

MINUTES OF THE
The SIGNIS INDIA NATIONAL ASSEMBLY
New Media for New Generation
Carnival Club, Yapral, Secunderabad
16th to 20th February 2013

Secunderabad Feb. 20th: SIGNIS India organized SIGNIS National Assembly in association with SIGNIS A.P. from 16th -20th February, 2013. The theme of the convention was “New Media for New Generation”. This convention had around 130 delegates attend it from all across India.

The Assembly started with an opening prayer by Sr. Teresa Kamsuan (FMA) leading the Assembly into a prayerful mood with the prayer of “Gratitude, Blessings and intercession”. Invoking the spirit of God to fall upon us, she guided the gathering to surrender all the activities and decisions into the loving hands of God our Father.

Mr. Sunil Lucas, SIGNIS India President and Fr. Norbert Herman SVD, SIGNIS India Secretary welcomed Mr. Augustine Loorthusamy, the SIGNIS World President; Mr. Alvito D’Souza, SIGNIS World Secretary; Most Rev. Bp. Chacko Thottumarickal SVD, Chairperson of CBCI Office of Social Communications and Fr. Faustine Lobo, Director of Pontifical Mission Society Bangalore.

Mr. Sunil Lucas explained the reason for the special session before the formal inauguration of the Assembly. **He said that all the secretaries of CBCI-OSC are present after their regional meeting Hyderabad.** He said that **SIGNIS** India is the largest family in the world and it is an example to the world. He emphasized that we are here to set our house in order and regain credibility in the SIGNIS World.

SIGNIS World President Mr. Augustine Loorthusamy gave a word of appreciation to all gathered and expressed a sense of pride in being present in the SIGNIS National Assembly.

Fr. Faustine Lobo Director, Pontifical Mission Society Bangalore started his presentation by defining Evangelization: “Communicate the experience of the Risen Lord Jesus with others; the One I have seen, heard and touched. We must have an encounter with the Risen Jesus as the Disciples encountered Jesus.” He encouraged the participants to focus their attention on the media gadgets for the sake of communication of faith. And thus SIGNIS India should be at the disposal of evangelization.

He continued with the following points:

- Pope Paul VI wrote in his 1975 Apostolic Exhortation ‘*Evangelii Nuntiandi*’: ***Living our faith in such a way that that is deeply attractive to others and telling others what we believe.***
- ***It is an essential part of the Catholic way of life***

- Cardinal Joseph Ratzinger gave a wonderful talk about this in the Jubilee Year 2000. He said that evangelization is not a matter of achieving instant success through vast programmes. It is about going back to the spirit of the Gospels.

New Media for New Evangelization

Speaking about the New Media for New Generation, Fr. Faustine highlighted the concern of the Holy Father that is evangelizing the three categories of people namely, those who do not know Christ (Beyond frontiers), strengthen those who have known Christ and are living enthusiastically and the third category he mentioned is in between the first and the second. Below are the points in detail:

- Though well-known and undoubtedly a part of the Church's many projects, the "new evangelization" remains a **relatively new expression and concept in ecclesial and pastoral circles**. Consequently, its meaning is not always clear and precise.
- Initially introduced by Pope John Paul II during his apostolic visit to Poland, without any specific emphasis or idea of its future role.

Redemptoris Missio 33

He continued thus, “The fact that there is a diversity of activities in the Church's one mission is not intrinsic to that mission, but arises from the variety of circumstances in which that mission is carried out. Looking at today's world from the viewpoint of evangelization, we can distinguish three situations.

First, there is the situation which the Church's missionary activity addresses:

Peoples, groups, and socio-cultural contexts in which Christ and His Gospel are not known, or which lack Christian communities sufficiently mature to be able to incarnate the faith in their own environment and proclaim it to other groups.

This is mission *ad gentes* in the proper sense of the term.

Secondly,

There are Christian communities with adequate and solid ecclesial structures.

They are fervent in their faith and in Christian living.

They bear witness to the Gospel in their surroundings and have a sense of commitment to the universal mission.

In these communities the Church carries out her activity and pastoral care.

Thirdly,

There is an intermediate situation, particularly in countries with ancient Christian roots, and occasionally in the younger Churches as well, where entire groups of the baptized have lost a

living sense of the faith, or even no longer consider themselves members of the Church, and live a life far removed from Christ and his Gospel.

In this case what is needed is a "**new evangelization**" or a "**re-evangelization.**"

- St. Mathew's Gospel warns us of complacency: "***For, this people's heart has grown dull, and their ears are hard of hearing, and they have shut their eyes; so that they might not look with their eyes, and listen with their ears, and understand with their heart and turn... and I would heal them.***"(Mt. 13.15)

New Ways of "Being Church":

Fr. Faustine spoke about our Mission today with following elaborations:

- These new circumstances in the Church's mission make us realize that, in the end, the expression "**new evangelization**" requires finding new approaches to evangelization so as "**to be Church**" in today's ever-changing social and cultural situations.
- The traditional, long-accepted model of a division of the world into "Christian countries" and "mission lands", despite its conceptual clarity, is now seen as limited, overly simple and no longer applicable to the present situation, and thus, unable to be used as a reference in building today's Christian communities.
- Instead, Christian life and practice must guide this reflection, in a deliberative process of devising new models of "being Church", which avoids the dangers of sectarianism and a "civic religion", and allows the Church, in today's post-ideological era, to continue to maintain her identity as missionary.
- Even in places where she might be in the minority or subject to discrimination, the Church must not lose her capacity of remaining close to the people in their daily lives so as to announce in that very place the life-giving message of the Gospel.
- According to Pope John Paul II, the "new evangelization" means to remake the Christian fabric of human society and the fabric of Christian communities themselves.

He also drew attention of those in the assembly about the Vatican Council II. He said, that 'Decree on the missionary activity of the Church 'Ad Gentes' No. 2 states, "The pilgrim Church is missionary by her very nature, since it is from the mission of the Son and the mission of the Holy Spirit that she draws her origin, in accordance with the decree of God the Father".

The above text is very important not only because it affirms the radically missionary identity of the Church, but also because it bases it on the Trinitarian Mystery, on the mission of the Son and the Spirit. Our mission today – the 'Christian (priestly/religious/laity) being' is precisely a being who is sent.

Mission Ad Intra

Growth in our own faith

- Encounter with Jesus as the Son of God.
- Jesus as the One, who is sent.
- Memory of words and deeds of the historic Jesus.

Mission Ad Extra

Missionary for others

- Mission is both people-centered and Church-centered.
- Ad Gentes missionary activity is exercised in three “spheres”: geographical, social and cultural (RM 37).

Sighting the example of Bl. Mother Teresa as the communicator, Fr. Faustine brought out the most important issue of being connected with the Eternal Power! He said that Bl. Mother Teresa used the metaphor of the Electric wire to explain the relationship between God & us. According to her unless current is flowing through the electric wire there is no light. She placed the responsibility on us saying, “The ‘power line’ is you and I. The electric current is God. Unless God, the power flows through us we cannot generate light to the world.” “Without Him, we have no being. Through Him, we have our being.” (Acts 17:28)

MAKE MISSION A ‘MOVEMENT’

‘Movement’ is a coordinated group action focused on an issue. It is coordinated effort and therefore, two or more persons work in tandem to achieve a common purpose in their minds. Their time, energy, intelligence and other resources are totally dedicated and focused on what they have to achieve. So, the attitude of those who are into a movement should be “We will not rest until we achieve.” Mission, for us Christians, should become a movement. Our efforts should be coordinated to spread the Good News far and wide. Every Christian should deliberately decide that he/she will not rest until the last person in this world knows Christ Jesus and his message. This drive should spring from the fact of our encountering the historical Risen Lord. When we encounter the Risen Jesus we must be able to say along with the apostles, “What I have touched, what I have heard and seen I cannot but proclaim”.

He thanked Mr. Augustine Loorthusamy, SIGNIS World President and appreciated the tremendous contribution of SIGNIS in the field of communication. According to him the Church is equipped with communication gadgets and facilities. The Church is catching up with the changing trends in communication methods. The Church is able to communicate efficiently & effectively to a great extent because of the gift of SIGNIS.

Fr. Faustine spoke of SIGNIS - at the service of the Church. He urged the participants to focus on the Core Values & Vision & Mission. He said that the Communication/SIGNIS is at the disposal of other Commissions. All the other wings of the Church look for help in using the communication media. The different commissions have to communicate to the people. **Teach them how best and easily they can communicate.** He asked the participants to introspect the dream of the church for the coming years.

A few suggestions were proposed by him and they are as follows:

- Give the communication skills training to the Church.
- Skills to speak, to write, use of all modern communication gadgets / mass media of communication: Ads, Newspaper, Magazines, Radio, TV, Online – Facebook, Twitter, and Mobile SMS.

He urged the members to be part of the Pastoral plan. He posed a few questions:

- What is the membership criterion of SIGNIS ?
- How does SIGNIS form part of the pastoral plan – (The National, Regional & Diocesan pastoral plans)?
- What is the relationship between the social communication commission and SIGNIS? Collaboration with the Social Communication Commissions at different levels

He highlighted the Project Selection mechanism saying:

- Who checks the feasibility and the relevance of the project?
- Monitoring mechanism – who monitors (insider or outsider) & how?
- What is the accountability? How to ensure cost effectiveness & the results?

He also revealed that there are instances when the amount is taken and the projects are absent.

Strongly emphasizing the process of Evaluation Fr. Faustine said that we must have Mid project & End project Evaluation system. He said that the Evaluation Format is ok it should be clear who evaluates the project's effectiveness and efficiency and that Impact evaluation must be done before sanctioning another project as to how the project is beneficial for the purpose intended.

Mr. Sunil Lucas, President SIGNIS India, thanked Fr. Faustine for his excellent presentation and Fr. Norbert Herman SVD presented him with a memento as a token of appreciation.

Presentation by Mr. Alvito D' Souza, SIGNIS World Secretary

Mr. Alvito D' Souza reiterated the presentation of Fr. Faustine and spoke about the SIGNIS criteria for evaluation. He gave a **promo** on the SIGNIS World's areas of intervention through cinema, radio, internet, advocacy, media education, arts, spirituality, health education, religious freedom, conflict resolution, life enrichment, combat consumerism, Empowerment of Children, Human Trafficking, Training Workshops, Drama for Life and Music for Life.

The topic of his presentation was SIGNIS PROJECT EVALUATION GUIDELINES.

He began by saying that SIGNIS is all about

- *Informing, educating, and entertaining...*
- *Celebrating the marvel of cultural diversity...*
- *Nurturing solidarity beyond racial, ethnic and religious differences....*
- *Encountering the spiritual dimension of every human being...*
- *Transforming cultures...*
- *Promoting peace...*

Media can do all this!

He continued with “The Mission of SIGNIS”. He said, “It is to engage with media professionals and support Catholic Communicators to help transform our cultures in the light of the Gospel by promoting Human Dignity, Justice and Reconciliation.

Mr. Alvito explained the Calendar and stages for OPPF projects in detail. He listed the following points:

Sept 30: Deadline for receiving projects in Brussels

Dec: Projects handed over to OPPF

Jan-Feb: Letters sent to projects that were not recommended

May: OPPF assembly decides on funding of projects

June/July (approx): List of accorded funds received in Brussels and letters sent to applicants + receipt of funds and report form (**New....**).

Oct-Dec (approx): Funds are received in the account of Diocese, Archdiocese via the Nuncio.

He explicated the Calendar and stages for OPPF projects in the following terms:

It takes nearly one full year from the reception of projects at National level to their input in Brussels to the PMS Assembly and finally the transfer of funds!

Constitution of evaluation committees:

Continental Level: (Min 3)

Representative of the Brussels Secretariat

Representative of the continental assembly

Competent elected committee members

Mandate of 2 to 4 years for continuity

Should not have or intend to present a project

The criteria of evaluation committee should consist of:

National Level (Min 3)

SIGNIS National Representative

At least two other elected persons

Should not have or intend to present a project

Strongly suggest that one of them be the local PMS Director

He elaborated each criteria in a National Level taking into account existing local structures, context and environment... Committees must be transparent and accountable for their decisions. Committees must provide a written report of their meetings.

Written Reports (National Level):

1. List of Committee members
2. Dates of meeting
3. List of ALL projects evaluated
4. Clear indication if the project is recommended or not and WHY
5. Evaluation of the process.. Suggestions?

Written Reports: a suggested format

Country

Date

Committee members

Number of projects evaluated

Number of projects recommended

Diocese

Institution

Applicant

Recommendation

Priority

Objectives of review (screening?)

- **It is not simply a rejection or acceptance of applications**
- **It is a means of engaging a discourse on priorities, needs and resources**

Objectives of review (screening?) committees:

In view of the very limited resources, applicants, national representatives, regional representatives and the Brussels Secretariat engage a DISCOURSE to prioritize media development needs at Diocesan, National, Regional and World levels!

He suggested that together we look for:

- Media projects that are genuinely related to the local church.
- Projects most linked to Diocesan or regional pastoral plans.
- Areas most in need.
- Areas where PMS intervention will be most effective.

The Result!

Mr. Alvito appealed to the gathering to involve teams (committees) at different levels to engage **local, regional and international (laity?)** to discourse, share, discover and plan priorities. Through our reports and communicating results of evaluations to all, we engage open discussion, providing the checks and balances that lead to transparency and accountability. According to him the SIGNIS evaluation process is more than a simple screening process. It is an exercise in community building (association). The Focus is not on control but rather on responsible growth.

- *IT IS ABOUT BEING SIGNIS... sharing talents and creativity.*

He stopped with a thought provoking question: What image of Church and of SIGNIS do WE WANT TO BE?

“It was indeed an enlightening and reflective presentation” said Fr. Norbert as he summarized the session.

BUZZ Session

Several question and clarifications came from various corners of the conference hall, such as:

- **What is the relationship between Pontifical Mission Society and SIGNIS?**
- **Should SIGNIS members be in screening committee?**
- **Can we digitally scrutinize the projects?**
- **Are the guidelines enforced?**
- **What is the priority for projects?**
- **Could you focus more on building community objectives?**

Besides the above points, there were also a few observations regarding the quality productions, practical difficulties of carrying out the projects due to lengthy process of screening etc.

Sunil Lucas concluded the buzz session with words of appreciation for Mr. Alvito’s presentation.

SIGNIS Project Guidelines and Comments

George Plathottam SDB Secretary, CBC - OSC

Follow the project guidelines as indicated in the form

Applications are divided into three heads: Equipment, Training and Production.

Signature: It should be of the Local Bishop for Dioceses and Regional Chairman for the Regions.

If no Bishop is in office due to retirement or resignation, the Apostolic Administration is authorized to sign. Absence of the Bishop from the diocesan office (**Absence of the Bishop of the Diocese from office**) is not enough reason to get signature of the VG or someone else.

In case in a diocese, the Bishop has designated a VG to sign all projects, a letter of authorization is to be enclosed.

Write the information sought, not anything and everything in the columns.

Read carefully the requirement

Project title: not the name of the project or the title of the video or film but what it is Eg. LCD Projector

Media Education Training for Teachers

Video on the Life and Message of Blessed Mother Teresa

If the place provided is not sufficient please add annexure at the end with specific references.

Projects are specifically and only for communication activities Pastoral Communication is the priority. Formation of leaders, production of quality programs that can be used to reach a larger audience through public media

Applicant: Individual Catholic with Communication competence and credentials, Institutes and organizations and media centres: not social development centres, clinics or Bible apostolate etc. But projects can be for enhancing the communication component/ dimension of these activities, but it must be clear.

Better to have a proper designation, letter head, identity, brochure etc. for your centre.

Please keep the exchange case (unclear) as proposed by SIGNIS each year.

All equipments are for the institution and not for individuals. They must be entered in the inventory of the centre and should not be transferred along with the applicant. No personal items to be applied for: laptop, personal cameras etc.

Do not apply for mikes, mike stands, CDs, DVD purchases.

One person may only apply for one project except when one is having multiple tasks. But don't take contract for several institutions, parishes.

National and Regional projects are allotted bigger amounts due to their responsibilities, area and larger number of beneficiaries.

Dioceses and new centres are priority.

Centres with overarching activities: broadcasts and telecasts, national projects which are original, new, creative, path breaking get preference.

For instance, media research, website: only one project each. In 2011.

India is weak on media research

More than half the dioceses in India do not have a website, and many of those who have are not updated regularly.

Applicant and centre should follow area of competence; strength, competence if your centre is film studies, try to promote projects related to it- film appreciation ...

There is no use of applying for equipment for single time production or just one use in a year.

Reporting:

Please attach scanned and edited photos. Not photos of other workshops (Example: Education seminar with CBCI secretary for education, photo of taking class in novitiate) Provide proper captions.

Regional Screening to be done more seriously:

Priorities of the region, not all projects similar, but address various dimensions of the communication.

Regional Screening: don't write comments on the project copy.

Congregations: Applicant should not be Mother General, Provincial of congregations.

They must designate communication persons to take responsibility and implement the project.

Project should benefit and serve all, not just 'sisters of our congregation'. Teaching in seminary, novitiate etc. do not need SIGNIS project.

Where the program is day-long not requiring residence do not mention lodging.

Define pastoral plan and priorities clearly.

Don't write general, negative comments- people don't have anything...

The document be grammatically correct, with correct spellings (names of Bishops, resource persons mistaken).

Quotations should be printed, and not made on computer by person himself or herself.

In production acknowledge SIGNIS India and PF

Too many productions with no proper coordination

Too many poor quality productions; SIGNIS intend to set up quality check and those whose production do not meet standards will not be favored.

Diocesan directors of social communication and many others do not seem to know of the CBCI pastoral plan, so they are making their own plans.

Leaders have to be animators and motivators, not producers.

Submit products and publicity materials, reports of how it benefited the people with testimonies and real life-transforming stories, not of the producer himself praising the work.

Project Screening- 2011

From Dr. Magimai Pragasam

1. Flashlights, tripods, organs, generators, diesel, dimmer and dippers are not recommended as they could be mobilised locally.

2. Descriptive report of the fund received last needs to be attached as there is no other means of reporting for the money spent. Photographs can be attached. List of participants of the workshop, video, audio programmes need to be enclosed. We wonder, every year lots of productions are recommended, and we receive none during screening, nor the secretariat receives them from members.
3. In productions, mere messages from priests cannot be called a programme. Message by a priest could be one of the items of the programme.
4. Celebrations of Mother Teresa centenary is already over. Hence, let us base our programmes on the values propagated by Mother Teresa, instead of her life.
5. Synopsis for the video is a must.
6. The number of courses should be clearly mentioned. They differ from place to place.
7. Children are no more our target, as far as training programmes are concerned. The focus is on trainers, animators, teachers and leaders.
8. Letter to Belgium is not required
9. Quotations are insufficient. At times they are handwritten without seal etc.
10. Justification of equipment is not sufficient
11. Improper alignment
12. Improper format
13. For one day programme, boarding and lodging is not necessary.
14. Direct development projects like AIDS, climate change, alcoholism etc. need not be applied for.
15. Nunciature's name is misspelt on many projects.
16. Programmes for choir members need to be explained
17. Joint projects are to be written only when the nature of the programme demands collaboration and not for the sake of writing a joint project. In such a case, if money received through joint project is spent in another diocese, the respective Bishop has to be informed that money received through another diocese is being spent in his diocese. Whether Bishop signs the project or money comes from the joint project from another diocese, the local Bishop has to be informed, as the money comes from PSPF and local ordinary should be kept informed about it.

Questions

- 1) What is the *Role/Regulations (rule/ regulation?)* of PMS to SINGIS
- 2) To write a proposal, is it necessary to have a (...?)

Business days

February 17th, 2013

The day began with Holy Mass presided over by Fr. Bernard, Vicar General; Fr. Norbert Herman SVD and Fr. Mariadas SDB. The hall turned into a place of worship, echoing with sounds of an angelic choir from St. Anthony's Church, Mudfort.

Fr. BalaShowry, Director Amruthavani(Chairperson, AP SIGNIS) welcomed the gathering on the occasion. Fr. T. Mariadas invited the performers for a welcome dance. The hall resounded with the song "Suswagatam" and the dancers from the Sacred Heart Church graced the stage with Indian classical rhythm, invoking the blessings from Christ - the Communicator, thereafter followed the welcome Audio Visual presentation by SIGNIS, AP. They spoke of

the meaning, theme and purpose of the assembly- Being Listening, Discussing and Deciding. Composed especially for the occasion by St. Antony Church, Mudfort echoed the song: **“Vande, suswagatam, prembhav se atithiaapkokarte hum swagatam.”** The song incorporated the theme, message and the good wishes for the coming days.

Fr. T. Mariadas SDB, President SIGNIS AP called upon the chief guest Rev. Mons. Bernard, the Vicar General to the Bishop, to light the lamp, hence formally inaugurating the assembly. Among the dignitaries were Mr. Augustine Loorthusamy, SIGNIS World President; Mr. Alvito D' Souza, SIGNIS General Secretary; Mr. Sunil Lucas, President SIGNIS India; Fr. John Edappilly CMI, Vice President SIGNIS India; Fr. Norbert Herman SVD, Secretary, SIGNIS India; Fr. George Plathottam SDB, Director NISCORT who added to the flame of SIGNIS national Assembly 2013. Fr. Bernard V.G., the chief guest for the day, congratulated the gathering for its initiatives towards dealing with the technological challenges in the present time.

New Media New Generation: Keynote address by Mr. Dony Peter C.

Using Ad films, web ads and web info, the new generation presenter - Mr. Dony Peter C., enlightened the assembly on market brands and benefits, media building trust, Power of Media in connecting the people with facts, Jesus and Religion etc. He threw light on the usefulness of Facebook in order to show how the audience is in control of the media. He said, **“Audience needs money to get through the face book for any information beyond his contacts (unclear. Close quotes?).** Through personal data analytics, Dony emphasized that the future of media is in the BIG DATA, the example is LIFT (Applications). BIG Data is the new media that has everything such as FACEBOOK, TELEMEDICINES, he revealed. Therefore there is **no, nothing personal (unclear)** in the big data as they go through every purchase that one makes in any store. Hence, **privacy is taken for granted (or is it – privacy can no longer be taken for granted?).**

Dony challenged the Communication personnel gathered on the quality, credibility and relevance of the content that matters in media. He continued on the point of Politics and Protests in media and how it either takes someone to the zenith of success or determines his / her fall. He gave the example of Obama's second coming in power due to his use of media (BIG DATA) for election campaigns.

Dony spoke on SLACKTIVISM meaning sharing the ideas rather than exploring new avenues. According to him gaming is a big area in media: games that engage people. The easiest way to sell the product across the world is CREATE, PASTE, SELL a NEW AGE OF DIGITAL WORLD!

Focusing on the pedagogy of media he spoke on the role of media as:

- ✓ Changing education – how free online courses in 33 universities across the world have brought about a great revolution in the field of education. He informed that the requirement for such ventures is just a WEBCAM!

- ✓ Engaging the customers: **Give the customers(unclear. Give to the customers?)**, share with them the content that matters. He echoed the magic: Pay, Enrich, Go!

Dony concluded his presentation with a challenging introspection: **WHERE ARE WE (GOING TO BE?)**ten years from NOW that is the NEW GENERATION!

Dony's presentation was followed by a buzz session where the following questions / clarifications were made:

MD Vincent: Where are we in the social media?

Dony: Develop Catholic media applications; create interesting, engaging videos for all. He gave an example of how they are sending out the messages on "New Way of Fasting."

Mr. Alvito: Please highlight some creative processes to put things together and correctly

Dony: Referring to quality productions available on the Net, he spoke of "I care" effect. He suggested going through professionals called "filters" in the industry, to have courage to say "NO" to productions below quality, and to go by world standards.

Fr. BalaShowry: How do we engage media technology for use in the educational institutions?

Dony: Create a team of people who can study the recourses available, have media consultancy websites, have multi-media presence for vocation, have a unified platform in the church. He reinforced the point that these are "DOABLE" possibilities.

The Chief Guest was called on to the Dias along with other SIGNIS Executives:

Address by SIGNIS WORLD President:

Dear Friends,

I bring you greetings from SIGNIS World. The fact that the World President and the General Secretary Alvito de Souza are both here for this Assembly reflects the importance we give to the work of SIGNIS India.

Vision

SIGNIS aims to be a Network that inspires, educates, and transforms our Societies, building a global culture of peace.

Mission

To engage with Media Professionals and support Church Communicators to help transform our cultures in the light of the Gospel by promoting human dignity, justice and reconciliation

This Vision and Mission is reflected in the communication activities of our SIGNISmembers around the world. Asia is a leading light in the SIGNIS family and India stands as the largest, in terms of membership and activities.

SIGNIS is the World Catholic Association for Communication registered in Switzerland as an NGO and holding offices in Brussels and Rome. SIGNIS is also a Public Body of the Church with its own canonical statutes under the Council of the Laity. SIGNIS works with the Church to advance the Good News of Jesus Christ to the world.

SIGNIS itself is inspired by the teachings of Jesus Christ and his church. We are also guided by church encyclicals and documents *Inter Mirifica*, *Gaudium et Spes*, *Evangelii Nuntiandi*, *Redemptoris Missio*, *Communio et Progressio*, *Aetatis Nova* and many others. We have also been deeply influenced by those who have gone before us including Peirre Babin, Fr. Jacob Srampical, Fr. James Reuter, Mother Theresa and the late Cardinal Martini. There are also many wonderful SIGNIS members, living and working around the world transforming societies and building a culture of peace. Our Vision and Mission is derived from these inspirations.

PCSC

At the **Pontifical Council for Social Communication (PCSC)** – Communication is seen as Central to the Mission of the Church. There can be no evangelization without Communication. It is Liturgy through communication, Catechetical through communication and Formation through effective communication.

The Council sees Formation of both Clergy-Religious and Lay in the means of Social Communication as a top priority. Other priorities include communication in Seminary Formation, an emphasis on a philosophy of communication that is underpinned by the Gospel, Advocacy programs for a just society, setting up of Church Media institutions with Media Education as part of the curriculum, ecumenical and inter-faith initiatives and an active presence in the Social Networks. **Social Networks: portals of truth and faith; new spaces for evangelization – Theme for WCD 2013**

Role of Bishops

Cardinal Dulles said, ‘the church is communication’. All dioceses are expected to have fully resourced offices of communication. It is the responsibility of the local Bishop to support communication by making available both human and material resources. He is to be guided by the Church documents on Social Communication, by the messages of the Holy Father on World Communication Day and by the priorities set by the Federation of the Asian Bishops Conferences and the National Bishop’s Conference. It has been my experience that when a diocese is ‘alive’ it is thanks to the leadership of the Bishops and the priests. Effective communication is taking place thereby benefitting the people. The diocese then moves.

The reverse is true when the Bishop does not pay attention to the role of Communication in the diocese. This has become a rule rather than an exception. This has become a serious problem. I ask our SIGNIS members in India to work with the Bishops and encourage them to listen to the demands of the Digital revolution. Even the Holy Father responded via YouTube, Facebook and Twitter. We are waiting for the Bishops. “The ship has left and we are swimming after it.”

The document on the training of seminarians and Novices is clear. All seminarians and aspirants must be trained in the means of Social Communication from the first year to the final year. The results have been dismal. Except for a few Seminaries and formation houses most seminaries given token recognition to Social Communication. And to think that the future priests and sisters are going to face our children who are the products of the Digital Revolution. Good luck. You will be like **chickens(hens/cocks)** communicating not to small chicks but to ducks and neither will be able to understand the other.

It is also true that seminary/novitiate curriculums need serious updating and in these curriculums communication is given a low priority. Added to these teaching methodologies are also weighed and found wanting. This will result in good candidates dropping out.

You have just heard a brilliant presentation by Dony Peters on what is happening in the cyber world and its chilling effects on society. SIGNIS has this great opportunity to be a bridge between the sacred and the secular between the institutional church and the secular world of media. If we don't engage with this world of new media we will lose the new generation as they will be in the 'cyber cloud' and we will truly have big empty churches with only old people.

As we move towards our next World Congress in Beirut, Lebanon in October of 2013 (Alvito will brief us on this) we must pause and reflect on where we are and where we need to go.

SIGNIS Priorities

SIGNIS members ask questions, challenge injustices, champion Gospel Values and promote reconciliation through radio and television productions, websites, media education, film appreciation, advocacy, formation, interfaith dialogue, reflections, publications and representations.

In the meantime our children are faced with unsustainable materialistic trends that harm society, contributing to a culture of violence and death and taking it away from a culture of peace. Media Education becomes an important part of SIGNIS work. This is another reason why the young are our priority at the coming World Congress.

Our Inter-faith response through Cinema and network dialogue

- SIGNIS uses culture and cinema to dialogue with other faiths
- An increase in Inter-faith juries in Teheran and Bangladesh
- Film awards in Sri Lanka, Thailand and Hong Kong, and Indonesia
- We are challenging SIGNIS India to move in this direction too, since we have Bollywood as part of the culture.
- Partnership activities with WACC, CAMECO, Deutsche Welle and Global Media Forums

Advocacy work is reflected in supporting the independence of media in conflict situations and supporting those who are working to build freedom of expression and human rights. A fine example is Fiji and the work of SIGNIS members there.

Inter-religious dialogue

In Asia and especially in India, the cradle of the world's religions, the only way to dialogue is to move forward on an inter-faith and inter-cultural plane. For the millions who are poor and marginalized Religion is a non-negotiable part of one's identity. To accept and understand is the first step towards peaceful co-existence.

Well known Catholic Theologian Hans Kung says, 'there is

No peace among nations without peace among religions

No peace among the religions without dialogue between the religions

No dialogue between the religions without global ethical standards and

No survival of our globe without a global ethic.

A new Communication Paradigm to overcome distrust and suspicion is necessary. Only then can there be real dialogue. Any attempt for real dialogue must be undergirded by an adherence to certain mutually acceptable ethical standards.

In 1993 the Parliament of World Religions, in Chicago, came up with six basic principles for a global ethic which was accepted

- 1. Treat others as you would like to be treated (the Golden Rule)**
- 2. Every human being must be treated humanely**
- 3. Have respect for life – all life**
- 4. Deal honestly and fairly**
- 5. Speak and act truthfully and**
- 6. Respect and love one another, and be responsible for your partner's happiness.**

The practice of these principles would lead to a culture of Peace.

What communication challenges for SIGNIS does this represent?

Our friend and colleague Fr. Jerry Martinson has this to say on **SIGNIS' role in positioning the Church**

One of the greatest needs of the Church in Communication today is to accurately present to the public an image of the church that is compassionate, open, understanding, respectful and inclusive of all, especially to believers of other faiths

The more the Catholic radio and TV programmes give a voice to people of other faiths, the greater the chance of a real dialogue. Let them say what they believe, and listen and sympathize and dialogue with them as persons (as Jesus would do) rather than pronounce judgment on them. The Church can always state its position, but once it has done that, let it portray itself in the media as a loving, sympathetic, compassionate and patient listener and friend. Too often, Church leaders and representatives still come across to the public as self-righteous judges, or worse, as hypocrites who are demanding off others what they themselves

cannot do. I really think the Church needs a campaign to change that behavior and image if it is to be credible.

Even as we enhance our faith with effective communication within the church through religious programs(Ad Intra) we need also to engage with the other in the ‘market place’. So our radio, TV and social network engagement must not only be just ‘catholic’ but have space for other faiths and cultures. We will then avoid becoming a ghetto church and become a target for criticism. After all Jesus did not come for Christians but for all. In an inter-faith and inter cultural environment this is the only way.

The Church in India is doing many wonderful things for the people and we need to communicate that. But the Paradigm has also shifted. In the digital world, action speaks louder than words. Our work must be visible and effective. We need to document and communicate all that is done for the common good and where a common need is expressed. We must be for the poor, the dispossessed, distressed, the orphan, the sick, the lost and the marginalized. We stand for social justice, for a green earth, against pollution, against corruption and against all that demeans life. And we can do this with others in an ecumenical and inter-faith way. The Christian must be seen in action rather than in words. In the words of Mother Teresa of Calcutta **“the hands that serve are holier than the mouth that prays”**.

Thank you for this opportunity. Be assured that SIGNIS World is behind you and supports the work you do.

Business Session

The session began with the approval of the Time Table proposed by Fr. Balashowry and seconded by Fr. Gilbert. After this the voters from various regions were identified in order to make it easier for voting and counting. The number of voters is as follows:

Regions	No. of Voters
Agra	4
Andhra Pradesh	5
Bengal	5
BIJHAN	4
Karnataka	4
Kerala	5
MP CG	4
Northern	3
Orissa	4
North East	3
Tamilnadu	3
Western	4
National	5
Total number of Voters	53

Minutes of the National Assembly were presented by Fr. Norbert Herman SVD, National Secretary SIGNIS INDIA followed by Acceptance of the minutes. CM Paul proposed the acceptance and Fr. Ashok Vaghela SJ seconded the same. This was unanimously passed.

The session proceeded with welcoming the new members into SIGNIS. Following are the new members:

Serial no.	Name of the member	Region	Membership
1	Sr. Joyeann DSP	Western	Individual
2	Michelle Mathias DSP	Karnataka	Institutional
3	Fr. Sebastian V.	Agra	Institutional
4	Fr. ProloyBordya	Bengal	Individual
5	Fr. Julius Kumar	Karnataka	Institutional
6	Fr. James Ullattil	Northern	Institutional
7.	Fr. Theoditius	Bengal	Individual
8	Fr. Anthony	Kerala	Individual
9.	Fr. Welcon	Kerala	Institutional
10.	Fr. Milton	Kerala	Institutional
11.	Ms Sophia Gomes	Bengal	Individual
12.	Fr. ArockyaBhasker	Tamil Nadu	Individual
13.	Fr. Innocent	Tamil Nadu	Institutional
14.	Fr. Arekel Raj	Tamil Nadu	Institutional
15.	Fr. Titus Amalraj	TamilNadu	Institutional

Session III 2:45 pm

Time to Report

The session began with Fr. Norbert Herman SVD giving the financial reports: Receipts and Payments 2012 - 13, Proposed Income and Expenditure for the year 2013 – 14. With minor corrections and clarifications like - some **needed(unclear. asked for)** headings to be changed / regularized, Accounts to be mentioned clearly, contribution from membership and projects be mentioned separately, etc. the financial reports were voted for and accepted. Fr. Dilip Rosario signed witness, seconded by Fr. Gilbert. The **Motion (financial report)** was passed unanimously.

Regional Activity Reports

Under the chairmanship of Fr. John Edappilly, the secretaries of various regions, presented their regional activities through audio visuals. Fr. Norbert Herman SVD presented the National Activities, followed by Agra, Andhra, Bengal, BIJHAN, Karnataka, North East, Orissa, TamilNadu and Western Regions. Congrats to all the secretaries for preparing short and **tolerant (crisp)** activity reports!

Feb. 18

The Day began with a prayer, led by the Karnataka region, in co-ordination with the Daughters of St. Paul which was followed by a video presentation of the SIGNIS meet.

Fr. JohnEdappilly announced that Fr. George would read out the report of NISCORT and invited him on stage.

Fr. George Plathottam gave a Power Point presentation and gave a report of all the meetings and activities in relation to CBCI –OSC meetings and in his capacity as both the member of SIGNIS and Director of NISCORT.

Fr. George made some important observations that in some of the dioceses, Bishops have not yet appointed anyone as the PRO or into the communications office. **This trend needs to be encouraged (Unclear.This trend needs to be discouraged?)**. He was of the opinion that the SIGNIS body needs to strengthen this.

Another suggestion was that SIGNIS and CBCI could collaborate with the religious to start a news channel.

As NISCORT Director, he was also of the opinion that two young people from each diocese could be trained and **inserted (inducted?)** into the diocesan commissions of every diocese.

Highlighting some of the problems, Fr. George spoke about how he was told that there was no staff to teach ‘Communications in Pastoral Leadership’, in many colleges.

He spoke of how, many of the Bishops are not even aware of what SIGNIS is all about and that he had to explain to them all about SIGNIS. There were cases where Bishops feared to sign projects as they feared this would affect their funds.

He requested everybody to encourage the lay- especially young professionals to join SIGNIS and also to be friendly and considerate towards them as they don’t easily get holidays.

He spoke of how he was attempting to revive the not-so-active SARS news service.

He suggested that the ICPA which was struggling could be revamped and the building sold to develop a SIGNIS office.

He then gave an explanation of NISCORT, its history and its activities, courses and academic programmes.

There was a request from an assembly member to use appropriate titles and designations while addressing our church authorities, especially while addressing Bishops on-screen. Fr. George clarified that in the context of journalistic **language (address/)** and in an arena where even our president, Mr.Pranab Mukherjee had abolished titles, **the same were not necessary to be used on-screen (may be rephrased - some leeway may be made.)**.

To another question from the assembly asking what was done with the list of names that had been collected in the Gujarat region and why no action had been performed. **Do something in Gujarat (unclear)**, he would surely contact Gujarvani.

Fr. Norbert then thanked all the members for sending all the data. He requested that those who had not communicated their data and field of expertise, to do so.

One of the assembly members then appreciated Fr. George Plathottam and spoke of the efficiency in coordinating and replying back to complaints and queries. She also spoke of how in between the CBCI website was not accessible, but how immediate steps were taken.

Another assembly member appreciated the art activities that were being taken up, although she felt as it was too little. She suggested a possibility of collecting art information from various sources.

Mr. Michael Peria (spell check) expressed how he accessed the CBCI website. He said that he had replied to the queries about the availability of professionals as he himself was one. He requested that the required personnel make good of offers given by qualified personnel like him.

In order to add to our information about SIGNIS and some other communication bodies that had initially existed, Mr. Alvito spoke about the ICPA and SIGNIS relationship. UCIP no longer exists. When UCIP collapsed, the Vatican said it was not a catholic organization. The reason it was called off was because there was no governance. When this happened, the pontifical council approached SIGNIS. Thus, SIGNIS became the face OF catholic Communications. SIGNIS is not going out fishing for members of UCIP. We have started having discussions between different members. SIGNIS is THE catholic organization for Communication. The political members have brought some senior members of UCIP together. The pontifical doesn't want another organization. When you have a discussion with the ICPA one must bear in mind that it may not be wise to do it as an umbrella body.

One of the assembly members from Kerala region pointed out that the church was still far away from Media. He requested Fr. George Plathottam to send a NISCORT prospectus compulsorily to all Bishops of Kerala, so that they send one or two students for study. He said that if not, the church would get outdated in a short while.

Fr. George thanked the appreciation. He said that although Bishops are aware they, need to be encouraged. He requested everyone to promote NISCORT. He also added that when he came to Hyderabad, and in spite of being hi-tech, some of the dioceses did not have a website. Furthermore, the regional secretaries had to be active but not all were so.

Fr. John Edappilly added that they had sent prospectus before but then the promotion drive had failed.

Fr. Mariadas, the MC for the day, then invited Fr. Jude to share his experience of the Asian COMMUNICATION NETWORK. Fr. Jude then shared his experience.

Since, Alvito spoke of a merger with SIGNIS, Fr. Jude spoke of the merger of UNDA and SIGNIS and how they had invited the ICPA to join them. He said that they preferred to work separately. He informed that the ACN was also formed to use the network of people outside our faith and share resources also from outside Asia.

After, Fr Jude's sharing, renowned author of books related to Khandamal, Mr. AntoAkkara was invited to present his book. The Secretary General, Mr.Alvito was invited to release the book "Early Christians of 21st century to the assembly.

Fr. C M Paul also released an MP3 on the songs by Peter Gonsalves, titled, 'The Peter Gonsalves Collection, Lyrical Food for the Soul. Fr Joachim was then called to do the honors and present a copy to MrAlvito, a copy to SIGNIS India president, Sunil Lucas, SIGNIS AP President Fr. Maria Das.

The details of the study tour and timings were then discussed by Mr. Michael Peria and all were invited for the photo session.

After the Photo Session followed by the tea break Fr. C M Paul was invited to share their experience of the Asian Malaysian Meet. The assembly was made aware that the SIGNIS ASIA board does not have an Indian in it. Fr. C M Paul then gave a power point presentation on the meet.

Fr.Edappilly then thanked Fr. C M Paul for the same. Fr. Norbert and SIGNIS INDIA, President, Sunil Lucas were called on board. Fr. Norbert was then called upon to explain the current situation and present the reports of the projects. He informed that the reports will be put up on the notice board.

Fr.Norbert, then gave a power presentation on the report without reading it as he said it would be put up on the notice board.

Fr. Norbert spoke about the arrival of 80 projects. He further said that the screening team rejected 17 projects due to indiscrepancies. He then gave a power point presentation of the projects approved.

There were questions raised on why two states were entirely rejected.

Sunil Lucas also mentioned that there was some confusion with regards to PMS and Mr.Alvito was asked to clarify the same. Mr.Alvito made a power point presentation explaining the mission of SIGNIS. He recommended that there should be three members for screening.

He also requested SIGNIS India to develop a way to monitor and evaluate the projects and this could be shared with SIGNIS world which would be of help worldwide. This will further help in transparent dealings.

He also informed that the new form will have two parts and is co-designed by SIGNIS and Propagation of Faith.

The project applicant will be held responsible to acknowledge the receipt of funds, the date of funds received and execution.

The moment SIGNIS knows that money has been allocated, with a form. The recipient should acknowledge and send a receipt when the project is completed along with the report.

He also informed that the Propagation of Faith will ask for reimbursement of funds, if there is no proper execution of the funds for the project concerned from the person whose name is down on the project. Some dioceses have already been asked to send the money back.

There were doubts raised: Whether it was a general picture or a few instances of cases of fund mismanagement. If one applies for a project and money comes after three years, then how it goes?

The query was responded by the answer that Yes we need to have a good structure even if people from out of SIGNIS are there to monitor and that it was one instance in India. But Africa had many issues due to discrepancies in the screening process. There was a lapse in the screening process due to overlooking of some elements. Mr. Alvito finally opined that ultimately it was how we acted according to our conscience.

Regarding the long duration of the screening process and the funds arriving very late, Mr. Alvito said that after being screened in one country, the project ended up coming to Brussels by September. Over 450 projects come from all over the world. Therefore it was a time-cycle that could not be shortened. These projects were filed and sent to Propagation of Faith Board. The Propagation of Faith team met only in May. Initially, the office at Brussels had no idea of things about the funds, but now they are informed.

He also said with regards to reports and authenticity verification, at times photos were sent. But photos are not an explanation.

Mr. Augustine intervened and said that initially the money was given but with more and more asking for funds, the cake had to be sliced more and more. They only support the project not sponsor the entire thing. Mr. Alvito opined that Fr. Timothy Lehanne had been generous and supporting but due to shortage of funds from countries plagued with crisis the funds were going down. Mr. Alvito reiterated that the relation with Propagation of Faith team was very good.

There was another question from the assembly as to what could be the solution to the problem of a bishop who did not want to release the amount and those bishops who were asking for cuts in the amount to be released.

Mr. Alvito was of the opinion that every bishop must sign the project. If the applicant has not received the funds, the applicant must contact the Propagation of Faith and say they have not received. But at the end bishops are bishops! If one has received the funds and the bishop has taken a cut that too can be added into the report.

One assembly member opined that if there are few cases then the case should be dealt strongly by the region itself than blaming everybody.

There was also another opinion that Accountability had to be on both sides. The bishops too don't know what's happening to the funds. Bishops also should be given details of accountability. Someone from the centre should go to the place and see for him/herself that the work has been carried out.

Mr. Sunil Lucas pointed out that there was an effort made at the regional level for screening. Things were supposed to be better but unfortunately things happened.

An assembly member opined that the government had many laws coming up. There should be an inventory, so that while screening, one comes to know about the earlier funds supplied, credentials of people who have been supplied with the funds for the equipments and their usage.

It was also said that since money comes to FCRA account. If individuals had no account, it would come via the bishop. The Bishop needs to be convinced. Institutions found it easier, while individuals find it difficult and hence a rapport had to be built with the bishop. Issues can be taken up in dealing with the bishop as and when required.

Another question raised in the assemble was about the delay at times created problem as needs of the times had changed or the personnel in the institutions had changed by the time the funds had been passed. Could it be possible that when the report is given the project report can be given with the words that the needs have changed and the project money was used for another project?

Mr. Alvito said that this could be done; provided there was towing of the lines of the SIGNIS requirements otherwise there would be serious repercussions.

Another query was that when one wrote a project and asked for 6000 USD but was given just 1000 USD then was it necessary that one had to give a report for the entire project? And if the project money took time, could the project be completed and the money refunded?

Mr. Alvito opined that SIGNIS had no money. And SIGNIS had to search for funds. For the project you asked money for, you have to send the report. But Self evaluation was required. In case of refunding a project completed due to funds arriving late, he said that Propaganda fide will say, "This project has been done in the past, then how can this money be used like this?". The problem is there but we have to live with it.

One of the assembly members asked for clarification with regard to PMS involvement?

Mr. Alvito said that a PMS was only an observer and not an advisor or screener.

Mr. Augustine said that the Secretary is normally a member. The other two are elected members of the screening committee. Only these three will screen the project. The observer can only make observations. They cannot say how SIGNIS has to be run.

Fr Edappilly added that in the screening process, people on screening committee should not have a project. Regarding the screening on the international level, Mr. Alvito said that when it came to Indian projects being screened, the Indian screener had to leave the room.

An assembly member suggested that the screening team could have a member well versed with equipments. It was also said that there should not be squabbling among the members as screening members are elected representatives.

After this, SIGNIS India President, Mr. Sunil Lucas called upon the assembly to endorse the session.

Fr Francis Stephen proposed the matter. And Fr. Sebastian V. seconded it.

Fr G.P. George abstained from the voting while the all the other members of the assembly endorsed it.

Mr. Sunil then brought up the topic of the place for the venue for 2014.

Mr. Allan Brooks proposed Mangalore while Fr. George Plathottam said that since the ICPA was celebrating the golden jubilee and St Paul's was celebrating their centenary, the next place could be Delhi.

Mr. Sunil asked if the northern region would back it up. The northern Region said that it was too early to decide as even the Secretary was missing.

Fr Vijay from Diocese of Mangalore said that Mangalore had no problem to host but he seconded the proposal of New Delhi. SIGNIS Tamil Nadu said that they too were most willing to welcome the SIGNIS Assembly.

Mr. Sunil then asked the theme for the study days. Mr. Michel Peria suggested 'Global Warming.'

Fr. C M Paul said that the theme from Vatican also would be appropriate and that we could get back to our states inspired by the study days and organize programmes.

Mr. Sunil also said that there was the Asian assembly and the World Congress. Some more details were furnished by Mr. Alvito especially about the place 'Beirut, Lebanon.' The SIGNIS WORLD CONGRESS would be held from 19-25 October, 2013, with the theme 'Media for a culture of peace, creating images with the new generation. Mr. Augustine also gave inputs about the place.

Some details about Registration were discussed.

After this session, Fr John Wakhla SVD invited Fr Jomon James to the stage to hand over copies of Christayan a film by Satprakashan.

Fr. John Edappilly then invited the president of every region to come to the stage as he thanked all the members for the successful programme. The presidents were then honoured with Rajput pagadis by the President Sunil Lucas.

The session thus concluded.

STUDY DAY I

Fr Mariadas SDB greeted everyone and invited Fr. Balashowry, Organizing committee Chairman to give an introductory session on the theme "New media for New generation."

Fr. Balashowry used a power point presentation to highlight the theme. He concluded that the focus of the study would be the use of the mobile media and using the internet.

Fr Mariadas then invited Fr.Vincent B. Wilson to chair the session. He requested Fr. Sebastian to introduce the speaker. Fr Sebastian invited the speaker, Mr. Sumanta Banerjee, Head of CMC,Limited.

Mr.Sumanta showed a video presentation to initiate his session. Mr. Sumanta explained how all devices today could now be controlled through hand held devices like mobiles or I-pads.

He spoke on the topic

- What is mobile media?
- Types of mobile media
- Users of mobile media
- Usage of mobile media
- Use and misuse of mobile platform
- Application

After the session, Fr Wilson reminded a few of the pointers, after which he raised the question for the team as he said how we can use the mobiles to apply these applications to our context.

A question was raised: how can we send Sound Bites, Videos text to different mobiles.

Mr. Sumanta said through your server, you could use your mobile to upload to your server, and people can download things from the server and access the content. You can also do live pod cast to those who are not attending this session.

The limitations: there are pod casting limitations

Till date we don't use 4G. We use 2G. We can't think of bandwidth. We can use compression technology and clip the videos.

Question: What is the security level?

Mr. Sumanta : There is no security for sending smses.

Example: there was a case on the principal for destroying privacy. Finally the SDB had to collect 3500 signatures to say that parents approve receiving smses from principal at their school.

Question: Can you specify the rules and regulations from the government.

Mr. Sumanta : MMSes should not be used imprudently. You are under law. If I don't want sms from you, or even a call I can file a lawsuit.Misuse of mobile can land you in jail.

Question: Mobiles are unhealthy: they say the brain can't take more than three minutes of usage.

Mr. Sumanta : Indeed, radiation is harmful, it does affect health. It can cause hemorrhages.

The moderator then called anyone who wanted to take the discussion forward.

Fr. Norbert spoke of using it for SIGNIS members

Mr. Michael had uploaded songs on the server and the farmers could access these by sending a code to the server.

One member said that he expected a bit more input on how mobiles could be used other than passing on the word of God.

As the session concluded, Fr Wilson thanked Mr. Sumanto.

Fr. Mariadas, highlighted that we cannot ignore the use of the mobile. As a sign of appreciation Fr. Norbert was invited to honour Mr. Sumanto. Then Vicepresident Fr. John Edappilly offered a memento to the speaker. Fr. Mariadas also thanked Fr Wilson for moderating the session.

Afternoon session:

During the second session, Fr. Mariadas called to Sr. Joeyanna to moderate the session. Fr. Sebastian then invited the speaker, Mr. Michael Peria, Secretary, SIGNIS AP, to take up the next study session.

Sr. Joeyanna opined that Mr. Michael was going to speak on different issues of making the website user-friendly.

Mr. Michael also said that he would upload the matter and send the URL link to all. He also said that he would not speak on technological aspects rather on requirements, site map, color concepts, etc.

UX is user experience. This is what every developer is talking about.

He spoke of static and dynamic websites. You update once in 2 days or even a week or still longer. Timely websites are those which are constantly updated. He enumerated how a good website should be.

After the session, the moderator called forth questions from the assembly.

Question: All the websites have hackers. This year we have had three catastrophes in India: CBI was hacked. AICC was hacked. The whole idea of auditing online is risky. There is netspamming; there is no technology to save us from hackers; 95% banks are unsecure.

Mr. Michael said that wherever there is good, there is evil. All these problems remain. And yet we can do the good we are called to do.

Magimai: How far can we use a free website?

Some use Gmail as documentation services?

Fr.Theodocius: We are talking about existing media...not about new media.

Mr. Michael explained. New media is all that is interactive in new media. It can be website, social networking,e-learning. He also encouraged having our own portals.

Fr. Balashowry appreciated Mr. Michael's presentation of the concept. I would have been happy if you would have told how we can exploit it for our ministry.

Mr. Michael placed the question in the open forum.

Example: Psalm tunes are being uploaded.

Sr. Joeyannathen concluded the session on the website as she summarized in a few words the concepts that came up. She also endorsed a SIGNISface book account.

Mr. MichaelPeria was then felicitated by Fr.JohnEdappilly.

Feb. 19

The participants assembled in the hall at 7. 00 am, for the Holy Mass. It was creatively animated by MP and BIJHAN Regions. Fr. Jomon James SVD, Fr. John Wakhla SVD and Fr. Cyprian Kulu were the main celebrants, concelebrated by other priest participants. At the very outset, Fr. Jomon greeted the gathering with the freshness of the Lord's blessings. He threw a reflection on three categories of people living in the world, namely: those who make things happen, those who watch at what is happening and those who wonder at what is happening. We are therefore communicators, who are called to make things happen differently after the example of Jesus, the greatest of communicator, he also said.

In his homily, Fr. Wakhla highlighted on the importance of creating the image of God as a loving and caring Father and to project it to the people especially the young through our very life. He challenged us all, Communicators to take the responsibility of knowing the right image of God. The choir helped the participants to pray with greater devotion through the enchantment of *Bhajans*.

At 10.00 am, we had the screening of a film on "Christayana" produced by Satprakashan as a starter to the first session of the day. Fr. V. Sebastian, President, Varanasi Region then introduced Mr. V. Lakshmikant, a speaker of the session who has many feathers on his cap.

The topic he dealt with was on 'Social Media' where he took the listeners back to the Industrial Revolution era – the advent of print technology. Commenting on Social Media he said "We use facebook to schedule the products, twitter to co-ordinate and youtube to tell the world". Technology has changed the way we communicate to a great extend he added. He also said that the convergence of technology is beyond one's imagination and that it is all integrated through the mobile phone.

Mr. Lakshmikant defined clearly social media as the interactive forms of media that allow users to interact with and publish to each other, generally by means of internet. Some of the important aspects of Social Media were emphasized such as: users, facts and figures, advantages and challenges. He further posed a challenging question to the audience as how we, as communicators could average the powerful tool as social media in order to be effective in our media ministry. At the end of his speech, there was an interactive session where majority of the members participated in it with enthusiasm. A very interesting suggestion came from the speaker himself saying; “it is important to understand (Social Media) first of all what it is all about”. Another solid contribution came from the audience who said that we should know the function of social media, critically understand it and participate in it. The first session of the day was proficiently moderated by Fr. Victor Vijay Lobo, Secretary, Karnataka Region.

The later hours of the morning were dedicated to the panel discussion on Social Media by four youth: Mr. RagallaKalyanSrinivas and Mr. J. Revanth, Loyola Academy College and Ms. MeghaBhojawani and Mr. Rahim Chagani, St. Joseph’s College, Hyderabad. Their professionalism and expertise on the topic was indeed amazing. They handled the matter with great confidence and deep conviction in what they believe to be true as they spoke on behalf of the youth of today. They competently satisfied the numerous queries posed by the assembly with regard to the confrontation of the social media. As a conclusion to the interventions, Fr. Ashok Veghela SJ, President, Gujarat Region, moderator said that we need certain amount of self control, self realization and practice of values in one’s personal life in the use of social media.

The vibrant and enthusiastic panelists set the participants on fire to be more aware of the needs of the young people today. Fr. Ashok brought home the message of the session through his relevant and witty remarks, comments and suggestions on the topic. He then brought the panel to a glorious conclusion exhorting everyone present to the maximum use of social media in our ministry and profusely congratulated the panelists.

This was followed by the release of a DVD on Folk Media and Dance produced by Mr. GurrampPratapReddy, President for NATFoM (National Association Tribal and Folk Media). A copy each was presented to Mr. Alvito D’Souza, Secretary, SIGNIS World, Mr. Augustine LoruthuSamy, President, SIGNIS World and Mr. Sunil Lucas, President, SIGNIS India. Before his departure for Brussels, Mr. Alvito gave a short message, expressing his thanks and appreciation to the members of SIGNIS India for the enthusiasm and the ability to work together for a cause. The assembly then bade him good bye and farewell.

The afternoon session on Application was chaired by Fr. C.M Paul SDB, Fr. Ashok Vaghela SJ, Mr. Michael Peria and Mr. Magimai. Few pointers were given to facilitate better outcome for group discussion. The assembly was then divided into groups (mixed groups due to the absence of many participants) to discuss on the following points:

- What can we do at regional level concretely as SIGNIS India?
- What can be done at and National level?

- How will we do it, by whom and with time limit?

The different groups then presented the reports with proposals to be implemented at National and Regional levels.

The outcome of the group Discussion:

1. Website for the SIGNIS India
2. SIGNIS India FB and YouTube. (Everyone will have this address)
3. Training on new media for all. (Teachers, Catechists, student, pastors,)
4. Make use of mobile Media to the maximum.
5. The portal.

At 6.00 pm, the assembly gathered for the solemn Awarding ceremony in the lawn, Carnival Club, Tulsi Gardens. A prayer Dance by KristuBharati set the right atmosphere to the solemn moment followed by a welcome note by Fr. Balashowry, Chairman Organizing Committee and Director of Amruthvani, Regional Communication Centre. Shri Dhama Kishore, IAS, Govt. of AP, Chief Guest, Bishop M.D Prakasam, Bishop of Nellore, the Vice Chairman, APBC, Guest of honor, Mr. Augustine Lourthusamy, President, SIGNIS World and Mr. Sunil Lucas, President, SIGNIS India, Fr. John Edappilly CMI, Vice president, SIGNIS India and Fr. Maria Doss SDB, President, AP Region were felicitated.

Awards were given away to the winners on: essay writing on Pros and cons of Social Media; video short film, Using mobile phone shoot a short film and Citation to the Video jackies, Volunteers and few others. The Chief Guest congratulated the awardees and appreciated the theme aptly chosen in keeping with the signs of the times. He also encouraged everyone that to have certain control in the use of the new media. It is an import tool if it is used responsibly, he added.

The beautiful rendition of the cultural dance typical to the place mesmerized the audience. Mr. Sunil Lucas then expressed his thanks especially to the host Region for the success of the assembly and the participants of the various competitions on creating New Media with the new generation for being on board. Mr. Michael Peria and Fr. Maria Doss, organizing committee members also thanked all assembly members present and said that coming together was a manifestation of our oneness as SIGNIS India family to the rest of our country. The entire programme was skillfully compeered by Sr. Michelle FSP.

The day came to a happy ending with a high dinner on the terrace (5th floor) of Carnival Club with variety of sumptuous *Hyderabadifood* items.

20.02.2013 – Study Tour to the Film City

The climax of the SIGNIS National Assembly in Hyderabad 2013, was the Study Tour to the Film City. The participants left the venue at 7.30 am in two buses with great excitement and curiosity to discover the unknown world (for most of us). Then a Fascinating Journey Began in RAMOJI FILM CITY, the World's Largest Film Studio Complex; with experience larger-than-life entertainment, thrills, shows, fun rides, food, shopping and other excitements. Some

of the most fascinating experiences were: Ramoji Movie Magic, Ramoji Tower, Fundustan, Borasura and the like. The Opening and the Closing ceremonies were yet wonderful moments too. Everything we saw witnessed and experienced were occasions for new learning experience, as communicators. *Hyderabadidelicacies* were ordered for lunch from the restaurant. We thank the Organizing Committee Members of AP Region for giving us such a unique experience of visiting a Guinness World Records Centre.

Our grateful thanks goes to God, our Almighty Father for his loving presence with us all through the assembly; to Mr. Sunil Lucas, President, SIGNIS India, Fr. Norbert Herman SVD, Secretary and Treasurer, SIGNIS India, his team and other key persons who made things happened for the success of the SIGNIS National Assembly 2013. Long Live SIGNIS India family!

Evaluation:

- The atmosphere and the food were good.
- Key note address was really good
- There is lot of improvement in the SIGNIS India Assembly
- Speakers for the study days could have been better
- Timing of the session could have been outside the lent
- Should be more practical for the pastoral ministry
- Need to organize better