



Editorial

Dear friends,

Better late than never! After a gap of eight months, we are ready with yet another issue of our newsletter. Although our AGM and National Convention was held in February-March 2019, due to unavoidable circumstances the publication of this newsletter got delayed. My sincere apologies.

This issue carries glimpses of the 24th National Convention of Christian Journalists and related stories from the AGM held at Jharsuguda, Odisha.

I take this opportunity to thank all the former members of the Executive team, especially Mr Jose Vincent who painstakingly brought out the last issue of the Newsletter in December 2018. He has been a great source of support and encouragement for me while I went about compiling this newsletter.

Henceforth, I hope to bring you regular updates on ICPA related events. Do not hesitate to mail me (tessyvm@gmail.com) news stories and information about events at your end. Sharing news and views, let's remain connected through ICPA newsletter.

Sr Tessy Jacob, SSps
Joint Secretary



24th National Convention: A call to revival



Founded in 1963, ICPA is an association of Catholic newspapers, periodicals, news agencies, publishing houses, journalists and teachers of journalism. It is one of the oldest Catholic press organizations in Asia and has the patronage of the Catholic Bishops' Conference of India. It has more than 160 members from all over India, consisting of lay persons, priests, brothers and nuns.

The ICPA chose Jharsuguda as its venue for annual meet and convention to commemorate the tenth anniversary of Kandhamal massacre. Archbishop John Barwa of Cuttack- Bhubaneswar, under whose territory

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25th National Convention of Christian Journalists & ICPA Annual General Body Meeting 2020

Venue: Don Bosco Centre, Okhla, Delhi
Date: 29th February 2020 & 1st March 2020

Note: Rooms are available for ICPA members from Friday 28th February 2020 (2 pm) until Monday 2 March, 2020 (12 noon). Delhi Darshan: 1 March 2020 (post lunch).

**ICPA Executive
Team
2019-2022**

President: Mr Ignatius Gonsalves (M: 9447964232 | ignatiusgon@yahoo.com)
Vice-President: Fr Sunil Damor (M: 8637216529 | sdamorsvd@gmail.com)
Secretary: Fr Suresh Mathew (M: 7042562963 | sureshcapuchin@gmail.com)
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Treasurer: Fr Joby Mathew (M: 7045340899 | jobyspp@gmail.com)

Ecclesiastical Advisor from the CBCI: Rt Rev. Bishop Salvatore Lobo

North-Rep: Fr Jacob Kani (M: 9818716160 | jacobkani@gmail.com)
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West-Rep: Dr Roman Bhatia (7042562963 | drromanbhatia@gmail.com)
North-East-Rep: Fr Vincent Carmel (M: 88003 36062 | vincentssp@gmail.com)
Institutional Rep: Fr Valerian Fernandes (9880851674 | raknno@gmail.com)



Kandhamal falls, thanked the members for their support through their writings on Kandhamal.

The association pledged to become more effective by roping in more press personal and training the youngsters in print journalism.

Capuchin Father Suresh Mathew, the editor of the Indian Currents, with power point presentation



highlighted how the present political leaders have been deviating from the Constitution; the local tribal activist Siprian William Kiro said how the constitutional rights guaranteed to the tribals have been denied to them and social activist Fr. Ajay Singh of Cuttack-Bhubaneswar spoke how the dalits have been marginalized today.

Bishop Emeritus A. S. Hemrom of GEL Church of Simdega spoke on Constitution and tribal religion. Divine Word Father Ignatius Soreng spoke on Constitution and Cultural Pluralism and Salesian Father George Plathottam, the recently appointed FABC secretary for Social Communications and a former ICPA president, spoke on Unity in Diversity versus Enforced Uniformity.

Divine Word (India Eastern) Provincial Father Luis Ronald Pereira, in his Keynote speech addressed on the effectiveness of the written word.



Keynote Address: Fr Ronald Pereira SVD

“The Digital era opens up immense possibilities for primary and new evangelization and the sharing of our spirituality.” Addressing the 24th National Convention on Christian Journalists at Shanti Bhavan, Jharsuguda Odisha, Fr. Ronald Pereira SVD, quoted from the Chapter documents of SVDs. Communication at its most profound level is the giving of self in love and consequently, a basic attitude is necessary for all of us.



Christian community was the first among all other communities that moved into the media world. Media as a medium of communication plays an important role in over all development in the society by informing and disseminating knowledge, creating awareness of various issues that are important for the society.

Fr. Ronald, congratulated ICPA for the choice of topic in the current convention “Indian constitution and Pluralism” since it is the time that our constitution is under threat. The press which is regarded as the fourth pillar of democracy should strive forward to uphold the integrity of our country and the constitution. The Press also has a duty to stand worthy of its trust- the ethical practices of journalism.

In spite of the stunning growth of media and the resultant information overloaded, crucial issues of poverty and deprivation still remain ignored. It is widely recognized that a free and fair press can help in social development.

He urged journalists present, to keep in mind that the first obligation is to the truth and loyalty to citizens and never allow the market forces to determine the news.

Kindly note the new email id of ICPA office
Email: indiancatholicpress@gmail.com

ICPA Awards 2019

Feathers on the Cap of Veteran Journalists

Veteran journalist **Anto Akkara** was selected for the annual Fr Louis Careno Award for his relentless writings especially in the form of Four Books on Kandhamal and championing the cause of the seven innocent Christians languishing in jail by online signature campaign for their release.

Divine Word **Father Herman Minj** from Sundergarh district in Odisha was awarded the ICPA-CBCI SC/BC Commission award for raising the voice of the tribals through his Monthly bilingual Hindi and Sadri magazine *Gangpur Awaz* (Voice of Gangpur).



Fr. Herman Minj, SVD



Mr. Anto Akkara

Another Divine Word Father Dr. Ignatius Soreng was honored for his prolific contribution in the field of literature and poetry especially in Odia and Hindi. Fr. Ajay Kumar Singh of the Archdiocese of Cuttack-Bhubaneswar, was honored for his special contribution to various secular and religious magazines and newspapers raising issues of Social Justice. Bhubaneswar based Janobadi, (People's Voice), an Oriya magazine that campaigns for human rights among tribals, dalits and marginalized, was also honored.



New Baton Bearers for ICPA

The Indian Catholic Press Association (ICPA) elected a team of new office bearers for a term of three years (2019-2022) during its AGM held at Jharsuguda, Odisha, from March 1-3. Mr Ignatius Gonsalves of Kochi was elected as its new President. He is the second layman to head the 56-year-old association. The other elected members are: Divine Word Father Sunil Damor of Jharsuguda as the Vice-President, Capuchin Father Suresh Mathew, (Editor of the New Delhi-based *Indian Currents*) as the Secretary, Holy Spirit Sister Tessy Jacob as the Joint-secretary, Society of St Paul Father Joby Mathew, (former Editor of Mumbai-based *The Teenager Today* magazine) as the Treasurer.

Father Valerian Fernandes, Editor of Konkani *Raknno* weekly from Mangalore, represents Institution members in the managing committee. Sebastian Kallarackal of *Deepika* and Journalist Dr Roman Bhatia from Surat (Gujarat) were elected as the South region and West region representatives respectively.

At a later Executive meeting Fr Vincent Carmel (Director, NESCOM) and Fr Jacob Kani were appointed as North-East and North representatives respectively.



Pilgrimage to One of the Oldest Mission of Gangpur Catholic Church

As part of 24th National convention at Jharsuguda, A mission trip was organized to Gaibira, one of the oldest parishes of Gangpur Mission in Odisha. The Parish which was established by the Jesuit Missioners is entering into the Centennial Year in 2020. It is also a place which has given many vocations to universal church, including two bishops and one Arch



Bishop. Hence our visit witnessed two celebrations- the inauguration of Centennial Year and the Silver Jubilee of Bishop Kishore Kumar Kujur, who is the Bishop of Rourkela Diocese.

With more than 4,000 tribal Catholics, after many bifurcations, the parish has produced a number of priests and nuns and three bishops: Divine Word Archbishop John Barwa of Cuttack- Bhubaneswar, Bishop Kishore Kumar Kujur of Rourkela, and Divine Word Auxiliary Bishop Telesphore Bilung of Ranchi. Jesuit Archbishop Felix Toppo of Ranchi also joined the number of priests, nuns, three bishops and parishioners for this celebration.

Archbishop Barwa remarked that hundred years ago Belgian Jesuits from Ranchi came to this region to proclaim the Good News. Now Divine Word Bishop Telesphore Bilung has been chosen from among them to go to Ranchi to work for the people there.

Gaibira Parish is managed by the Divine Word Missionaries (SVD) currently. Although located far away from city, the Parish has many residential educational institutions in the Campus as well as in the vicinity, catering to thousands of poor tribal students.

In his sermon Arch-bishop Felix Toppo,SJ of Ranchi Arch Diocese, acclaimed the rich contribution of the Missionaries in bringing education to the land, which in turn has formed many religious, Priests, Civil servants, Sports persons, and many more in different services. The ICPA delegates had the opportunity to participate in the liturgical celebration with the unique local cultural elements integrated into it.



Visit to the Mission stations also included Sundargarh Parish where the Generalate of the oldest Local Religious Congregation for women – “Handmaids of Mary” is situated. The Congregation is involved in the education, health, catechetics and social development activities in Odisha, especially in the Western region. By providing residential educational facilities for the Tribal girls in many parts of Odisha, they educate thousands of girls every year.

ICPA EXECUTIVE MEETING

14 July 2019 at St Pauls Provincialate, Mumbai



The first full fledged Executive Meeting of the ICPA was held at St Pauls Provincialate, Mumbai on 14 July 2019. The meeting was attended by Ignatius Gonsalves (President), Fr Sunil Damor (Vice President), Fr Suresh Mathew (General Secretary), Fr Joby Mathew (Treasurer), Sr Tessy Jacob (Joint Secretary), Fr Valerian Fernandes (Institutional Representative), Mr Sebastian Kallarackal (Southern Region Representative), Mr Roman Bhatia (Western Region Representative).

After the opening prayer led by Fr Sunil Damor, Mr Ignatius Gonsalves, the President, welcomed all the members of the Executive Committee to the first official gathering of the newly elected body.

“Our Honey moon period is over, it is time to begin our work,” stated the President in his opening remark, inviting everyone to cooperate and work hard for the fulfillment of the dreams of the ICPA. He reminded the participants of the celebrated history of the Association and appreciated and acknowledged the hard work of the office bearers of the past for their colossal contribution to the establishment and development of the ICPA. He recollected the works done by Fr Alfonso Elengikal SSP, Mr Jose Vincent, Fr Jayan and all the former Executive

Committee members for steering through the troubled waters and making ICPA a legal entity.

“The task ahead is to consolidate the Association and work for its growth. The growth of any movement is defined in the context of its purpose. Let us not lose sight of the purpose of the founding fathers of the Association,” he exhorted. “The Executive committee has an admirable blend of youth and the experienced. The society and the church have a dream about our organization and we, as Catholic journalists, have a responsibility to respond to the signs of the time”, he continued.

“The forthcoming General Body Meeting of the ICPA gains relevance for various reasons. Usually the AGBM and National Convention of Christian Journalists (NCCJ) are held together and the year 2020 would be the Silver Jubilee year of the NCCJ. We have a prodigious responsibility to make the theme and the convention relevant in the context of the changed scenario of the nation.

“The ICPA has an enviable history and legacy with prophetic leaders leading the organization. ICPA is the first Catholic organization of journalists to be formed in the world as a result of the Vatican II. The print

media was supreme in the 1960s, whereas today we live in a multimedia context. Yet the print media has not lost its significance”, Mr Ignatius remembered.

“The moot question is, how do we become relevant to the church and society in the context of our lives. The organization has to reinvent itself and find a place in the church and in the secular media. Are we going to be just recipients of information doled out by the church and the government? Or are we going to play any major role by becoming a catalyst for change? We are called to be spokespersons of the truth”, reminded the President.

“Right now, the role of the CBCI with the ICPA is limited to the appointment of an ecclesiastical advisor for the Organization. We have to make our presence felt in the church and society by collaborating with the Church. We should dream of an opportunity where the CBCI would invite us as observers in their plenary sessions. We also have to find a role as observers at the CCBI and the Synods of Oriental churches as members of a premier organization of Catholic Journalists of the Church in India”.

The president chalked out a few specific areas of focus for the organization.

- 1. **Membership:** New members should be added and the dormant members to be made active. Each executive member should attract two new members. If we don't go on membership drive ICPA would face an untimely death.
- 2. **Regional and Linguistic initiatives** for ICPA During this triennium: Let us organize at least four programmes at regional levels. The suggested areas are: Kerala, North East, Goa and Mangalore.
- 3. We should **be active in the secular media** and carve a space for ourselves.
- 4. We should **address the issues of the country** and of the world.
- 5. We should **be available to the Church** in India by **organizing training programmes** for budding journalists .
- 6. We also have to **work in collaboration** with the Public Relations Department of the Church.
- 7. Another area of importance is **Talent and Resource pooling**. We shall document the talents and skills of our members.

Mr Ignatius concluded his presidential address and invited the forum to deliberate on the issues raised and the agenda prepared.

Thereafter, the EC deliberated upon the following issues: National Convention of Christian Journalists and AGBM of ICPA, status of our office in Delhi, important financial matters, printing of the revised Constitution of ICPA, the status of the ICPA website, details regarding Edit aids, Collaboration with Signis, ID cards, ICPA badges, letterhead and appointment of Northern and North-Eastern representatives.

The meeting unanimously opined that the next AGM and NCCJ shall be held in Delhi as suggested by the AGBM held at Jharsuguda in Orissa.

It was suggested that the rooms be made available from Friday noon of the AGBM for the participants and have the registration on Friday evening itself. The NCCJ shall be held on Saturday and the AGBM on Sunday. We shall also organize a sightseeing programme on Sunday afternoon for those who are interested. The members shall be accommodated at the expense of the ICPA until Monday morning. The expense of further stay and sightseeing shall be borne by the participants themselves.

Fr Suresh Mathew agreed to steer the local organizing committee.

It was further discussed that as suggested by the President, the EC members shall strive to introduce two new members each to the ICPA, as well as work towards bringing back the inactive members of the ICPA.

Fr Joby presented the financial details of the organization and apprised the members of the current financial position, major expenses and sources of income.

The EC felt that we need to collaborate with Signis-India to better use our talents and resources. Hence, Mr Ignatius would send a letter to the President of Signis-India on the possibility of collaboration. The idea is to begin with the mutual participation on pro-bono basis.

A proposal from Fr George Plathottam, FABC Media Secretary, on the possibility of collaborating with VAIS, was read out to the EC. It was suggested to have more clarity on the issue before we decide upon the collaboration with Radio Veritas or VAIS.

The Vice-President and Joint Secretary shall be responsible for the ICPA Newsletter, management of ICPA official Whatsapp group and the maintenance of the website. They shall instruct the members regarding the policy of the whatsapp group. Members shall desist from forwards and posts in regional languages.

The meeting was concluded at 3pm.

Catholic Editors gather for conference on 'Peace Journalism in a Viral Culture'



KUALA LUMPUR — SIGNIS Asia Journalism Desk under the aegis of SIGNIS World, organised a conference on: *Peace Journalism in a Viral Culture*, at the Council of Churches (CCM) Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia from 14 – 16 August 2019.

18 Catholic editors and journalists representing 12 countries attended the Roundtable.

The Resource persons were: Helen Osman, President – SIGNIS World and Chair of the SIGNIS Journalism Desk. She spoke on the topic: *Faith News not Fake News*, focusing on setting standards and ethics to equip Catholic journalists with a road map to avoid conflicts of interest, ensure freedom of expression, and enabling a journalism that is constructive, transparent and responsible. Helen also elaborated on *Crisis Management*.

Dr Peter Monthienvichienchai, Executive Director of UCANews spoke on: *The UCANews Story*, which covered challenges faced when trying to be accountable and relevant in presenting social, cultural and religious news in Asia. His news portal is aimed at providing a platform for the voiceless.

Fr Pakkam Michael Harris, Consultant at the Vatican

Dicastery of Communication, gave an *Overview of Dicastery for Communication: Structure, Protocol and Services*. He spoke on the purpose and mission of social media, and the channels utilized to create and maintain visibility for the contents of Vatican news.

Fr Paul Samasumo, Vice President of SIGNIS World and Head – English and Swahili Service Africa, Vatican Radio, covered the topic: *Overview of Vatican Radio/ News Media: The Pope's Radio Today*. He also stressed on the importance of collaboration and co-operation and the emerging trend of listening to podcasts.

Fr Suresh Mathew, Chief Editor of Indian Currents weekly presented a paper on the 'Challenges of Catholic Editors in a Viral Culture'.

The participants shared the religio-cultural, socio-political situations of their respective missions.

The conference raised a few common concerns like declining readership in the context of viral social media, hostile political authority, financial crunch, lack of required skills and training for those involved in Catholic journalism.

Participants unanimously agreed that the print media of the Church must stay on even in the midst of adverse scenario in the Asian region.

They have compiled the following recommendations:

1. SIGNIS Asia to organise more hands-on training for existing and budding Catholic journalists.
2. To network among themselves to share their rich experience, information, expertise and other resources.
3. To announce the tidings of Good news, for we are baptised and sent by the Lord. To stay away from sensationalism and fake news and to resolve to abide by the Gospel values of truth, honesty and transparency.
4. To formulate a *Code of Ethics* for Catholic journalists in Asia.
5. To strive to promote unity and peace among themselves and the citizens of their countries. Also to work towards promoting ecumenical and inter-faith collaboration within the region.
6. To strive to stand for, and with, the Church to uphold her greater good, especially in promoting justice and service to the poor. Also to abide by the teachings of the Church on faith and morals.
7. To offer their services to the local church in disseminating information 24/7, as well as render their expertise to the ordinaries in networking and crisis management.
8. To establish a platform for Catholic editors/ journalists/ publishers in the Asian region. To institute 'Catholic Press Association-ASIA' under the aegis of SIGNIS Asia in collaboration with the Communication department of the FABC.
9. To give due prominence to the Vatican News in their publications, to inform readers about the Pope, his activities and the Church in the world.

