

SIGNIS National Assembly 2014
Dharmaram, Bangalore

Report Compiled by Rev Fr Dr Norbert Herman

Date: 24.04.2014

Eucharistic Celebration:

SIGNIS National Assembly 2014 started with a meaningful Eucharistic celebration. The main celebrant was Fr. Jude Botelho. He set the tone for the day by screening the painting of Christ from as introduction for the mass. As the participants shared their reflection, the atmosphere was set to reflect and celebrate the theme, 'Creating images for the culture of peace'. In his homily was Fr. Jude Botelho God touched the lives of people through deeds of kindness. Through his humility he created powerful images. Pope wants us to be connected through media. The target group is the young people since they are the hope of the Church. He also asks us to create images with the young.

Inauguration:

Coordinator of the day: Fr. Richard DSouza

Prayer Dance – ICPE Bangalore

Welcome Address by Mr. Sunil Lucas, President

Lighting of the Light by the executive members

Keynote Address: Mr. Bansy Kallappa

Moderator: Sr. Joeyenna D'Souza DSP

Mr. Bansy Kallappa, Senior Correspondent, News 9 TV Channel, Bangalore was the keynote speaker. In his address he said that, media has to inform and educate but the sad truth is that media has developed as a force, that has to be controlled. He threw light on topics like, who are the media controllers? and what are their priorities? with apt illustrations from the current issues. He recommended that we listen to media carefully and try to understand what they actually mean and grasp the truth behind.

While answering the queries, he suggested that we pray for media personnel and take courage in filling the spaces available in this field with good people. He further encouraged the participants to become citizen journalist.

Fr. John Edapilly thanked Mr. Bansy Kallappa for his enlightening speech about today's media.

Session 1: New Media for a culture of Peace

Mr. Nazarius Manoharan, presently Director and Chief Creative Officer at M&M Connect was the resource person. Fr. Ashok Vaghela was the moderator for the session. Mr. Nazarius with his vivacious presence, kindled in every participant the enthusiasm to be connected with people and be sincerely engaged with people. He started his talk with the question 'what do you mean by peace? It was a lively session, as the participants were lively interacting with the resource person and were engaged with exercises of building contact. He defined new media by explaining the difference between the old and new media. Fr. Balashoury expressed sentiments of gratitude on behalf of the participants.

Session 2: Media for a culture of Peace

Mr. John Thomas, RETD Journalist & Academician was the resource person for the session. Fr. C.M. Paul the moderator introduced the resource person. He started his talk saying that newspaper is my textbook. The illustrations presented by him spoke vividly about the condition of media presentations and the demand for the Christian response. He explained intensely the instability which is found everywhere. Peace, which is the theme he said has been mirages down the ages. A culture of peace he stated, is a great mystery. He urged the participants to communicate through media as faith survives through marketing. Sr. Lalitha proposed the vote of thanks.

Reported by Sr. Celine, Tamil Nadu Region

Minutes of the 2nd day: 25/04/2014

The Holy Mass began at 7.00 am at the DVK Research Centre Chapel. The Mass choir was led by Bijhan Region. The main celebrant was Fr. Cyprian Kullu, the regional Secretary and the Treasurer of Bijhan Region. He beautifully preached on the theme “Media For A Culture Of Peace.” He shared the problems and violence in the State of Jharkhand, eg. Naxals activities, fear created by the extremists, tension between the Catholics and the Sarna brethren, frequent bandhs, and Singhpur issue regarding the statue of Our Lady with red boarder sari.

At 9.30 am, the Executive Members: Mr. Sunil Lucas – Signis India President, Fr. John Edapally, CMI - Vice President, Fr. Norbert Herman, SVD – Secretary- Treasurer came on the dais. Fr. John Edapally led a short prayer and sang a *bhajan*.

Then the Roll Call was taken by the President Mr Sunil Lucas. The list was announced as follows:

1. Agra: 06 votes
2. Andhra Pradesh: 04 votes
3. West Bengal: 05 votes
4. Bijhan: 03 votes
5. Karnataka: 06 votes
6. Kerala - 01 vote
7. Kerala no letters, no proxy. The regional centre secretary was present. Fr. Albert the President was absent.
8. MP: 03 votes
9. Northern Region: 05 votes
10. North East: 06 votes
11. Odisha: 04 votes
12. Tamilnadu: 06 votes
13. Gujrat: 05 votes
14. National Member (Fr. George Plathottam) – 01 vote

Total : 61 Votes

Members who were absent on this day but coming on the following day except Kerala region will have the voting right was passed.

Proxy was closed down.

Accreditation of New Members

Sr. Vaishali- Karnataka region

Fr. Hridayraj, CMF- Cultural centre- classical dancer , Good in mimicry also

North East: 04 members

Kerala: Fr. Jolly: 01

AP: 01

In the afternoon the regional reports were presented by the regional Secretaries

1. West Bengal by Mr. Dilip Rozario
2. Agra Region- Video presentation by Fr. Anand, IMS
3. Bijhan Region- Fr. Cyprian Kullu
4. Western Region – Fr. Stanely
5. Karnataka Region – Fr. Richard
6. Andhra Pradesh – Fr Balachouri
7. M.P. & C.G.- Sr. Pushpanjali SSpS
8. North East – Fr. Gilbert
9. Tamilnadu – Mr. Magimai

10. Odisha – Fr. Alphonse Toppo
11. Western Region – Fr. Ashok Vaghela, SJ
12. Kerala region – Fr. Jolly
13. NISCORT – Fr. George Plathottam, SDB

The second Session resumed after the tea break. It was chaired by Mr. Sunil Lucas, Signis India President, and co-chaired by Fr John Adapally, CMI, Vice-President and Fr Norbert Herman, SVD, Signis India Secretary-Treasurer.

Then, Fr. Herman read out the minutes of the previous Signis India National Assembly held at Hyderabad, Feb 16-20, 2013. A few members from the floor suggested some corrections in the minutes and proposed to incorporate in the report such as to mention the names of the video journalists who were covering the event, among others. Without much ado, the motion for passing the report was set. Fr. Stephen Francis proposed the minutes and Fr. V. Sebastian seconded it. Thus, the minutes was unanimously passed.

Fr. Herman, Secretary – Treasurer presented the income and expenditure account for the year ended 31 March 2013. According to the report, the total income was: Rs. 994,272.00 and Expenditure was Rs. 994,272.00. A few members raised some clarifications on the accounts, such as to explain Rs 41,880 spent under the heading of Asian Executive Meeting. The Signis India Executive team said that it would be clarified in the afternoon session which was done later.

The next item was the Signis India proposed Income and Expenditure 2014 – 2015. The proposed income was set at Rs. 11,60,000 and Proposed expenditure was Rs. 9,93,500. Mr. Dilip Rosario pointed out in proposed income (B/F Bank A/c. Rs. 2,00,000.00 should be in the available funds category. To this, some members suggested to keep it as proposed income. Fr Stanly proposed it and Fr. C.M. Paul SDB seconded it. The floor, unanimously passed the 2014- 2015 budget .

Then, Fr. Herman SVD presented the Project Screening Committee report. He said that 28 projects were rejected out of 75. Some of the reasons for rejection of the projects were: Signis India project format was not followed, some projects lacked media focus as the main component, poorly written, lack of adhering to clear media objectives, incongruence with the objectives of projects and the proposed budget, some of them were social projects which are not funded by Signis, etc. The details of project fund allocation were displayed at the end of the conference hall for the kind perusal of participants and project applicants.

It was followed by general report presented by Fr. Herman, Signis India secretary. The floor felt that the general report lacked comprehensive, depth and systematic details of activities, programmes and some tangible results of Signis India achieved in a given year or during the last three-year term of the present Signis India National Executive team.

Some of the suggestions were made in the floor: The Signis National Executive team would present a three-year term report of the activities / programmes during its tenure; some said it is not required. To this, the National team suggested that everything was done with transparency and accountability during its three-year term.

1. Signis India needs to conduct media training programmes for different regions and at national level as well.
2. Singis India must take some serious issues affecting the nation and some regional concerns that have national dimension.
3. The Signis India needs to evolve action plan at national and regional level and follow up plans are to be drawn.
4. Signis India needs enthusiasm in the organization to do something concrete to the regions and nation at large. One of the factors is funds for Signis media work.

5. Common Signis media projects (comprising Sri Lanka, Bangladesh, Pakistan and India) should be carried out without further delay. About the common projects, the National Team should communicate to the regions and members.
6. Bring young talented media professionals into Signis India.
7. Create core committee from Signis India members to raise funds within India
8. At the end of Signis India National Assembly, a press statement should be made for the sake of others, especially publications in the press/media.

Thank You.

Sr.Lalita Roshni Lakra, DSA Bijhan Region

Minutes of the meeting held on 26th April, 2014

The morning session began at 9:10 a.m. with a prayer by Sr Pushpanjali SsPs. Mr. Sunil Lucas, the President of Signis India took over and the first thing on the agenda was the passing of the Income and Expenditure account. It was passed by the floor unanimously.

Fr Joe Edapilly then gave a warm welcome to His lordship Salvatore Lobo, Chairman of CBCI-OSC . He then addressed the Signis assembly. The thrust of his message was that we should give and offer Christ in everything we do or say.

The next thing on the agenda was the Amendment to the Constitutions. The articles discussed were:

9.1.1 was discussed but left untouched according to the unanimous decision of the assembly.

9.2.3 was about the right to transfer- was discussed and passed unanimously.

9.2.4 – was about membership and this was decided to be shifted to the bylaws.

12.1.2 – the change made was the change of tenure of the office bearers from three years to Four years. Also additions were made to this with regard to residence of the office bearer in the region till the tenure is over.

12.1.3 With regard to the Screening committee members, there was an addition made to this clause.

12.1.4 With regard to national office bearers residence , there was an addition made to the clause.

15.7.1.3 – the term national office bearers would be changed to ‘National Executive’

15.7.1.4 – the term was changed from three years to four years

17.1 – The term National Executive Committee was replaced by “The Signis India Governing Board”

17.1.4 was about the Chariman – i.e. CBCI-OSC- being the patron with one vote.

From the BY LAWS, nos. 4, 5 and 9 were changed to some extent.

All the above were accepted unanimously after some clarifications and discussions.

After this the next thing of the Agenda was the Sharing about the World Congress held in Rome. The sharing was done by Fr Jude Buthello and Mr. Magimai Pragasam.

Mr Pragasam spoke of the day to day events and shared his enthusiasm about the Congress and spoke about the Future Search

Fr Jude Buthello iterated the 11 important points which came up at the World congress for the Way forward in the coming years. Of these six were chosen for adaption to the Indian Context. These were : Media Education, New Media for Social Transformation, Networking, Folk Media and Tribal Arts and other Art Forms, Spirituality and Media, Public Relations. The assembly was then divided into groups according to interest and a coordinator and reporter was chosen among them. For the next twenty minutes they discussed in groups and then shared their findings with the assembly concretely mentioning what they planned to do about this at Signis level in the coming months.

Coordinators chosen were: Tribal Arts – Fr George Plathotham, Networking – Fr John Edapally, Media Education – Fr Vijay Lobo , Public Relations – Fr Hrudayaraj, New Media – Fr Francis, Spirituality and Media –Fr Clarence Scrambical SVD.

Mr Pragasam was appointed to coordinate all these groups and see to their progress in the coming months.

Fr Nobert then thanked Mr Magimai and Fr Buthello for their sharing and also for their participation.

After this on request of the Daughters of St Paul, there was the release of two books based on the Popes who would be canonized in Rome the next day – namely John XXIII and John Paul II. One of the books was authored by a Signis member, Sr Joeyanna D'Souza. Fr C M Paul said a few words about the books. Bp Salvadore Lobo, Chairman of CBCI – OSC released the book and handed a set to National Signis President – Mr Sunil Lucas. One copy was then handed to the Bishop.

Afternoon Session:

Elections Process :

It began at 2:30 p.m. with a prayer by Fr Nobert Herman SVD and Fr Jude Buthello. Fr Jude then explained the election process. Counters of the votes and collectors of the votes were appointed from among those without Voting rights.

Number of eligible Voters was 61.

Elections of the President, Vice-President, and Secretary-Treasurer- Delegates for the Screening committee were elected respectively.

President: Nominees were : Fr Balashoury, Mr Sunil Lucas, Fr Ashok Vaghela, Fr Victor Vijay Lobo and Fr Anand M. IMS. Of these , Fr Anand M declined

After 3 ballots, Sunil Lucas won by 17 votes over Fr Balashoury and was declared President for the term 2014-2018

Vice-President: Nominees were Sr Pushpanjali, Fr Ashok Vaghela and Mr Nirmal .

After 2 ballots, Fr Ashok Vaghela won by 23 votes over Sr Pushpanjali and was declared VicePresident for the term 2014-2018

Secretary – Treasurer: Nominees were Fr Innocent, Fr Victor Vijay Lobo, Fr Nobert Herman.

After 4 ballots, Fr Victor Vijay Lobo won by 19 votes over Fr Innocent and was declared Secretary – Treasurer for the term 2014- 2018.

Screening Committee- Nominees were Sr Pushpanjali, Fr Bala Shoury, Fr Nobert, Fr Francis and Fr Sunil.

Fr Stephen and Fr Norbert were incorporated into the Screening committee as they got the highest and second highest number of votes.

After the Election , there was a round of photographs and wishing and then we broke for tea. The meeting resumed with the new team presiding , to decide about the venue and dates for the next National Assembly. There were various suggestions, but nothing was fixed except that the meeting would be held in February, 2015. It would be informed by the National Signis Board, later. Also suggestions were asked from the assembly and the members gave many suggestions and also expressed their grievances, with regard to past Signis meetings.

Mr Magimai Pragasam then thanked the Karnataka region for organizing and coordinating the event. The president then officially closed the Signis National Assembly and said the date and venue for the next meeting would be informed by correspondence. The Assembly concluded with Thanksgiving holy Eucharist presided over by Most Rev Salvadore Lobo, Chairman, CBCI OSC.

Reported by Anna Kipounamai FSP