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MALAYSIA: WORLD COMMUNICATION DAY CELEBRATION

St Dominic Church in Lahad Datu celebrated World Communication Day (WCD) on June 11 with a sunset Mass and a powerpoint presentation on the Papal WCD messages since 1967. Various media instruments like microphone, laptop and camera were also offered in the Offertory. On June 10, members of the diocesan and parish media organizations joined a half-day recollection facilitated by an official of the Diocesan Social Communication Commission (DSCC). Lahad Datu is a town located in Tawau Division, in the east of Sabah, eastern Malaysia on the island of Borneo. (CATHOLIC SABAH)

INDIA: DAUGHTERS OF ST. PAUL START MINI-LIBRARIES

The Sisters of the Daughters of St. Paul (DSP), in collaboration with the Italian Episcopal Conference (IEC), have provided child-care institutes and others across the country a total of 200 mini-libraries consisting of books, cassettes, CDs and VCDs on a wide range of topics. Fifteen of them are mini-libraries in rural and poor localities of Ahmedabad diocese. In Secunderabad, Care Foundation for Children and Aging, another beneficiary of the DSP-IEC initiative, is so encouraged by the project that it hopes to expand the library given by the sisters. The Sisters have been in India for more than 50 years maintaining 15 book centers throughout the country. (TNL)

PHILIPPINES: MEDIA CENTER FOR DIALOGUE AND PEACE RISES IN HARMONY VILLAGE

The Silsilah Dialogue Movement in Zamboanga, southern Philippines, will open a "Media Center for Dialogue and Peace" as a venue to promote inter-faith dialogue thru the media. A structure is now being erected in the Movement's Harmony Village to house a TV/radio production studio and Silsilah's "Media Desk" to be chaired by multi-awarded director, Marilou Diaz-Abaya. The Center will produce radio plays, TV spots and similar materials to spread Silsilah's vision of peace and dialogue. Silsilah Dialogue Movement was founded by PIME Father Sebastiano D'Ambrá in 1984 as a "common house and family" for Muslims and Christians. Its Dialogue Institute (SDI) conducts long and short term courses, seminars, workshops and immersion programs in dialogue. Their website is at <www.silsilahdialogue.org> (SB)

INDIA: INTERNATIONAL FILM FESTIVAL AWARDS KERALA CATHOLIC DIRECTOR

Film director Leo Thaddeus has been awarded second prize in the feature film category of the 21st International Catholic Film and Multimedia Festival 2006, held in Niepokalanow, Poland May 17-21, 2006. The Kerala-based director was recognized for his film "Tree of Life," a story of a family's struggle with abortion, relationship and career issues. The international Catholic film festival was organized by SIGNIS, World Catholic Association for Communication. (TNL)

INDIA: POSTAGE STAMP ON GERMAN MISSIONARY TO BE RELEASED

The Indian government has decided to release a postal stamp on German Christian missionary, Bartholomaeus Ziegenbalg, to mark the tercentenary celebration of his arrival to India. Ziegenbalg, said to be the first Protestant missionary to arrive in India at Tranquebar July 9, 1706, translated Tamil grammatical prose into Latin, introduced the printing press in 1712, and published many Christian books in Tamil. A seminar entitled "The Contribution of Ziegenbalg" was held July 4 in Tranquebar, Nagapattinam district in Tamil Nadu state as part of a week-long celebration in honor of the missionary. (SAR NEWS)

INDONESIA: CATHOLICS LAUNCH MAGAZINE TO PREVENT HIV/AIDS SPREAD

Catholics in Maumere diocese, in Indonesia's Nusa Tenggara Timur (NTT) province, have launched a monthly magazine "Creative News" on June 23 to help stop the spread of HIV and AIDS in the province. The magazine presents news and articles on issues related to sexual behavior, drug abuse and HIV/AIDS. Yayasan Peduli AIDS Flores (Flores AIDS Care Foundation), publisher of the magazine, says the 10,000 copies printed initially were distributed in Sikka and the other 14 NTT districts. NTT province records 67 HIV/AIDS cases in 2005. Indonesia had a sharp increase in AIDS cases from 7,090 in June 2005 to 10,156 this June. (UCANEWS)

INDIA: CHURCH CENTER WANTS GUJARAT TO WITHDRAW MANIPULATIVE TEXT BOOK

"Prashant," the Ahmedabad-based Center for Human Rights, Justice and Peace, wrote to officials of the Gujarat State Board of School Textbooks calling for the immediate withdrawal of the Std. X Social Science Textbook citing its bad language, spelling and grammatical errors, factual inaccuracies and statements that are highly manipulative. To the complaint, Prashant Director, Father Cedric Prakash, included a two-page list of the book's mistakes, inaccuracies and distortions. (THE HERALD)

BANGLADESH: PRIESTS AND RELIGIOUS ATTEND MEDIA RELATIONS WORKSHOP

Some 36 priests and religious from all six Bangladesh dioceses gathered for a media relations training-workshop June 26-28 in Dhaka. The workshop titled "Meet the Press" was organized by the Christian Communications Centre (CCC) of the Bangladeshi Catholic bishops and Caritas Development Institute of Caritas Bangladesh. The workshop covered public relations principles, the role of priests and religious in media relations, the value of expressing views thru media, and how to deal with journalists. (UCANEWS)

SRI LANKA: CHURCH-RUN SINHALESE PAPER TURNS 140

“Gnanartha Pradeepaya” (lamp of wisdom) weekly, published by Colombo archdiocese, celebrates 140th anniversary this year with a change in format. On June 25, the oldest Sinhalese newspaper in Sri Lanka, appeared in a tabloid-size, 10-column anniversary edition. The national weekly has 18 pages, with its front and back pages in full color. Over the decades, it has developed from merely reporting Church news and papal speeches to also highlighting political, social and economic issues in the country from a Christian perspective. The paper was founded by John Fernando, a layman, on June 7, 1866, and started out as a four-page broadsheet of Church news and papal speeches, put out by a team of eight people and one priest, Fr Peter Elari. (UCANEWS)

NEPAL: CHRISTIANS HOLD OPEN-AIR MUSICAL TO CELEBRATE NEW RELIGIOUS FREEDOM

The National Churches Fellowship of Nepal (NCFN) staged a three-hour “Valley-wide Good News Musical Program” on July 1 at Khula Manch open-air stage in Kathmandu. About a quarter of the thousands present were Christians who were reminded that they are now free to sing, dance and express their faith as openly as they wish. The outdoor musical program showcased songs in Nepalese performed by well-known singers. NCFN, comprised of 1,200 churches, is the country’s largest Protestant Church network in Nepal. (UCANEWS)

PAKISTAN: CATHOLIC BROADCASTING ASSOCIATION MARKS 50 YEARS

The Catholic Broadcasting Association (CBA) of Lahore archdiocese celebrates its golden jubilee this year. The organization was founded on January 31, 1956 by a group of Catholics wanting to produce programs for Radio Pakistan Lahore and Pakistan TV Lahore for airing during religious feasts. CBA has introduced many media talents, writers, singers and actors to the mainstream media industry in Pakistan. (RABITA MANZIL)

PHILIPPINES: MANILA ARCHDIOCESE’S SATELLITE TELECAST CONTINUES

“TV Maria,” the satellite channel run by the archdiocese of Manila, continues to air “deep, human and Filipino values” over channel 21 on Dream Satellite since it started operations on January 1 this year. TV Maria supplies fresh 8-hour programming daily, produced by local Catholic organizations, which are then replayed twice by Dream Satellite. This is acceptable, TV Maria officials say, because Dream’s footprint covers the whole North America and 22 countries in the Middle East, beside the Philippines and a large section of Asia. Therefore, when it is midnight in Manila, it is 12 noon in New York. TV Maria’s board of directors is chaired by Manila Archbishop Gaudencio Cardinal Rosales. The president is Bishop Bernardino Cortez, chairman of the Filipino bishops’ commission for social communication. (PHILSTAR)

INDIA: ROMAN-SCRIPT LOBBY FINDS HOPE IN KONKANI BIBLE

The All Goa Citizen’s Committee for Social Justice and Action (AGCCSJA), a civil rights group, has petitioned to India’s President A.P.J. Abdul Kalam to adopt Roman script as the official script of the Konkani language. Konkani, one of India’s 22 official languages and the official state language of Goa, has no script of its own. The group cites the immense popularity of the first Konkani-language Bible written in Roman script as enough evidence to convince Abdul Kalam that the Roman script is the language of the masses. (UCANEWS)

HONG KONG: DIOCESE LAUNCHES MUSEUM DEDICATED TO EARLY LOCAL CHURCH HISTORY

Bishop John Tong officiated the inauguration of the mini-museum “Hong Kong Catholic Diocesan Heritage Centre” on July 9. The two-room facility located inside the Holy Spirit Seminary College on Hong Kong island aims to help Catholics appreciate the work of the early local Church and its development. More than 100 artifacts of historical significance are being displayed for the official opening in October. But the facility will eventually have more than 2,000 artifacts, officials say, allowing periodic changing of displays. Father Thomas Law Kwok-fai, chairperson of the Diocesan Liturgy Commission and convener of the center’s main working group says, the center will help the local Church “remember the work of early missionaries” and thereby “clarify our own mission.” (UCANEWS)



*... be true to the self-
communication of
God ... so that his
love can truly
become the
prevalent measure
of the world.*

*- Pope Benedict
XVI, 40th World
Communication Day
2006*

INDIA: RETIRED BISHOP THOMAS FERNANDO OF TIRUCHIRAPALLI PASSES AWAY

Retired Bishop Thomas Fernando of Tiruchirapall died July 4 evening in Tuticorin at age 93. A native of Idinthakarai in Tirunelveli district, Bishop Fernando was a Canon Lawyer, priest for 67 years and prelate for 56 years. He was the mentor of Kalai Kaviri Arts Institute and Kalai Arasi Music School. Under his sponsorship, the famous “Yesu Kaviyam,” the epic on the life of Jesus Christ was written by the late Tamil poet laureate, Kannadasan. (SAR NEWS)

CHINA: BIBLE IN CHINESE WRITTEN ON SILK IS GUINNESS’ ‘LONGEST BIBLE IN THE WORLD’

A 50-volume Christian Bible written on a piece of silk 5,007 meters long is recorded as the world’s longest Bible in the Guinness Book of World Records. The Bible was done by a single artist using some 900,000 Cao Shu Chinese characters which first appeared during the Han dynasty (206BC-220AD). It is on display at the Exhibition Hall in Beijing. (FIDES)

JAPAN: CATHOLICS IN HIROSHIMA LAUNCHES SUNDAY GOSPEL PROGRAMS

The Catholic community in Hiroshima has started Sunday Gospel programs for the local station Yamaguchi Radio as a means of evangelization and promoting Christian values. The initiative came from Italian Jesuit Father Domenico Vitali who saw radio’s power to reach families and young people in the locality. The local Church gives full support to this project seeing radio as a means of communication, dialogue, Christian growth and intercultural understanding. Catholics in Japan are now more than one million, 450,000 of whom are nationals and the remaining 560,000 are immigrant workers. (FIDES)