



**FABC**  
**OSC**

# Communication | N F O

FEDERATION OF ASIAN BISHOPS' CONFERENCES - OFFICE OF SOCIAL COMMUNICATION

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Vol. XXI, No. 11

November 2006

## **TWO ASIANS APPOINTED CONSULTORS TO PONTIFICAL COUNCIL FOR SOCIAL COMMUNICATIONS**

Pope Benedict XVI has appointed two Asians as new consultors to the Pontifical Council for Social Communications. They are: Jesuit Father Jacob Srampickal, director of the Interdisciplinary Centre for Social Communications (CICS) at the Rome-based Pontifical Gregorian University, and Mr. Ignatius Handoko, president of Indosiar, the leading private national television station in Indonesia. They both join fellow Asians who were re-appointed this year to the same post: Dr Chainarong Monthienvichienchai, chancellor of St John's University (Bangkok) and former Unda/OCIC World president, Fr Franz-Josef Eilers, svd, FABC-OSC executive secretary, and Fr Robert Astorino, mm, executive director of UCANews. (SAR NEWS/OSC)

## **INDIA: ST. XAVIER'S AHMEDABAD LAUNCHES JOURNALISM COURSE**

St. Xavier's College Ahmedabad has started a one-year certificate course in journalism in September 2006. The University Grants Commission has approved the course along with other job-oriented courses. These courses are held on Saturdays and Sundays and are open to students of arts and science faculties. The course is handled by columnist and author Father Varghese Paul, sj. (THE HERALD)

## **PHILIPPINES: CATHOLIC ARTIST DRAWS 'THE LAST SUPPER' WITH POOR CHILDREN AS MODELS**

Joey Velasco's painting of "The Last Supper" which depicted poor children from Metro Manila aged 4-14 now hangs at the entrance of the major seminary building of University of Santo Tomas in Manila. The painting dubbed "Hapag ng Pag-asa" (table of hope) and completed in December 2005 reveals a story of greater hunger than a plate of rice could satisfy, Velasco, 39, said. On October 13, the businessman-turned-artist launched a book titled "They Have Jesus: The Stories of the Children of Hapag" based on the stories of the children used in the painting. (UCANEWS)

## **FATHER AMBROS EICHENBERGER DIES AT 77**

Dominican Father Ambros Eichenberger passed away on October 24, 2006 after a long illness. He was 77 years old. Fr Ambros was president of the international Catholic organization for film (OCIC) from 1980 to 1991, director of the Swiss Catholic Film Commission from 1972 to 1994, and member of the Pontifical Commission for the Means of Social Communication from 1985 to 1991. Fr Ambros used film for religious instruction and cultural studies. (SIGNIS)



## **INDIA: BISHOP SAYS ART HAS HELPED IN COMMUNICATION, PASTORAL DUTIES**

Holy Cross Bishop Stephen Rotluanga of Aizawl drew cartoons and sketches at the Northeast India Catholic Bishops pastoral conference in August in Shillong, Meghalaya State, as well as at the February plenary meeting of the Catholic Bishops' Conference of India (CBCI) in Bangalore. The Bishop says his drawing skills help him in his pastoral life and in communicating with people. Caricatures or cartoons "are a humorous way to get the pertinent points across without anyone taking offense." An artistic sense of seeing the truth in things can be "applied in liturgy, social development and all other aspects of diocesan administration," the bishop adds, "because art can be applied in all aspects of human needs." Calling God "the greatest artist," the bishop expresses his conviction that "we have to use all forms of art and have to use various forms of communication to communicate God's creativity." (UCANEWS)

## **PAKISTAN: FIRST CATHOLIC WEEKLY LAUNCHED**

The first Catholic news weekly titled "Agahi" was launched in Karachi on November 25. Father Arthur Charles, the priest behind the publication says Agahi is aimed at Christians across Pakistan but it is to be a "transdenominational and interfaith enterprise." The editorial and advisory boards of the publication include Catholics, Muslims, Hindus and Sikhs. It will be managed by a group of young people to be supported by veteran journalists. The weekly will also feature local and international news, and stories impacting lives and faith. (HERALD)

## **PHILIPPINES: RADIO VERITAS DISPLAYS 100 IMAGES OF OUR LADY**

Radio Veritas-Philippines, "Radyo Totoo," staged a "Marian Radio Pilgrimage" in Manila in October showcasing 100 images of the Blessed Virgin Mary from all over the Philippines. The exhibit includes a precious image owned by late Manila Archbishop Jaime Cardinal Sin, the picture of the *Virgen delos Remedios* from San Fernando, Pampanga and the icon of *Nuestra Senora dela Merced* kept at Candaba. The Marian pilgrimage sought to encourage the recitation of the rosary as Mary requested in her many apparitions. Radio Veritas-Philippines works under the auspices of Manila archdiocese and is legally separate from FABC's short-wave Radio Veritas Asia. (FIDES/OSC)

## **INDIA: SHALOME TV CHAIRPERSON BAGS MARYVIJAYAM AWARD**

Shalome TV Chairman Benny Punnathara was awarded the Swami Devanand Memorial Darshana Award at a function in Thrissur, Kerala on September 30. The award was given by Maryvijayam Catholic monthly magazine, the 56-year old publication of Thrissur Archdiocese, catering to the literary and socio-cultural needs of local Catholics. The memento as well as cash prize was handed over by Thrissur Archbishop Jacob Thoomkuzhy. (THE HERALD)

## **BISHOP DESIGNS THAI MADONNA**

In the early 1990s, Redemptorist Bishop George Yod Phimphisan of Udon Thani, Thailand conceived the idea of an image of the Blessed Virgin Mary in Thai style and designed by a local artist. His collaborator, lay Catholic and Fine Arts Professor Bancha Srivong, thus started his research consulting several other experts on the matter. Finally, one professor was able to draw up a picture fitting to Bishop George's specifications. This original picture now hangs in the prelate's house in Udon Thani. The next step was to carve a statue of the Thai Madonna. Again, with the help of Prof. Bancha, this was materialized. A two-foot statue was made entirely in gold finish following the local tradition of coloring venerable objects with only one color, and gold is considered royal and sacred in Thailand. In 1996, a replica of the statue was given to John Paul II on the golden jubilee of the Pope's sacerdotal ordination. That gift of the Thai bishops was kept in the Vatican museum for all the faithful to see. Bishop George is chairman of the Thai Bishops' commission for social communications. He was chairman of the FABC-OSC Executive Board from 1998 to 2004. (CBCT/OSC)

## **INDIA: BISHOP GEORGE ANATHIL RECEIVES SADBHAVANA AWARD**

Indore Bishop George Anathil, svd received the Sadbhavana Award from M.P. Governor Dr. Balram Jakhad on November 4. The award was constituted jointly by two leading NGOs in Indore, Sadbhavana Pratishan (Harmony Foundation) and Lok Maitri, both working for communal harmony and peace in society. Bishop Anathil was chosen for this award for actively promoting interreligious dialogue and spearheading work in education, health and social service. Bishop Anathil was chairman of the FABC-OSC Executive Board from 1992 to 1998. (THE HERALD/OSC)

## **PHILIPPINES: MEDIA SEMINAR IN LIDONG PARISH**

Twenty-three participants from various groups joined the media awareness seminar organized by the Diocesan Commission on Social Communication (DCSOC) of Legazpi in Lidong parish on November 5. Fr. Antonio Peralta, DCSOC head, gave a talk on "The Power of Media and Media Evangelization." DCSOC publishes the fortnightly newspaper "An Bangraw, Katoliko Bikolano" featuring local Church news and aiming at faith enrichment of Catholics in northeastern Philippines. (AB)

## **CHINESE FILMMAKER WINS BRESSON PRIZE**

Chinese film director, Zhang Yuan, was conferred the annual Bresson Prize at the Venice Film Festival in Italy. Zhang, 43, was recognized as with other previous winners for promoting "a truly humane culture" and advancing appreciation for the life of the spirit. Zhang's works include award winning films like "Behind the Forbidden City" (1997), "Seventeen Years" (1999) and a more recent one "Little Red Flowers." This year's award was handed over by Archbishop John P. Foley, president of the Pontifical Council for Social Communications. The Bresson Prize, named after French filmmaker Robert Bresson, was established in 2000 to recognize artists who "give significant witness" to the spiritual meaning of life. (SE)



## **PHILIPPINES: CHURCH SEEN BY JOURNALISTS AS POLITICAL POWER/POWER BROKER**

A one month survey of two major broadsheets and the bishops' conference website found that journalists perceive the Catholic Church in the Philippines as a "political power" and a "power broker." According to a research done by graduate students of the Pontifical University of Santo Tomas in Manila, the "voice of our shepherds seemed to have been lost largely due to its poor handling of public relations and communications." The reports published by The Philippine Star, Philippine Daily Inquirer and CBCP Online in July 2006 suggest that pastors of the Philippine Church are "more political than pastoral." The Church as a source of spiritual experience can only be "gleaned from a few news reports courtesy of the Pope and the Papal Nuncio," the research says. The study was an initiative of the MA Theology course on social/pastoral communication designed by FABC-OSC.

## **INDIA: CHURCH OBSERVES WORLD COMMUNICATION DAY**

The Catholic Bishops' Conference of India (CBCI) has joined together with the Delhi Archdiocesan Media Commission, Society of St. Paul and the National Institute for Social Communication Research and Training (NISCORT) to observe World Communication Day on November 19. A day-long symposium in New Delhi was organized in which eight Catholic journalists were awarded for their contribution to social development. Catholic dioceses across India also celebrated special liturgies stressing the importance of communication in ministry. World Communication Day is celebrated in India in November every year. (THE HERALD)

## **PAKISTAN: CATHOLIC OFFICE FOR SOCIAL COMMUNICATION CELEBRATES 15TH ANNIVERSARY**

Rabita Manzil, the national Catholic office for social communications of the Pakistani bishops' conference, celebrated its 15th anniversary in Lahore on November 24. Some 80 participants, including 3 priests and 15 nuns, joined the celebrations and witnessed the launching of the first-ever DVD produced by the office, the annual magazine of Radio Veritas Asia's Urdu language service and an audio-cassette of Christmas songs. In his address, Archbishop Lawrence Saldanha stressed the importance of the means of social communication in proclaiming the Good News in South Asia. He called on all Catholics to develop their communication skills in order to become "powerful preachers." (THE HERALD)

## **HONG KONG: MEDIA URGED TO LOOK AT BIGGER PICTURE AND NOT DEMONIZE SOCIAL SECURITY RECIPIENTS**

The results of an 11-year survey of three local Chinese language newspapers conducted by Caritas Francis Hsu College about the Comprehensive Social Security Assistance (CSSA) and its recipients were disclosed on November 11. The survey found that more than one-third of the editorials dealt with the negative image of the recipients. Of those editorials, 40 percent expressed the belief that CSSA recipients are problematic on their own account and that the individuals themselves need to resolve them. Experts say the negative reporting by the media diminishes the dignity of CSSA recipients, making them feel that they are failures. This also leads to discrimination of the poorer sectors of society. Reporters and editors are then urged to adopt a "more macro approach" when dealing with this issue. Limiting reports on the basis of economics and focusing on the CSSA recipients' personal responsibility prove to be divisive. (SE)