

NEWS REPORT OF THE

The 9th SIGNIS INDIA NATIONAL ASSEMBLY

“CREATING IMAGES FOR A BETTER TOMORROW”

Don Bosco, Matunga, Mumbai

February 24-28, 2012

Mumbai, Feb. 29., XI SIGNIS INDIA NATIONAL ASSEMBLY organized by SIGNIS INDIA in association with Tej-Prasarini, Don Bosco Communications at Don Bosco Matunga, Mumbai from 24-28th February, 2012. The theme of the convention is “Creating Images for a Better Tomorrow”. SIGNIS is a non-governmental organization that includes members from 140 countries. It has a consultative status with UNESCO, Ecosoc (United Nations as in Geneva and New York, the Council of Europe). Every year SIGNIS India engages all the members in serious discussion on current topics prevalent in the World. This convention had 90 delegates attending the convention from all across India.

The Solemn Holy Mass was presided by Most Rev. Bishop Godfrey de Rosario, Bishop of Vadodara, secretary of Social Communication Commission of Western Region (CBCI) as the main celebrant. Rev. Bishop Godfrey De Rosario commenced his enlightening homily with the myth of Pandora's Box which was supposed to contain the blessings for human beings. But today as before, Pandora's box has been opened and every good gift has vanished and only the beautiful gift of HOPE remains. He challenged the participants to be authentic witnesses of the truth and quoting the Holy Father's message of World Communication Day 2011 encouraged them to be “the conscience of the nation”.

Mr. Bosco Rodrigues, RJ from All India Radio compered the programme. He enthralled the audience with puns and quips to make the sessions a little lighter.

The dignitaries included Most Rev. Bishop Godfrey de Rosario, Bishop of Vadodara, Secretary of Social Communication Commission of Western Region Catholic Bishops Conference of India. Mr. Sunil Luca, President of SIGNIS India, Rev. Frs. John Edappilly, Vice President, Norbert Herman, Secretary and Treasurer of SIGNIS India, Ashok Vaghela, President of the Western Region, Fr. Ajoy Fernandes, sdb Vice Provincial of the Salesian Province of Bombay and Joaquim Fernandes, sdb, Co-ordinator, Director of Tej-prasarini, Don Bosco Communication lit the lamp and inaugurated the convention and prayed for the blessing of God for the success of this convention.

In the Inaugural session Mr. Sunil Lucas, The National President of SIGNIS India welcomed the audience. He enunciated on the theme and gave the history of SIGNIS and its objectives. Fr. Ajoy Fernandes SDB, Vice Provincial Salesian Province of Mumbai gave an inspiring talk, backed by his video presentation highlighting on the influences of media on the children and young people.

Ms Lorraine Martin, Group Communications Officer, Ogilvy, India in her key note address, speaking on the theme : *“Creating Images for a Better Tomorrow”*, shared her expertise on Emerging Perspective on Media and Social Transformation, Reflection and Challenges of growing up in a Digital Age. She continued on Current Global issues on how images have been created in the world and empowered governments, people, youth and children.

She commented: David Ogilvy said, “*Encourage innovation. Change is our life-blood, stagnation our death knell.*”

And Einstein wasn't too far away when he said, “*We cannot expect to do things the way we have always done, expecting the same result every time.*”

“We can only create a good image

On the back of good, solid, sound, reliable, valid messages

that are *communicated* to the

right audience at the right place at the right time

in the right manner”

We are living in very complex, turbulent, challenging and fast changing times.

In my humble opinion, further advancement in the science of Information Technology is going to be our death warrant; at the risk of sounding like the voice of doom, it has become increasingly clear that the pace at which technology is advancing, indicates that our future could well have the makings for self destruction. Some of this is already highly visible.

She explains that many really powerful brands were built not just on ideas, but also on ideals. The viewing of some of the advertisements on social issues like Polio, Domestic violence, Smoking were trite and humoristic, while those on tourism were interesting all produced by her group of companies. There were moments of intervention, which further enriched the participants

In the morning session Fr. Joaquim Fernandes, SDB, Director of Tej-Prasarini, Don Bosco Communications and general secretary of Boscom, South Asia, spoke on “***Communication for Pastoral Leadership – A Formation Programme for the Church in India***”. The Church's mission is primarily one of communications. Social communication is not something that is optional or peripheral to the pastoral ministry of the Church but is at the core of all that she does. As Aetatis Novae states; “Social communications have a role to play in every aspect of the Church's mission” (AN 17). With the aid of video clips, he showed us how the new media has made in-roads into the mode of prayer through the breviary and even the confessional through mea culpa the latest application by apple apps. He explained the 3 books published on “*Communication for Pastoral Leadership*” for seminaries across India.

1. Basis of Social Communications for postulancy and pre-novitiate stage
2. Critical Understanding of Social Communications for students of Philosophy and Regency in seminaries.
3. Theological Perspectives in Social Communications for students of Theology

“Rich Media for Better Tomorrow: The propagation of Catholic Christian Faith” by

Mr. Michael Peria, Consultant – Multimedia Practice, CMC Limited. He took us on a journey through the various media channels, revealing to us the wonders of multimedia. He also stressed on Websites, Portals and E-learning. He himself was charged with passion for catechesis and tried to infuse this into the participants.

“New Media: Social Networking: A Bane or a Boon” by Mr. Joseph Pinto, Suraksha Foundation, Director. Being a street boy himself and having lived at Don Bosco Shelter for many years and then working with Don Bosco Balprafulta having grassroots experience today he has opened his own NGO and works with disadvantaged children and youth and conducts training programmes for Police officers at Mumbai. He proved his clarity in the choice of rescuing the unfortunate children

through a video of powerful songs on child labour. He uses the facebook account to support his project to protect street children in Mumbai

Journalists Ms. Karen Laurie and Mr. Carlyle Laurie spoke on ***“Creating Images for Family through the new media”***. Carlyle stressed on Media’s role: every time we write script, we touch the lives of millions of people. He showed us how Broadcast Journalism through “live links” got the governments involved in the case where Indians got redressal. He also showed us what good reporting is and warped journalism can do, the importance of speed in news and carpet journalism and the question mark. Karen took us to what is happening behind the television. She presented the true picture of a journalist. There is a lot of exploitation that takes place and that made them leave their jobs. Karen was very much down to earth in telling us how family life gets disturbed.

February 25, 2012. Mr Conrad Saldana, Principal Advisor of Don Bosco Center of Learning, Ex-Vice President (Training and Research) in the Times of India Group, spoke on ***“Media Meanderings”*** and highlighted the Alphabetical age v/s the digital age. He contextualized on how erosion of trust in Corporation, Religious Institutions, Families and self have taken place due to the new media. What is our emerging response and how social media has evolved to this present generation. It calls for transparency and trust. He quoted Mahatma. Gandhi *“My life is my Message”*. He explained how we need to understand the emerging social reality and responding in a relevant manner.

Savio D’souza general secretary of the Indian Music Industry enunciated the topic of ***“Thou Shall Not Steal-Images And Intellectual Property”***. He quoted from the Acts 5; 1-11, the example of Ananias and his wife Saphira who lied and gave just 50% of their product. He further said “Render to Caesar all that belongs to Caesar and to God all that belongs to God” (Mk 12: 17). He played a number of Video clippings on the violation of Intellectual Piracy. He insisted on familiarizing ourselves with the Copy Right Act 1957 as media producers and consumers.

Mr. Vivek Bhatt, Risk Management-Compliance-Insurance-Investments a convert and presently residing in Canada spoke on behalf of the ***“Light House Catholic Media”*** which symbolizes the Catholic Media and insisted that the Catholic CDs should have the project of raising the faith of the people. It should be a commitment to life: Church and society.

Mr. Mathew Martin, spoke on ***“Universal Design in Communication and Sign Language”*** and challenged the audience to enhance the blind and the deaf children of India. He gave a few suggestions to the media persons present to give a serious thought to producing materials that will facilitate the learning ability of the differently able people with a special emphasis to give caption and not sub-titles along with minimum audio description.

“Creating Images – Fuelling Ambitions” was dealt with professional competence by Mr. Agnelo Dias, Chief Creative Officer, Tap Root India. He enlightened the participants on the attitude of the ads and not the product. He said the aim of advertisement is to stimulate people to consume. Dias displayed at least six different Advertisement clips (Just do it from Nike, snake and charmer, Airtel, Pepsi, Mumbai mirror, Amitabh Bachan speaking on 60 years of independence) to showcase the technology, skill and creativity involved in making them. He was involved in the Teach India campaign and the Aman Ki Asha campaign for Times of India.

“Principles of News Making” by Ms Carol Andrade, Editor of The Afternoon, she efficiently shared her expertise in the field of print journalism. She highlighted on elements, which make quality news. Carol differentiated between NEWS and an EVENT. She said that an event if not reported was not news. Giving further input on NEWS, the Editor briefly described how PROXIMITY, PROMINENCE and TIMELINESS make news for the day. She also talked about practical problems in news reporting like getting to site, spin report, short deadline, lack of home work and lack of personal observation. Carol also touched upon 5Ws, 1H and consequences; packaged story and paid news.

The last session of the day was an interactive evening with the representatives of young people: Ms. Rochelle (Sociology Student), Mr. Shuan Harris (Web Designer) and Mr. Pratik Patelia (Cinematographer) at the panel discussion during which they shared their personal experiences on media and gave general opinion on how young generation was deviating from the church due to the media technological boom. The youth urged upon the assembly to communicate in a manner that interest the young.

In the evening a Cultural Extravaganza by the Don Bosco Boarders, NIOS Students of Don Bosco High School, Matunga, Shelter Don Bosco, Wadala, a scintillating Dance performance by international dancers Mr Diego Pereira and his partner Ms Reesha danced to the tune of the famous Titanic songs “ My heart will go On” this was followed by “ The Pray Sing Choir from Tej-Prasarini, conducted by Mr Amon Daniels . They sang the Hollywood and Bollywood numbers and kept the group upbeat for a long time. It was indeed a mesmerizing show which kept the audience under spell bound for more than an hour.

February 26, 2012, A field trip was organized to the famous R.K. Films and Studios at Chembur, a cradle of many Bollywood Films produced over the past decades. It was an eye opener for most of us to discover at a closer range, the magical power of the cinematography world. A short trip to Mary Mount Parish Church led the participants to witness the inspiring scene of the devotees flocking to the place of prayer and worship. The magnificent and splendid sight of the Bandra Worli sea link was amazing a fine art of technology and precision to bridge the deep ocean. After lunch, was yet another exciting experience of discovering beyond Mumbai city: a visit to Pagoda – a Vipasanna Meditation Centre, Gorai, Uttan Beach and finally to Boscowadi place to just relax and share experiences of our works and network.

February, 27-28, 2012. Bishop Chacko Thottumarickal SVD, (Bishop of Indore), Chairman of the Social Communications at Catholic Bishops Conference of India spoke to all the SIGNIS India delegates. He said “We need to spread the good news of Jesus” through the new media channels available to us. Fr. Micheal Fernandes sdb, Provincial Salesian Province of Mumbai, addressed the gathering and welcomed all the SIGNIS India members to Don Bosco , Matunga. Mr Augustine Loorthusamy, World S President spoke of the global perspective and how SIGNIS world is creating new images in the audio and TV production across the world. He mentioned that the new seminarians need to move away from the chalk and the talk method of teaching and use the various social media networks to enhance the new digital age

The book “ **JESUS –THE PRINCE OF PEACE**” by Joaquim Fernandes sdb was released by his His Grace Chacko Thottumarickal SVD, (Bishop of Indore), Chairman of the Social Communications at CBCI, speaking on this occasion he said “ I am very happy to see the Catechism for first communion which you have painstakingly prepared. It is a praiseworthy attempt to make the religious

instruction to children more interesting. We are living in an audio-visual world. Imparting religious instruction through heavily loaded text is becoming more and more uninteresting. You have made religious instruction very interesting and attractive. The simple language, the beautiful lay out and meaningful pictures make catechism attractive. I am sure that your attempt to make Jesus a friend of the children would make it more challenging. May God bless you and your ministry. May the children grow in the knowledge and love of Jesus.” . Fr. Joaquim Fernandes, sdb thanked all the donors and the people who had played an active role in this project to publish the book. He thanked Mr Kevin Jairaj for concept and design, Mr Ganesh Sonuskar for the artwork, and Fr. Valerian Pereira, Fr. Cletus Dsouza and Ms Verona Vaz for editing the book.

The SIGNIS India President Mr Sunil Lucas, along with Fr. John Edappilly, Vice President and Fr. Norbert Herman, secretary started the proceeding for the business days. The audited accounts and SIGNIS India report were presented to the assembly and passed. The various groups along with the presidents of each region submitted their reports and their works in the various parts of India. An evaluation and suggestions for SIGNIS India took place and finally the deliberations to give awards for the best documentary / movie to be screened during the next assembly. The next SIGNIS India Assembly was flagged off to Andhra Pradesh.

The meeting gave Catholic producers the opportunity to share experiences, foster collaboration and co-production and promote their work. The focal areas that were discussed by an esteemed panel of speakers have enhanced creating images for a better world for our children, for youth and for each one of us.

Fr. Norbert SVD

