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# Communication | N F O

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## **VIETNAM: FALSE PRIESTS APPEAR ON HANOI MEDIA TO DISCREDIT CATHOLICS**

False priests have appeared on Vietnamese state TV and have been interviewed by government newspapers speaking out against Thai Ha parishioners who want the restitution of their parish property. The diocese of Hanoi said these men are not members of the clergy. At least one of them has, in fact, been identified as a Communist party official. As this is happening, Catholics are still carrying on their peaceful protests in Hanoi. Flyers expressing solidarity to the parishioners and the Redemptorist Fathers, the original owners of the disputed land, are being handed out all over the place. Mgr. Anthony Vu Huy Chuong, a bishop of Hung Hoa, a diocese on the border with Laos in the extreme north, sent a "Letter of Communion" to the provincial superior of the Redemptorists of Vietnam and to the superior of the Thai Ha Monastery. In the letter, Bishop Vu prays that justice and truth may be honored not only in Thai Ha but in places where people suffer injustice and dishonesty." (UCANEWS)

### **AUSTRALIAN JESUIT TO DIRECT UCANEWS**

Jesuit Father Michael Kelly, a native of Australia, has been appointed as director of the Union of Catholic Asia News (UCANews). He will be sharing his time between Australia and Bangkok, where the main editorial office of the news agency is based, as he continues his roles for the Australian Jesuit Province and as Executive Director of Church Resources. UCANews was launched in 1979 to provide information on the Catholic Church and Catholic concerns in the Asian region. It is the largest Catholic news service in Asia. Fr Kelly has worked extensively in the media, first as a journalist and later as founder and CEO of a number of Catholic media organizations. He succeeds UCANews founder Maryknoll Father Robert Astorino as director of the Catholic news agency. (CN)

### **CAMBODIA: SIGNIS-ASIA ASSEMBLY**

Some 42 priests, nuns and lay members from 14 countries met in Phnom Penh Sept 15-19 for this year's annual Signis-Asia assembly. Resource persons as well as workshops explored the theme "Children in Asia and the Media: the Challenges... the Future." Present was Signis World President, Augustine Loorthusamy. Special guests were Phnom Penh Bishop Emile Destombes, and Bishops Mark Nguyen Duc Huynh and Peter Nguyen Van De from Vietnam. This year's meeting was hosted by the Phnom Penh-based Catholic Social Communications (CSC) Director Fr. Omer Giraldo and his team. (OSC)



## **THEME FOR WORLD COMMUNICATION DAY 2009**

"New Technologies, New Relationships. Promoting a Culture of Respect, Dialogue and Friendship" is the theme chosen by the Pope for the 43rd World Day of Social Communications. Archbishop Claudio Ma. Celli, president of the Pontifical Council for Social Communications, announced this on Sept 29, Feast of the Archangels. With this theme it is clear that the Holy Father "has a certain confidence in the possibilities the communications media can offer; the media can be of great help in favoring a climate of dialogue and trust," the prelate said. The 43rd World Day of Social Communications will be celebrated in most countries on Sunday May 31, 2009. The Pope's message is due to be published on January 24, 2009, Feast of St. Francis of Sales, patron of journalists. (VIS)

## **BANGLADESH: BISHOPS PUBLISH NEWSLETTER**

The Catholic Bishops' Conference of Bangladesh (CBCB) started publishing a newsletter in June 2008. In the words of CBCB President, Archbishop Paulinus Costa, the newsletter is supposed to "communicate with people within and outside the country the happenings of the local church. CBCB represents the church of Bangladesh." "We wish," the archbishop continues, "to reach every corner of the country through this newsletter to share with you our news and views so that you could cooperate with us to establish the Kingdom of God." The first issue of the newsletter covers the months of March to June 2008. For inquiries, email the CBCB Catholic Communications Centre: [cbcbscc@infobd.net](mailto:cbcbscc@infobd.net) (FABC)

## **SINGAPORE: PAUL OF TARSUS STARS IN PAULINE YEAR MOVIE RETREAT**

Some 55 Catholics from Christ the King Parish attended a movie retreat on August 31 organized by the Daughters of St Paul (FSP) on the church grounds. The retreat included a screening of the three-hour movie "Paul of Tarsus" followed by individual reflection on the film. The FSP sisters aim to hold similar retreats as their main project for the Pauline Year. "We choose to use a movie because it is visual, which is more effective than listening to a talk," one sister commented. (UCANEWS)

## **CAMBODIA: YOUNG CATHOLICS STUDY BENEFITS AND DANGERS OF MEDIA**

About 20 young men and women attended a seminar themed "Influence of Media" August 11-15 at the parish in Battambang town, 22 kilometers northwest of Phnom Penh. The seminar was conducted by the Phnom Penh-based Catholic Social Communications (CSC) office to increase youth awareness of media effects, and to develop local reporters for CSC. CSC Director Fr. Omer Giraldo told the participants that the Church must use media to proclaim the Good News. Fr. Omer is a native of Colombia and is a member of the Yarumal Foreign Mission Society. (UCANEWS)

## **INDIA: CELLPHONES HELP STRANDED VICTIMS OF ORISSA VIOLENCE**

Priests, nuns and laypeople who fled to forests for safety after Hindu fanatics attacked Christian villages in Orissa on August 24 kept in touch with each other through cellphones. "Several of them would have been dead but for cellphones," says Fr. Dibakar Pariccha, spokesperson of Cuttack-Bhubaneswar archdiocese, which heads the ecclesiastical province with the four other dioceses of Orissa state. The cellphone also helped the parishioners seek assistance from government and police officials in the wake of deaths and injuries caused by the violence. Fr. Prasanna Singh, who heads Pobingia parish in Kandhamal district but has left the area, says his parishioners keep him informed about developments in their village by phone. Kandhamal, where the violence has concentrated, lies within the archdiocesan territory, 350 kilometers west of Bhubaneswar. (UCANEWS)

## **FABC SENDS LETTER OF SOLIDARITY TO INDIAN CHURCH**

FABC Secretary General, Archbishop Orlando Quevedo, sent a message of solidarity with the Church and Christians in India on September 25. In a letter addressed to CBCI (Catholic Bishops' Conference of India) President, Cardinal Varkey Vithayathil, the prelate wrote: "We are deeply concerned and troubled about the many acts and violence against the Church in India (and) the sufferings of other Christians. (T)he once idyllic image of India as a country of religious harmony and tolerance is tarnished by a minority of religious extremists... We pray to the Lord of love and peace that the violence may stop and that those who are inclined to do violence may discover a more peaceful and harmonious relationship with their Christian brothers and sisters." (FABC)

## **SRI LANKA: 113TH CART FESTIVAL**

The annual Cart Festival "Karaththa Mangalya," the 113th this year, was held at St. Anne's Church, Kattimahana on Sept 1 with some 2,000 Catholic pilgrims, priests and nuns coming in via various modes of transport including traditional bullock carts. Hundreds of curious Buddhists from surrounding villages also joined. The feast day saw a procession of St. Anne's statue on a decorated cart, hymns, prayers as well as wayside meals and cooking. The "cart festival" is held every year as a way to strengthen the faith of local Catholics and pilgrims. Kattimahana belongs to Kurunegala diocese, northeast of Colombo. The diocese has 39,937 Catholics among a primarily Buddhist population of 787,938 people, according to 2007 statistics. (UCANEWS)

## **THAILAND: WORLD COMMUNICATIONS DAY 2008**

The Church in Thailand had a three-day celebration of the 42nd World Communications Day August 1-3. On August 1, students of the three Assumption schools of Assumption Bangrak, Assumption Convent and Assumption Suksa gathered at Assumption School in Bangkok for talks, dances and multi-media presentations. On August 2-3, the celebrations were held in Chiang Mai diocese with an exhibit of Church-communication history in the diocese as well as Catholic media programs in the country. A Cine Forum capped the activities with students of Catholic schools and lay people in attendance. The celebrations were co-organized by the Bishops' Catholic Social Communications of Thailand (CSCT) under the direction of Fr. Vorayuth Kitbamrung. (CBCT NEWSLETTER)

## **INDONESIA: ANTI-PORNOGRAPHY BILL BLOCKED BY PUBLIC OPPOSITION**

The Pornography Bill introduced in the House of Representatives in 2003, and which has been revised several times in response to criticism from various groups, is now again under contention. Opponents say the bill still does not clearly differentiate between pornography and obscenity on the one hand, and cultural, artistic and creative expression on the other. They also fear the bill will allow the state to interfere in people's private lives, and especially target women. In Jakarta, the Indonesian Bishops' Conference on Sept 17 issued a statement rejecting the bill. The discourse on the bill has turned into an ideological and political controversy that has polarized society and has the potential to bring about conflicts. (UCANEWS)

## **KOREA: RELIGION-BASED BROADCASTERS OPPOSE GOVERNMENT'S NEW MEDIA PLAN**

On Sept 22, about 300 National Union of Media Workers and representatives of religion-based broadcasting groups rallied in front of the ruling Grand National Party's office in Seoul against the dismantling of the Korea Broadcast Advertising Corporation (KOBACO) and the introduction of "private media representatives" as sales firms for advertisements. The move is thought to make broadcasting systems endlessly compete for audience share and only programs based on violence and sex will survive. KOBACO has played an important role in helping minor religion-based and regional broadcasting systems get the advertising money they need to continue running. Dismantling it will "kill" public service in media, an official of Seoul archdiocese's Pyeonghwa (peace) Broadcasting Corporation said. (UCANEWS)

## **PHILIPPINES: MEDIA BLAMED FOR TEEN PREGNANCY**

Bishop Reynaldo Evangelista of Boac diocese blames the media for the rising teen pregnancy in the country. "People from across the country are so exposed to television showing disturbing messages and images," the 48-year old bishop said, adding that the Internet also is becoming a place where youth access sex-related material. The Catholic Church in the Philippines is now opposing the passing of the Reproductive Health Bill (House Bill 5043) in Congress, saying that only natural family planning methods should be promoted. Bishop Evangelista said teen pregnancy will not be solved by contraceptives or sex education, but by the formation of conscience." (CNUA)

## **BANGLADESH: 'MEET THE PRESS' WORKSHOP**

Some 32 priests and nuns were told at a workshop August 28-29 in Dhaka that having good media relations is important. The meeting titled "Meet the Press: Role of the Catholic Church in Handling Media" aimed at helping the clergy and religious to use media more effectively. Resource speakers discussed the theme with practical cases, especially how the Church can work harmoniously with reporters in this Muslim-majority country. The Bangladeshi Catholic Bishops' Christian Communication Centre organized the workshop. (THE HERALD)

