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INDONESIA: JOURNALISTS TOLD TO PUT FAITH INTO ACTION

Some 200 members of the Catholic Journalists' Association of Indonesia (PKWI) gathered in January at Canisius College in Central Jakarta for a seminar titled "The Country Needs You." Guest speaker was Coadjutor Archbishop Ignatius Suharyo of Jakarta who encouraged the journalists to stand up for truth and use Gospel values to bring peace to society. Catholic journalists should not only share ideas with the public, but also tell people what is right, the prelate said. "Every word or sentence that you write can strongly influence people to change." Archbishop Suharyo also stressed that the country needs the Good News to unite people and create peace in the families. The Minister for Women's Empowerment and Child Protection, and several religious leaders also attended the event. PWKI was established in 2005 to unite Catholic journalists throughout the country. It now has about 500 Catholic journalists as members who regularly meet for discussion and Mass. (UCANEWS)

SIGNIS AWARD WINNING FILM CHOSEN AS BEST FILM IN ASIA-PACIFIC FILM FESTIVAL 2009

The SIGNIS Award winning film, *Laskar Pelangi* (Rainbow Troops/Rainbow Warriors) directed by Riri Riza (Indonesia), was chosen as the Best Film in the 53rd Asia-Pacific Film Festival (APFF) 2009 held in Taiwan on December 19, 2009. The movie is about an inspiring teacher and her poverty-stricken students who never lost hope for a bright future. *Laskar Pelangi* is considered Indonesia's top-grossing film to-date. SIGNIS, the world Catholic association of communicators, gave an award to the film at the 2009 Hong Kong International Film Festival. Special screenings were held in Hong Kong in mid-December 2009 with Hong Kong Bishop John Tong and about 200 Indonesians in attendance. (SIGNIS)

INDIA: CHRISTIAN PERIODICAL 'DOOT' CENTENARY CELEBRATIONS LAUNCHED

The centenary year of *Doot* (Messenger of the Sacred Heart) was launched on January 10 by the Church of Gujarat in Ahmedabad in the presence of a crowd of over three thousand. Bishop Thomas Macwan of Ahmedabad presided the Mass, which kicked off the event. Jesuit Father Isudas Cueli, Scripture scholar and translator of the Bible into Gujarati, delivered the homily. The Gujarati periodical was first published and printed from "The Examiner" press in Mumbai. For nearly 100 years, the magazine has been published every single month without break. Today, *Doot* is the second oldest publication in the whole of Gujarat. Various activities have been scheduled for the year-long celebration which will culminate in a grand event in January 2011 in Anand, the home of *Doot* since 1926. (SAR NEWS)

MALAYSIA: BISHOP LAMENTS 'ALLAH' BAN

Bishop Paul Tan Chee Ing of Melaka-Johor Diocese said in an interview that the controversy over the use of the word "Allah," as well as other Arabic words, has a definite political tone, as the ruling party "is afraid losing Malay votes, which make up of about 60% of the population." "In Malaysia, unfortunately, Malay is identified with Muslims." Yet in the Quran, the bishop pointed out, "it is said that Jews, Christians, Sabaeans and Muslims worship Allah." "Any objective scholar can tell you that the word 'Allah' is pre-Islamic. It has its root in the Semitic language." In the midst of this, he said, "the Church's stand should be calm, firm in its stand for the rights of non-Muslims as enshrined in our federal constitution." On Dec 31, 2009 the Kuala Lumpur High Court overruled the ban, which was instated three years ago, affirming that it was unconstitutional and that the word "Allah" is not exclusive to Islam. However, on Jan 6, 2010 the decision was suspended after Muslim groups protested that Christians and other minorities should not use "Allah" for "fear of confusing Muslims." (ZENIT)

INDIA: ISLAMIC 'PEACE TV' BANNED

Peace TV, the controversial UK-based Islamic channel, has been banned in India. The president of the Karipur Catholic Association (KCA) had written to the Information and Broadcasting Ministry a year ago objecting to the channel's derogatory references to Christianity and Hinduism. A similar letter was written to the British High Commissioner in India. On Nov 25, 2009 the KCA president filed an application under the Right to Information Act of 2005. On Dec 12, 2009, the ministry wrote to the KCA president telling that "permission was not granted to downlink Peace TV channel in India" due to non-compliance with down-linking guidelines. (SAR NEWS)

PAKISTAN: KARACHI ARCHDIOCESE TO LAUNCH SATELLITE TV

The Archdiocese of Karachi launched its first television network known as "Good News" and commenced test broadcasts on Christmas Eve 2009. Over the years, the Archdiocese has been quick to adopt new technologies in its effort to communicate with the peoples, an Archdiocesan statement says. The Urdu weekly *Agahi*, the first in the country, was launched in 2006 and a little later, its online edition was made available. Less than a year ago, the Archdiocese launched its first Catholic Web TV. The visionary behind the venture is Karachi Vicar-General Father Arthur Charles, editor-in-chief of *Agahi* and director of the Catechetical Centre in Karachi. He is now president and CEO of Good News TV. Karachi Archbishop Evarist Pinto hailed the launch of Good News TV as "a massive step forward for a different way of broadcasting in the country." (CATHNEWS ASIA)

PHILIPPINES: NEW WEBSITE FOR YOUNG PEOPLE

More than 1,000 representatives of youth organizations around the country gathered at the Plaza Mayor of the University of Santo Tomas in Manila on Jan. 16, 2010 for the launching of *YouthPinoy* website <www.youthpinoy.com>. Present at the occasion was Archbishop Edward Adams, apostolic nuncio to the Philippines, who invited the young people to make their faith known and spread the Gospel through active participation in the new website. *YouthPinoy* runs under the auspices of the Episcopal Commission on Youth and the Catholic Bishops' Conference of the Philippines (CBCP) Media Office. The prelate also reiterated the call of Pope Benedict XVI and the late Pope John Paul II for young people to bear witness to their Catholic faith through the digital world. Bishop Joel Baylon, chairperson of the youth commission, said in announcing the launch that this website is an opportunity for young people "to meet their fellow young people... and establish connections and healthy friendships." (SE)

HONG KONG: 'GOD ON BUSES' REVIVED

The Diocesan Audio-Visual Centre (DAVC) ran a new series of *God on the Buses* program late last year as part of Hong Kong diocese's commemoration of the "Year of the Priests." The series featured some of Hong Kong's clergy engaged in leisurely pursuits. In one segment titled *Serving God with Joy*, Hong Kong Bishop John Tong was shown playing basketball and the violin. Six other clergymen were also featured including one priest performing magic, and a deacon practising *tai chi* with a sword. The two-minute slots were shown every Friday, Saturday and Sunday between Oct. 2 and Nov. 8, 2009 on 1,600 buses fitted with multimedia systems. The clips have been uploaded onto YouTube. The series has received positive feedback from commuters. DAVC began showing *God on Buses* programs in 2001. (SE)

MYANMAR: YOUNG VIOLINISTS CAPTURE HEARTS OF PARISHIONERS

The dozen members of the Holy Childhood Violin Group, formed five years ago by a 12-year-old boy, are still the only violinists who play at Catholic services in Myanmar. The teenage group plays at Mass at the Church of Epiphany in Yangon one Sunday a month as well as on special occasions, and in other parishes by invitation. Churchgoers say the music inspires them as they sing hymns. The group practices three evenings a week. When the group first started, the Holy Childhood Association of Yangon archdiocese supported them by supplying 10 violins. So far 25 children have taken part in the group, learning at least the basics of the violin. (UCANEWS)

INDIA: SALESIAN FILM WINS NATIONAL AWARD

Yarwng (roots), a feature film directed by Salesian Father Joseph Pulinthanath has won Tripura state's first national film award. Federal Minister for Information and Broadcasting Ambika Soni announced the film awards on Jan. 23, 2010 in New Delhi. Father Pulinthanath's film spoken in Kokborok language was selected as the best feature film in the category of languages not officially recognized in India. It is the first national film award for the northeastern state. Indian President Pratibha Patil will present the awards in March. Produced by Salesian Father Joseph Kizhakechennadu of Don Bosco Sampari Pictures and directed by Father Pulinthanath, the Tripura film speaks about the displacement of thousands of indigenous people in the state due to the Gumti Hydel hydro-electric project. (UCANEWS)

MYANMAR: CHURCH RADIO FACES FUNDING SQUEEZE

Radio Veritas Asia (RVA) in Myanmar, in common with many Church services in the country, is facing a funding crisis as it is squeezed by a drop in foreign donations. "Support from donors is reduced year by year and financing is our main challenge," said Father Gabriel Htun Myint, RVA assistant program director. "We are trying to reduce the operating expenses and get our people multi-tasking but we still have a lot to do... Finding local contributions to programming is also proving difficult," the priest said. Father Htun Myint and a visiting representative of a funding agency, held a meeting recently with listeners of the Myanmar, Kachin and Kayin language services in Mandalay, Myitkyina and Yangon respectively. They also met with Myanmar bishops. Archbishop Paul Zingtung Grawng of Mandalay Archdiocese hopes that the local Church would rise to the challenge. "Our local church must take responsibility as much we can to continue this excellent radio service," he said. RVA is a project of the Federation of Asian Bishops' Conferences (FABC) and broadcasts in 15 languages across Asia. (UCANEWS)

HONG KONG: SEMINAR LOOKS AT COMMUNICATION AND IMPROVING PUBLIC PERCEPTION OF THE CHURCH

The Catholic Social Communications Office, Diocesan Audio Visual Centre (DAVC), and three vicars general of the diocese held a seminar for diocesan staff on Jan. 13, 2010 at the Diocesan Centre along Caine Road. At the seminar, Vicar General Fr. Michael M.C. Yeung encouraged the participants to put their faith into practice and protect the Church's image. The work of the diocese's frontline workers has public relations value, said Fr. Yeung, and that public perception of the Church begins with them. Fr. Dominic Chan, another vicar general of the diocese, said Church organizations should present the Church's view on matters to the community, in a coordinated way, whenever the opportunity presents itself. Meanwhile, Fr. Pierre Lam Minh said the work of Church organizations provides an avenue for living our faith values. He hopes communication within the Church will improve and urged parishes to publicize information from diocesan commissions. (SE)

HONG KONG: ONLINE SCHOOL OF EVANGELIZATION AWARDS 30 GRADUATES

The Online School of Evangelization based in Hong Kong awarded certificates to some 30 Chinese Catholics who have recently completed their course. The function was held on Jan. 17, 2010 in a Catholic school in the diocese. Some of the graduates came from afar to attend the ceremony which was conducted in English, Cantonese and Mandarin and broadcast live over the Internet. Those who live in Australia, Canada, China, and the U.S. spoke about their experience with the online course. During the ceremony, Msgr. Dominic Chan Chi-ming, vicar general of the diocese of Hong Kong, pointed out how Christians must make use of new media for evangelization. Father Giovanni Giampietro (also known as Yan Po-Tak) of the Pontifical Institute of Foreign Missions, supervisor of the online school, expressed his joy for students who want to become an instrument of Christ's evangelization. The online school's programs include courses in missiology and communication. (ASIANEWS)

the Word can traverse the many crossroads created by the intersection of all the different "highways" that form "cyberspace" - Pope Benedict XVI, *Message for the 44th World Communication Day 2010*