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THEME FOR WORLD COMMUNICATION DAY 2010

“The Priest and Pastoral Ministry in a Digital World: New Media at the Service of the Word” will be the theme for next year’s World Communication Day. This was announced by the Pontifical Council for Social Communications in the Vatican on September 30, 2009. In a special *communiqué*, the Council says the theme invites priests “to see the new media as a great resource for their ministry as servants of the Word and encourages them to confront the challenges posed by the new digital culture.” “Used wisely, with the assistance of experts in technologies and the culture of communications, the new media can become for priests instruments of profound evangelization and communion.” The 44th World Communications Day will be celebrated next year on the Sunday before Pentecost. The message of the Holy Father will be released on January 24, Feast of St. Francis de Sales, patron of journalists. (OSC/PCCS)

INDIA: CHURCH MEDIA MUST BE ACTIVE

Church media must be active at all times and not just when a church is vandalized, Church personnel or institutions are attacked, or when a law affecting the Church is passed, said Fr. Adolf Washington, president of the Indian Catholic Press Association (ICPA). He was addressing participants of the Karnataka Region assembly of diocesan youth directors, media directors and secretaries of media and youth commissions in Bellary on August 4 and 5. He said Church media need to understand the context of the world we live in, to help the secular world understand our frame and purpose as a Church, and above all to communicate effectively within the Church itself. He urged the participants to cultivate a friendly relationship with the Catholic media personnel and tap lay talents to work on Church media programs. (SAR NEWS)

PAKISTAN: WEB TV, NEW TOOL TO CONNECT THE FAITHFUL

Father Arthur Charles, vicar general of Karachi archdiocese, and a team of four, maintains the bi-lingual Catholic Internet TV <www.goodnewscatholicstv.com> which was launched in May this year. The website broadcasts in English and Urdu and offers prayers, hymns, rosary recitations, Church news, Scripture reflections, talk shows and a weekly message from Karachi Archbishop Evarist Pinto. The Internet has now become what the television used to be for people not so long ago, Fr. Charles said. The new medium is a “tool to connect the faithful to their faith.” Maintaining the broadcasts in the context of Pakistan, however, requires commitment, the priest added. Part of the archdiocese’s Catechetical Centre serves as studio for the team and houses two second hand computers for producing the programs. (UCANEWS)

INDIA: SONGS AND DANCE MARKS ANNIVERSARY OF CHURCH FOUNDATION

The 150th anniversary of the Church’s presence in Bengal and the founding of St. Xavier’s School in Kolkata was celebrated with an evening of traditional songs and dance on August 23 at St. Xavier’s College. Jesuit Father John Chinnappan, 41, enthralled audiences with his rendition *baul* songs, while Father Saju George, 44, did a solo performance of *Bharatanatyam* dance. Both performances were interpretations of the teachings of Jesus. *Baul* is a philosophical folksong tradition popular in West Bengal and Bangladesh. *Bharatanatyam* is a classical dance which developed in southern India. Present at the performances were Bishop Salvadore Lobo of Baruipur, students, priests and members of different religious congregations. (UCANEWS)

VIETNAM: MUSIC COMPOSER BISHOP

Hundreds of Catholics of Phan Thiet diocese clapped to the songs sung by Bishop Joseph Vu Duy Thong at his installation ceremony on September 3. Bishop Thong, 57, head of the Episcopal Commission for Cultural Affairs, and Catholic singers sang the songs he has composed to mark his installation at the Cathedral in the coastal city of Phan Thiet. The bishop, who has produced CDs of religious songs, concelebrated the ceremony with Cardinal Jean Baptiste Pham Minh Man of Ho Chi Minh city, 11 bishops and 180 priests. Some 1,200 Catholics and Religious attended the event. Phan Tiet diocese was established on January 30, 1975 and covers Binh Thuan province. It has 155,000 Catholics out of a total population of 1.05 million. It has 105 priests and 486 Religious serving 63 parishes and 39 sub-parishes. (UCANEWS)

SRI LANKA: CHURCH AT 11th COLOMBO INT’L BOOK FAIR

The Catholic Church was among 400 book stands at the Colombo International Book Fair, which run from September 19 to 29 at the Bandaranaike Memorial International Conference Hall. A record 300,000 visitors came at the book fair, reports *Daily News*, Sri Lanka’s national newspaper since 1918. Father Bertram



Fernando, who was in charge of the Catholic Books stand, said, “this was the most successful book fair of the eleven held so far.” This was a “boom year because of the end of the war,” when “the fear of threats and bombs was no longer on people’s mind,” the priest added. For the first time, the Church’s stand also exhibited religious articles like rosaries, statues and medals alongside books. Marian hymns by the late Fr. Mercelin Jayakody were the best-sellers, Fr. Bertram said. “Many Buddhists, in particular monks, also bought books, magazines and DVDs about Mother Teresa.” (DAILY NEWS/ ASIA NEWS)

BISHOP FRANK MARCUS FERNANDO DIES

The Church in Sri Lanka mourned the death of Bishop Emeritus Frank Marcus Fernando of Chilaw on August 24 at age 77. Bishop Fernando has been one of five bishop-board members of the FABC-Office of Social Communication. In 1978, he founded the Sudasuna Center, one of South Asia's major communications centers. He also supported the work of Radio Veritas Asia in the Philippines. In Sri Lanka, he is known as defender of the environment, having opposed the construction of multinational installations that could have disrupted ecological balance and displaced poor people. Bishop Fernando has served Chilaw diocese for 41 years. (ASIANEWS)

INDIA: RELIGIOUS SISTERS IN PATNA LEARN MEDIA

The Archdiocese of Patna and Ravi Bharati Institute of Communications conducted a media training course for 26 religious sisters in the archdiocese. The course aimed at helping the religious become experts in the use of computer, video, Internet and other media technology. Organizers said, today's evangelization includes helping people become media literates. "Because we live in a world that is heavily influenced by media, all should become 'media literate' to become effective preachers of the Gospel." The participants represented different religious congregations. The organizers hope that they in turn will teach what they have learned to sisters in their own institutes. (FIDES)

VIETNAM: CATHOLIC PRIEST DEFENDS ACTIVISTS

Father Peter Phan Van Loi of Hue diocese (Central Vietnam) has denounced television broadcast on August 19 which showed five arrested democracy activists pleading guilty to "threatening national security." "We cannot accuse them of being cowards only because we have seen them in a television broadcast. These confessions are always extracted under pressure and torture," the priest said. The dissidents were arrested for distributing flyers, displaying banners and writing pro-democracy poems and articles on the Internet. All of them are connected to "Bloc8406," a movement with two thousand members which supports freedom of expression and a multi-party system in Vietnam. (ASIANEWS)

KOREA: VIDEO ON RELIGIOUS LIFE

The Religious Societies in Korea have jointly produced a 43-minute video to mark 120 years since the arrival of the first women religious institutes, and 100 years since the arrival of the first men religious institutes in Korea. The video entitled "Beyond the World and Into the World" features the life of Catholic religious and missionaries, including contemplatives and apostolic religious. Some 4,000 copies of the video in DVD format will be distributed to religious institutes and parishes for catechetical and evangelization purposes. (CBCK NEWSLETTER)

"... the proclamation of Christ in the world of new technologies requires a profound knowledge of this world if the technologies are to serve our mission adequately."

- Pope Benedict XVI, 43rd World Communication Day Message on "New Technologies, New Relationships: Promoting a Culture of Respect, Dialogue and Friendship" (2009)

INDIA: MEDIA SEMINAR IN KARNATAKA

The Karnataka Region Bishops' Commissions for Youth and Social Communication have jointly organized a two-day seminar on media August 4-5 in Bellary. The participants included diocesan youth directors, media directors and youth representatives. Animator of the discussions was Bellary Bishop Henry D' Souza who called for more vibrancy in Church media work by increased networking and use of communication technology for pastoral and evangelizing ministry. The prelate urged members of both commissions to make an honest assessment of the strengths and weaknesses of Church media. He said, "Our Catholic identity is a commitment to God, Church and society. The laity has also a special part in the ministry of the priest and so both have to take each other into confidence in all activities." (SAR NEWS)

THAILAND: SALESIAN CENTER PROMOTES 'HEALTHY' COMPUTER GAMES

In July, the Salesians running the Don Bosco Youth Center in Samphran west of Bangkok decided to include "healthy" computer games among the other activities organized for youths every Sunday. Center Director Father Supoj Rewngam said, "Our center provides computer games for young people but these have been screened and most are designed to increase young people's skills in various ways and also increases their knowledge in using the computer." Before the youths can play games, they have to practice their computer skills. The children are then allowed to play computer games for one hour; in both times, under the guidance and watchful eye of Salesian seminarians. But beyond games, the center also teaches young people, who are mostly Buddhists, arts, music, dance and ethics. For Catholic youth, we teach catechism as well, Fr. Supoj said. (UCANEWS)

CHINA: HI-TECH GENERATION REFLECTS ON FAITH AND COMMUNITY

Some 120 Catholic university students took part in a week-long summer camp cum retreat August 2-8 organized by priests and religious of Shanghai diocese. The students are used to hi-tech communications and gadgetry, but the retreat enabled them to get closer to God and reflect on their spiritual life away from technology. The diocese began organizing summer camps six years ago, said Father John Zhao Shijie of Shanghai. This gives students time to deepen their faith and encourages them to later join small communities of prayer and Bible-sharing. Fr. Zhao said this year's theme "Where are you?" made students realize that God is calling them even when they are preoccupied with material pleasures like mobile phones, computers, games and money. (UCANEWS)

INDIA: JESUIT LINGUIST'S BIRTH CENTENARY

St. Xavier's College and the Camille Bulcke Research Centre organized a function on September 1 to mark the 100th birthday of Jesuit missionary and linguist, Fr. Camille Bulcke. Around 2,000 people, mostly Hindus, attended the function held in Ranchi, capital of Jharkhand state. Fr. Bulcke made Bible stories and the great Hindu epic *Ramayana* easy for common people to understand, Nalini Purohit, a scholar in Hindi language said. Fr. Bulcke's doctoral thesis "*Ram katha utpati aur vikas*" (Ram's story: origin and development) is considered one of the best commentaries on the Sanskrit-language *Ramayana*. (UCANEWS)