's commitment to use media and information technology (IT) for evangelization and pastoral care. The new edition Samok, which is mainly distributed to clergy and pastoral workers, will include topics such as bio-ethics, communication and migration "to be more of service and use" in these modern times, editor Msgr Basil Cho Kyu-man said. Last year, the Bishops' social communication commission planned to create a special body to deal with media relations and IT projects. Several dioceses are now active in IT like Uijeongbu diocese's Internet UTV. All this like Samok's reformatting contribute to what the Korean Church calls "cyber-mission." (FIDES)

INDIA

CHECK CREDIBILITY OF COMMUNICATOR, BISHOP SAYS

Bishop Thomas Dabre of Vasai diocese delivered a lecture on "Media and Truth" at Adichunchanagiri Mutt in Mandhya district, Karnataka on November 20, 2005. Speaking before leaders from Hindu, Zoroastrian, Jain, Jewish and Buddhist religions, Bishop Dabre said much harm was unleashed because of media's uncritical approach to communication. "Verifying facts and correctly interpreting them is the role of media," the prelate said. He urged the audience to ask basic questions like who is communicating and how credible the communicator is. "Interreligious dialogue takes place when we share the living experiences of other's faith," the bishop added. The lecture series was organized by FUREC (Foundation for Unity of Religions and Enlightened Citizenship). Bishop Thomas Dabre is a member of FUREC and the first Catholic bishop to deliver a FUREC lecture. (THE HERALD)

CATHOLIC WEEKLY 'JEEVANAADAM' LAUNCHED

A new Catholic weekly "Jeevanaadam" (The Voice of Life) was launched December 4, 2005 by Union Minister Oscar Fernandez at a function held in Kochi, Kerala. The aim is to empower especially rural people thru print medium and help them achieve total development. "Jeevanaadam" is sponsored by the Kerala Region Latin Catholic Bishops' Council. (SAR NEWS)

TV CHANNEL CELEBRATES CHRISTMAS WITH JESUS FOCUS

ETV Bangla in Kolkata had a 15 days slot in its popular meditation program "Upashona" from December 11-25, 2005 giving its main focus on "Christ of Christmas." Fr Robin Gomes, sdb, director of Kolkata's Commission for Social Communication, was presenter of the program. (THE HERALD)

PHILIPPINES: CBCP PRESS CORPS SPEND WEEKEND WITH ARCHBISHOP

Church beat reporters from six major news dailies spent a full weekend with outgoing CBCP (Catholic Bishops' Conference of the Philippines) President, Archbishop Fernando Capalla, in Davao southern Philippines September 2005. The prelate engaged the reporters, who recently are referred to as "CBCP Press Corps," in candid dialogue and took them to a Muslim community and different tourist places in Davao. This exercise is part of a series of familiarization tours of dioceses all over the country organized by the CBCP Media Office. "Bishops and media practitioners joining hands would mean strengthening the power of good to push our country forward, Archbishop Capalla said. He also proposes a "Bishops-Mediamen's Forum" to seal the friendship and increase collaborative efforts between the Church and media. (CBCP MONITOR)

TAIWAN: 'TAIWAN CHURCH NEWS' REACHES GOVERNMENT OFFICES

Members of Taiwan government's executive branch said they came to know of the positions and attitudes of the Presbyterian Church in Taiwan by reading "Taiwan Church News." As a result of this, the weekly paper will be distributed to government agencies and officers starting February 2006. First published as a monthly in 1885, "Taiwan Church News" is considered the first regular newspaper in Taiwan's history. (TCN)

God is love (1 Jn 4:8)... It is from there that our definition of love must begin. In this contemplation the Christian discovers the path along which his life and love must move.

- Pope Benedict XVI, *Deus Caritas Est* (2005, no. 12)

PAY-FOR-NEWS POLICY SHOCK RELIGIOUS COMMUNITIES

Some religious communities in West Bengal got a rude shock when Kolkata-based "The Herald" Catholic weekly charged them for publishing obituaries of deceased members of their congregations. The governing board of the newspaper came up with this novel income-generating scheme, but a former editor of the same weekly opines this is inappropriate. "A Catholic paper taking money to publish news is tantamount to MPs soliciting money to ask questions in parliament," Salesian Father C.M. Paul said. "Pay to print your news and sale of editorial pages have been condemned both by journalists and editors in secular media," the executive board member of the Indian Catholic Press Association added. "The Herald" is India's oldest Catholic weekly established in 1839 by the Archdiocese of Calcutta. (SAR NEWS)

CATHOLIC EDITION OF NEW TESTAMENT IN PUNJABI LANGUAGE RELEASED

The Diocese of Jalandhar released the first Catholic edition of "New Testament" in Punjabi language was released on December 27, 2005 by Bishop Symphorian Keeprath of Jalandhar. The event coincided with the Annual Missionary Meeting at Holy Trinity Regional Major Seminary auditorium. The Bible translation work took 10 years to complete. (SAR NEWS)

ST. XAVIER'S INSTITUTE OF PERFORMING ARTS INAUGURATED

St Xavier's Intitute of Performing Arts (XIPA) was inaugurated by Bishop Thomas Macwan of Ahmedabad on January 2, 2006. Fr Vincent D'Souza, founder-director of the institute, says XIPA envisions the overall development of a person in areas beyond academics like music, dance and dramatics. (SAR NEWS)