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INDONESIA/TIMOR: MEDIA APOSTOLATE PIONEER DIES

Jesuit Father Ruedi Hofmann, 70, pioneer of media apostolate in Indonesia and East Timor, died May 29 while on home visit to Switzerland. Fr Hofmann started his media-based pastoral work in Indonesia in 1963. He founded "Puskat Audio-visual Studio" in Yogyakarta, aiming to provide media education and production training for Catholics and non-Catholics in the country. Fr Hofmann was director of the studio from 1994 to 1996, and has served as president of Unda-OCIC (now Signis) Indonesia. In 2000, Fr Hofmann moved to Timor Leste, where he pioneered the audiovisual production center "Casa Producao do Audiovisual." The center researched Timor Leste's history and produced educational cartoons to teach people about their heritage. Its programs are aired via Timor's national TV channel. On May 31, around 1,500 Catholics and Church leaders attended a requiem Mass for the deceased priest in Dili's Balide parish. Bishop Alberto Ricardo da Silva of Dili officiated the Mass. (UCANEWS/CAMECO)

SRI LANKA: REMARKABLE PRIEST MOURNED

Over 700 priests, sisters and laypeople gathered to pay their last respects to educator, scholar and journalist Fr Welgama Lekam Appuhamilage Don Peter who died on April 24 at age 92. Fr Don Peter was a historian and prolific Church writer and defender of Catholic schools against government takeover in the 1960s. Colombo Archbishop Oswald Gomis led the funeral Mass at St Joseph's Seminary in Colombo. The prelate recalled the priest's efforts to block the nationalization of Catholic schools in 1960. Fr Don Peter wrote over 400 books including authoritative works on Sri Lankan Catholic Church history. Oblate Father Tissa Balasuriya, now 83, said Fr Don Peter was a storehouse of knowledge about the mission history in Sri Lanka. (SE)

PHILIPPINES: BISHOP CAUTIONS ON MEDIA USE

Avoid exaggerated and distorted media content, urged Manila Auxiliary Bishop Bernardino Cortez. In his message for the 42nd World Communication Day, celebrated on Ascension Sunday, May 4, 2008, the prelate-chairman of the Philippine bishops' commission for social communication, told the faithful to become authentic communicators of the Good News, anchored on Jesus. "Catholic media allow us to grow in our faith, amid other wares that only stifle our quest for life's true meaning and confuse the truths of our faith," the prelate added. There are over 40 Catholic radio stations nationwide as well as few terrestrial and cable TV stations, diocesan newspapers, media centers and a Catholic news service. (CNUA)



COMMUNICATION FACULTIES IN CATHOLIC UNIVERSITIES MULL OVER FORMATION

Representatives of communication departments of 45 Catholic universities from 43 countries gathered May 22-24 at the Pontifical Urbanianum University in Rome for a first congress of its kind, organized by the Pontifical Council for Social Communications. The meeting aimed to reflect on the identity and mission of communication faculties in Catholic universities, and "to strengthen and expand the cooperative relationship between the Pontifical Council and Catholic universities." Pope Benedict XVI received the participants on May 23 urging them "to promote truth in information, bringing our peers to reflect upon events, with the aim of being educators of human beings and builders of a better world. It is also necessary to promote justice and solidarity, and at all times to respect the value and dignity of individuals, who have the right not to be injured in matters concerning their private life." The meeting was one of the first moves of Archbishop Claudio Ma. Celli, the new president of the Pontifical Council. From Asia, presenters in the panels were Fr. Jacob Srampickal, sj (Gregorian University, Rome) and Fr Franz-Josef Eilers, svd (FABC-OSC). Participants from the region were Dr Chainarong Monthienvichienchai (Thailand), Bishop Bernardino Cortez (Philippines); Fr George Plathotam, sdb (India); Fr Alfons Duka, svd (Indonesia); Fr. Min-Soo Kim (Korea); Fr Jude Botelho (India), Dean Lilian Sison (Philippines), Mr Augustine Loorthusamy (Malaysia/Signis) and Sr Lucilla Baldado, spc (Philippines). (H2O/CBCI/CBCP MONITOR/OSC)

BANGLADESH: WORKSHOP HIGHLIGHTS TRUTH AND ACCURACY IN JOURNALISM

The Bangladesh Catholic Press Association and the Bishops' communication office organized a journalism workshop in Dhaka on May 19 with some 40 young people as participants. The workshop marked World Communications Day celebration, and had presenters stressing the need for truth and accuracy in news reporting. Bishop Gervas Rozario of Rajshahi, chairman of the Episcopal Commission for Social Communications, spoke about the Pope's message to the young communicators. All over the country, special homilies were said in local churches to mark the special day. (UCANEWS)

STYLE BOOK FOR CHURCH JOURNALISTS

The FABC-Office of Social Communication has published in May 2008, the "Asian Church Glossary & Stylebook," as a resource and help for Church journalists and researchers. Hector Welgampola, a veteran journalist from Sri Lanka and executive editor of UCANEWS (Union of Catholic Asia News) from 1988-2001, authored the 150-page book, the 8th volume in the FABC-OSC book series. Order from Logos Publications Manila, Email: info@logospublications.com



MALAYSIA: GO AHEAD FOR MALAYSIAN CATHOLIC NEWSPAPER'S LAWSUIT TO USE "ALLAH"

High Court Judge Lau Bee Lan has ruled on May 19 that The Herald's lawsuit seeking the right to use the word "Allah" may proceed. The Catholic weekly is seeking to overturn a government order prohibiting the paper from using the word "Allah" to mean God in its Malay-language section. The government says the word refers only to the Muslim God and its use by non-Muslims might confuse Muslim believers. The newspaper also asks the court to rule that the word "Allah" is not for the exclusive use of Muslims. The Herald has argued that "Allah" is an Arabic word that predates Islam and has been used for centuries to mean "God." Islam is the official religion of Malaysia. About 60 percent of the country's 27 million people are Muslims. (CN)

SINGAPORE: NEW LOOK FOR 'CATHOLIC NEWS' ONLINE

Catholic News Online has revamped its website and now sports a fresher look. The site <www.catholic.org.sg/cn> offers Google translations into French, German, Spanish and Italian languages. Meanwhile, the printed Archdiocesan bi-weekly launched an on-line version of its "What's On" section on March 27. It is a regular section of the newspaper where Catholic individuals and organizations can post information about their upcoming activities. The "What's On" blog, which lifts the limits of space and caters to Catholics using the Internet as their primary source of information, can be found at <<http://catholicevents.wordpress.com>> (CN)

INDIA: 14TH NATIONAL JOURNALISTS' CONFERENCE

The 14th National Journalists' Conference of the Indian Catholic Press Association was held May 12 in Bangalore. Participants included Bangalore Archbishop Bernard Moras, CBCI (Catholic Bishops' Conference of India) Media Office Director, Bishop Henry D'Souza, "Right to Information" activists Shailesh Gandhi and Aruna Roy, and international participants like Joseph Chitilapilly (secretary general of UCIP, the International Catholic Union of the Press), Jan Jalek (special correspondent, Epoch Times, Canada), and other media personnel. Addressing the participants, Archbishop Moras said the Catholic media must encourage true democratic participation in social responsibility. "Media must use and sustain human community in different sections - economic, political, cultural, educational and religious," the prelate added. (FIDES)

PHILIPPINES: BISHOPS FIGHT VS CHILD PORN

The Catholic Bishops' Conference of the Philippines (CBCP) is urging public leaders and ordinary people to join the battle to end child pornography and to ban pornographic materials. In a news conference in May this year, Msgr. Pedro Quitorio, CBCP Media Office Director, urged people to demand, "that ending child pornography be made a top priority of the government." "This is a disease, like the evil itself haunting our society today," the priest said. In July 2007, both CBCP and the government's Optical Media Board formed an ad hoc committee to address the influx of porn materials involving minors in sex acts. (CBCP MONITOR)

ASIAN CHRISTIAN COMMUNICATORS WORK ON PEACE STRATEGIES FOR LOCAL COMMUNITIES

The 41 participants at the Asia Region - World Association for Christian Communication (AR-WACC) assembly May 17-20 in Chiang Mai, Thailand agreed to help build viable communities of peace in the region. The participants from Bangladesh, Hong Kong, India, Indonesia, Korea, Myanmar, Pakistan, Philippines and Thailand issued a statement following the meeting titled "Communication is peace: Building viable communities in Asia." They explained that building such peace communities necessitates a holistic approach by addressing economic, political, cultural and religious obstacles to peace. AR-WACC members plan to work out strategies to deal with poverty in the region beginning with establishing poverty-reporting standards in India and extending later to Indonesia, Philippines, Myanmar and China. (APEN)

MUSICAL DIPLOMACY BETWEEN CHINA AND THE HOLY SEE

Pope Benedict XVI along with some 7,000 people gathered in the Vatican's Paul VI Audience Hall on May 7 to witness the China Philharmonic Orchestra and Shanghai Opera House Chorus perform Mozart's *Requiem in D Minor*. A senior Vatican official described the concert as "a sign of goodwill on both sides" that should be viewed within the broader framework of the ongoing dialogue between China and the Holy See. A spokesperson for China's Ministry of Foreign Affairs, meanwhile, has said that Beijing is prepared to take the next steps in improving relations with the Holy See. At the end of the concert, Pope Benedict XVI thanked the musicians and sent his greetings to all of the people of China. (SE)

ASIANS BAG PRIZES AT 23RD WARSAW FILM FESTIVAL

The 23rd International Catholic Film and Multimedia Festival concluded at Niepokalanow, Warsaw, June 1, recognized four works from Asia. Two productions submitted by three Indian directors won second prizes, and a third film got special mention in the feature film category. The film "Bethlehem van Java" produced by Puskat Audio-Visual Studio, Indonesia won second award in the film feature category. The festival held from May 28 to June 1 under the patronage of the Primate of Poland, Cardinal Jozef Glemp, included a 11-member jury. This year, 200 entries were received from 15 mainly European countries. (CBCI/ SAV-PUSKAT/ CFA)

INDIA: NEW BISHOP OF KADAPA DIOCESE STRESSES IMPORTANCE OF LOCAL MUSIC, CULTURE IN LITURGY

The newly appointed bishop of Kadapa diocese in Andhra Pradesh has underlined the importance of local culture and heritage in the liturgical celebrations of the Church. Addressing a gathering of music lovers in Vijayawada, Andhra Pradesh May 31, Bishop G. Prasad, the chief guest of the valedictory function, explained how in the growing globalisation scenario local culture ran the risk of neglect. He also spoke of the Church's role in upholding cultural values, and training the younger generation to become culturally conscious. (CBCI)

PHILIPPINES: CHURCH HERITAGE COMMISSION USES MULTI-MEDIA IN EUCHARISTIC PRESENTATION

The Archdiocesan Church Cultural Heritage Commission (ACCHC) in Davao uses multi-media in their Eucharistic presentation to children. ACCHC officer Daisy Apat, said they decided to use multimedia in the exhibit so that children will become keener to learn the significance of the Eucharist. Dubbed as "Exhibit on the Eucharist," ACCHC's presentation began in May and will last up till June 30. (CBCP MONITOR)



"ensure that media remain at the service of the person and of the common good, and that they foster man's ethical formation... man's inner growth"
-- Pope Benedict XVI, 42nd World Communication Day Message 2008