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SINGAPORE: PRIESTS AND NUNS REACH OUT THROUGH FACEBOOK

Nuns, priests and seminarians are now reaching out to people through social networking and other Internet sites. About 20 or so religious in the island have joined "Facebook," one of them is Canossian Sister Christine Santhou, 52. The nun maintains the website of the Canossian community in Singapore, and regularly leaves short messages on her Facebook account for her contacts to read. "I joined Facebook to give help when there is need," Sister Santhou said. She recently left a message for a woman experiencing problems in getting her son baptized. Father Gerard Weerakoon, 57, assistant parish priest at the Church of the Holy Spirit said, he randomly views his friends' profile to understand what is going on in their lives. He uses MSN instant messaging service to communicate with youths. "Young people seem to open more and express their feelings better through MSN," he said. But he still believes that the best form of communication is face to face. Terence Kesavan, a 31 year-old seminarian, meanwhile, said Facebook helps him to "meet people where they are" and to "engage them with what they are comfortable with." "We need to keep up-to-date with these media to understand their opportunities and dangers, and encourage Catholics to use them to evangelize," Kesavan said. (CNUA)

KOREA: LAY CATHOLIC PUBLISHES KOREAN-LATIN DICTIONARY

Mark Lee Soon-young, 52, has published his own 2,624-page Korean-Latin-Korean dictionary on July 1. This is one of the main highlights of the lay Catholic's effort that has produced 16 books including a four-volume "Daily History of the Korean Catholic Church" about Church-related events from 1540 to June 2006. In 2002, the humble office worker and father of three daughters published a 700-page "Korean-Latin Dictionary, the first and only one of its kind. In honor of his work, he received the Korean bishops' Mass Communication Award. Father Barnabas Kim Tjeung-nam of Seoul supervised Lee's work. (UCANEWS)

THAILAND: THAI BUDDHIST MONKS PROMOTE ACTIVITIES TO ATTRACT THE FAITHFUL TO TEMPLES

For the Feast of *Asalhabucha* on July 7, religious leaders called on the faithful to pray, meditate and live the monastic experience for one day. Under the slogan "Going to temple every Sunday will make you happy," Buddhist monks encouraged the practice of Buddhism among the faithful and to celebrate the day of the full moon of the lunar calendar, the day believed to be Buddha's delivery of his first sermon. The project was launched because leaders of the religion have observed people abandoning religious practice. Some 94% of Thailand's 62 million people are Buddhist but only a small fraction follows the precepts of the faith, a recent survey in Bangkok revealed. (CNUA)

KOREA: 'MASS MEDIA AND MISSION,' FORUM OF THE BISHOPS' COMMISSION FOR SOCIAL COMMUNICATION

"Mass Media and Mission: The Image of the Church in the Eyes of the Media" was the theme of a recent forum organized in Seoul by the Korean Bishops' commission for social communication. Chaired by Daegu Auxiliary Bishop Thaddeus Cho Hwan-kil, the forum is part of a seminar series on the overall theme "Mass Media and Mission," which seeks to discover new pastoral perspectives in today's media-saturated environment. The forum was attended by delegates from various dioceses and parishes, scholars and lay communication experts who offered their perspectives about the Church's image with the outside public. The participants stressed that the Church has long been linked to the promotion of "universal values, generosity towards the poor, and (to the) strength and credibility of an established hierarchical structure." (FIDES)

INDIA: ARCHBISHOP MORAS OPENS MOTHER TERESA PAINTING EXHIBIT

Archbishop Bernard Moras of Bangalore inaugurated the exhibition of paintings on Mother Teresa at Renaissance Gallery on Cunningham Road on July 21. The exclusive art works of renowned artist Ritu Singh was put on display to mark the 100th birth anniversary of the Kolkatan nun, dubbed "saint of the gutters." Ritu Singh is an ardent admirer of the blessed nun. She had been invited by the Vatican to attend the beatification rites in 2003. The founder of the Missionaries of Charity was born on August 27, 1910. (SAR NEWS)

PAKISTAN: RADIO VERITAS ASIA LISTENERS VISITED

The Urdu language section of Radio Veritas Asia (RVA) in Lahore has organized a two-day visitation program to listeners and listener clubs in Jhang, Faisalabad, Sahiwal and Gambar on July 24 and 25. The activity aimed to strengthen relations with RVA listeners in these areas and to know their actual situation in terms of program reception and other relevant needs. The visit was done by the RVA Team in Lahore headed by Fr. Nadeem John Shakir (RVA Urdu Director), Hadayat Nazar (Reception Monitor), Francis Xavier (Assistant Coordinator), and Kashif Adeel (staff of Rabita Manzil). Part of the itinerary was a visit to COMSATS Institute of Technology in Sahiwal. (RM)



INDONESIA: CATHOLIC JOURNALISTS' GROUP ON ITS FOURTH YEAR

The Indonesian Catholic Journalists' Association (ICJA) has recently held its fourth annual assembly in Jakarta with a renewed vision to serve the local churches in the country. The organization of more than 500 Catholic journalists, 350 of which are based in the capital, has grown from its beginnings in 2005. Since then, the members have met on a monthly basis, celebrating the Eucharist, and planning to bring about their vision of promoting human and universal values thru journalism. Part of their plan for 2009-2012 is to strengthen their network, carry out training programs for their colleagues, building a resource database and research center, as well as to publish online Catholic media. ICJA President is experienced journalist, Mr. Putut Prabantoro. (OSC)

VIETNAM: 'ANTI-WAR' PRIEST BURIED

Father Phero Truong Ba Can, long time editor in chief of "Catholicism" and "The Nation" magazine, has died at age 79. A solemn funeral was held in Ho Chi Minh City on July 13, drawing thousands of mourners, "Voice of Vietnam" News reports. Fr. Can was imprisoned by the former South Vietnamese Thieu regime for his anti-war activities. He has fought for democracy, workers' rights and against torture of students through demonstrations and hunger-strikes before 1975. He has served a nine-month jail term in 1971 for an article titled "25 years of socialism established in the North" under the Thieu regime. His passion for journalism has won him a Gold Medal Award from the International Catholic Union of the Press in 2001. Last year, he has published his autobiography "Looking Back after 50 years" about his work against the Sai Gon regime. (CATHNEWS ASIA)

INDIA: JESUIT MAGAZINE 'DOOT' PLANS MEGA EVENTS FOR CENTENARY

Plans were laid down for the centenary celebration of "Doot" magazine managed by the Jesuits. At a meeting held at St. Xavier's Parish Anand on July 5, the magazine's honorary editor, Fr. Vinayak Jadav, proposed an annual *Doot* Award. It was also suggested that every parish in Gujarat's four diocese should hold a "Doot Sunday" for collecting subscriptions to Mass-goers. Special issues on selected themes and a bulk centenary issue are planned from December 2009 to January 2010. A *Doot* calendar is also in the works for 2010. (SAR NEWS)

MALAYSIA: CHRISTIAN ARTISTS DRAW INSPIRATION FROM THEIR FAITH

About 70 paintings and sculptures were displayed at the second annual Malaysia International Christian Artists Show, which started on July 11 at the Dunia Seni Lukis Gallery in Kuala Lumpur. The two-week event featured 22 mostly Asian Christian artists who collectively believe that their faith was the single, most powerful inspiration for their creations. Chinese artist Wong San said one of her paintings, of water flowing over stones, was inspired by the Bible's reference to the "living water." Malaysia artist Janiz Chan, meanwhile, said her paintings are inspired either by the Bible or by her pastor's sermons. Filipino artist Celso Duazo Pepito, a Catholic, said he wants to move people to go beyond belief in God to action through his creations. The exhibit's opening was attended by more than 100 people. (UCANEWS)

If social communication can be defined as "sharing of meaning through signs," then this sharing becomes a reality in the Eucharist... The meaning of human life can be fully communicated only in the mystery of the Eucharistic Jesus. - *Bishops' Meet '07*

HONG KONG: BIBLICAL BOARD GAMES AIM TO GIVE HOPE TO YOUNG PEOPLE

Pauline Shum Sui-ping has come up with a board game called "The Great Leader, Moses" based on the Old Testament prophet's life. This came as the single mother with a 21 year old daughter learned about the increase of suicides among young people. She felt that a greater understanding of the Scriptures would help bring a message of hope to those who apparently had none. "I hope my game encourages young people not to give up on their lives so easily," Shum said. Pressed by her customers, who liked the game, she came up with another one based on the life of Christ, called "The Great Teacher, Jesus." Shum, owner of Resonance Publisher, also illustrates Biblical storybooks depicting the lives and teachings of Jesus, Moses and other biblical figures. (UCANEWS)

PAKISTAN: REQUEST FOR PRAYER

The director of "Rabita Manzil," National Catholic Center for Social Communication in Lahore, Father Nadeem John Shakir, had asked the faithful to pray for the safety of the center and its staff. This came in the wake of a threat received by a next door neighbor, a Christian, from unknown men in a motorbike early June. Mrs. Shaheen, a teacher at St. Anthony's High School, was asked if she and those at Rabita Manzil are Christians. After saying yes, she was told to either leave the area, embrace Islam, pay Rs 1.5 million or "be ready to be exploded in a suicide bomb attack." The people in the area are now feeling unhappy and insecure. "We now make an earnest request to keep us in your personal prayers," Fr. Nadeem wrote. (RM)

INDIA: ST. ALOYSIUS COLLEGE COMMUNITY RADIO PROGRAMS ON-AIR

The Jesuits-run St. Aloysius College Mangalore has started test transmission of its community radio station, CRS SARANG 107.8FM, on June 24. The signals are received over 20-25 km radius and cover large agricultural, fisher folk and daily wage earners' communities, besides the student population. Broadcasts in four languages - Konkani, Tulu, Kannada and English - includes programs on health, hygiene, agricultural issues, children and youth. Since test broadcasts began, community people came forward with their questions and stories. From an initial two hours daily programming, broadcast time will gradually increase. (SAR NEWS)

INDIA: BIBLE QUIZZES HELP CATHOLICS LEARN ST. PAUL

To commemorate the Year of St. Paul, the Raipur archdiocese Bible commission conducted 13 "Family Bible Quiz(zes)" for each of the 13 Letters of the saint. Nearly 3,500 families from both the urban and rural parishes of the diocese have participated. Father Mani Ambatt, director of the commission, said that the event has helped many Catholics to learn the teachings and life of St. Paul. (SAR NEWS)

