

## Editorial

### Silver Jubilee Convention

*The ambience at Don Bosco Centre, Okhla, Delhi, on 29<sup>th</sup> February 2020 warmed the hearts of all participants who joined the Silver Jubilee edition of ICPA's National Convention of Christian Journalists. It was both a meeting of brains and hearts. On the theme—Journalism Today: Pragmatism Triumphs over Principles?—the dignitaries spoke from their hearts, although with a pinch of pain that they undergo in fulfilling their responsibilities. It was an occasion to hear and interact with an array of well seasoned journalists.*

*I am sure, by now most of you have read different news stories on National Convention and AGBM. It had many highlights: The discourses by the eminent speakers, straight from the heart sharing at the Panel Discussion, spell bound moments of Award Function, fraternity feel at AGBM and lovely Delhi Darshan!*

*ICPA has a history of its own. While President Mr Ignatious Gonsalves was narrating the pathways that the organization has crossed, one could hear his voice cracking sentimentally at some points. It was a nostalgic moment.*

*Amidst the scary situation in Delhi during those days, many braved not to skip the convention. For those of us who could not make it for various reasons, this edition of ICPA News & Views will definitely give an unforgettable experience.*

*One cannot thank enough the meticulous planning and execution done under the able leadership of Fr Suresh Mathew and Fr Joby.*

*Happy reading!*



*Sr Tessa Jacob SSPs  
Joint Secretary*

## President's Message

### Let us fight Trutho-Phobia With Tooth And Nail

**T**hey say, that the context clarifies the content. The context also amplifies and magnifies the content. The socio-political, cultural and ecclesial context, in which we the Journalists are precariously positioned, is quite alarming. The National Convention of Christian Journalists and the AGM of Indian Catholic Press Association will be surely remembered for its context, content and the conduct!

Globalization of evil, tyranny of relativism, cultural anemia and a visible eagerness to embrace the Post-Truth, have turned almost all of us 'Trutho-phobic'!



There can be no Journalism if Truth is not perused but feared. There can be no Democracy if Truth is feared and suppressed; there can't be even authentic Christian life without Truth. Yet *Trutho-phobia* is gaining ground everywhere like the dreaded Corona virus.

This dark scenario reminds us what cardinal John Henry Newman, recently declared saint, explains as «encircling gloom» in his celebrated

# 25<sup>th</sup> National Convention

hymn—*Lead Kindly Light*. For we the people in India, *Lead Kindly Light* is *Thamassoma Jyothir Gamaya*. Blocking or suppressing of Truth amounts to the creation of Thamass or the “encircling gloom”.

It is a frightening contradiction that those who are chosen and called to be seekers of Light and Truth and show the way, have sadly evolved by degradation, as the *upaasaks* of *Thamass* and mislead their readers, audience or viewers. Fake news manufacturing has become ever more professional and sophisticated. Divisive rhetoric of hatred has reached diabolic decibel levels. The common people are at a loss!

It is Trutho-phobia that forces not only the fourth Estate, but all the Estates of Democracy to take the escapist route of pragmatism. These people cleverly camouflage as prudent.

It is in this context that the 25<sup>th</sup> National Convention of Christian Journalists pose this existential question to themselves—*Journalism Today: Pragmatism Triumphs over Principles?*

One must admit that the Church too is Trutho-phobic and pragmatic at times! The valiant and often lone battle being waged by Pope Francis against Trutho-phobia, deserves to be put in bold letters and underlined. Needless to say, his initiatives have enhanced the authenticity and credibility ratings of church structures.

The Vatican Secret Archives are losing their secrecy by and by. The section on the “wartime Pope” Pius the twelfth will be thrown open to researchers in two days time(March 2). abuse cases and their penal procedures were divested off the cover of pontifical secrecy, just a few weeks ago. Let the Church in India and elsewhere, and Journalists all over the world learn from our Holy Father and emulate him!

It is my sincere prayer for all of us that *Veritas Liberabit Vos* (Let Truth Set Us Free)!

*Mr. Ignatius Gonsalves*  
**President of the ICPA**



Mr H. K Dua (former editor of the *Indian Express*, *Hindustan Times* and the *Tribune*, diplomat and nominated member of the Rajya Sabha) lights the lamp along with Mr Ignatius Gonsalves (President, ICPA)



(From L to R) Archbishop Anil Joseph Thomas Couto of Delhi; Bishop Salvadore Lobo of Baruiapur; Mr Ignatius Gonsalves, President of ICPA; Archbishop emeritus Thomas Menamparampil of Guwahati; Rev. Father Stanley Kozhichira, President of SIGNIS India.



25<sup>th</sup> National Convention  
of Christian Journalists —  
Inaugural Session



# 25<sup>th</sup> National Convention

Under the aegis of the Indian Catholic Press Association (ICPA), the 25th National Convention of Christian Journalists was held in Don Bosco Centre, Okhla, on February 29, 2020.

For the past 25 years, the convention has served as a meeting ground for journalists to discuss the issues, events and trends that affect journalism.

The topic for the silver jubilee edition of the convention was “Journalism Today: Pragmatism Triumphs over Principles.” The esteemed guest list included Archbishop Anil Joseph Thomas Couto of Delhi; Bishop Salvadore Lobo of Baraipur; Archbishop emeritus Thomas Menampampil of Guwahati; Rev. Father Stanley Kozhichira, President of SIGNIS India; former Supreme Court Judge Justice Kurian Joseph; H.K. Dua, former editor of the *Indian Express*, *Hindustan Times* and the *Tribune*, diplomat and nominated member of the Rajya Sabha; M.K. Venu, founding editor of the *Wire*; T.K. Rajalakshmi, senior deputy editor with the *Frontline*; Rohit Wellington, senior editor and anchor with NDTV; and Rev. Father Cedric Prakash, writer and human rights activist.



Dignitaries and participants at the 25th National Convention of Christian Journalists in Delhi

The inaugural session of the day-long convention started off with a prayer dance, lighting of the lamp and a reading from the Holy Bible. The welcome address was rendered by Rev. Father (Dr) Suresh Mathew, ICPA secretary and chief editor of *Indian Currents* weekly news magazine, who in his speech quoted famed newspaper publisher Ramnath Goenka and said criticism from the government should be a badge of honour for journalists.

Bishop Lobo set the tone for the discussions of the day by emphasizing on the need to voice the truth in order to lead to justice.

ICPA President Ignatius Gonsalves began the presidential address by highlighting that the context clarifies and magnifies the content, and that journalists, especially Christian journalists, are precariously placed. He also spoke about “truthophobia” that is becoming increasingly prevalent today in the field of journalism and quoted the hymn “Lead Kindly Light” to put across the point that journalists must anchor themselves in the current media landscape, which he described as “encircling gloom.”

In the key note address, Archbishop Couto stressed that media has a prophetic vocation to raise voice against the evils in the society. Speaking about the future of the fourth estate, he cited freedom fighter Bal Gangadhar Tilak’s *Kesari* newspaper (founded in 1881) and voiced the need for nurturing more such Kesaris that would speak truth to power.

The subjective nature of truth was brought to the discussion by Father Stanley, who in his felicitation address said that when the nature of one’s truth is based on the Indian Constitution the weightage is more.

Notably, the guests at the event were welcomed with a copy of the Indian Constitution to highlight the responsibility of journalists to uphold the constitutional values.

# 25<sup>th</sup> National Convention



Panelists were welcomed with a copy of the Constitution of India



Mr H. K. Dua



Ms Rajalakshmi



Mr Rohit Wellington



Father Cedric Prakash



Mr M. K. Venu



After a short break, the guests and the attendees gathered once again for an enlightening panel discussion, moderated by Ms. Rajalakshmi. Joining her on the stage were Mr Dua, Mr Venu and Mr Wellington.

After reflecting at length on the need for objective reality in the functioning of journalists, Ms. Rajalakshmi handed the mike to Mr Dua. The senior journalist recalled a time when journalists feared going wrong in their reporting and contrasted it with the present where it is the fear of writing the facts that is prevalent among scribes. They are asked to “tone it down,” which Mr. Dua noted is a veiled reference to make the content acceptable or palatable.

Addressing the gathering, Mr. Venu of the Wire called for small media organizations across the country and the world to collaborate in order to fight for the rights of the citizens. The million media organizations will lead a “million mutinies” — a nod to V.S. Naipaul’s book “India: A Million Mutinies Now,” Mr Venu said. He also called regional media platforms the “redeeming part of the media landscape” as they are reading, writing, analyzing and consuming news.

Mr. Wellington appealed to the mediapersons gathered to turn their gaze inwards and ask a pertinent question — “Are we being the voice of the voiceless we set out to be?” Highlighting that “opinion is cheap, facts are sacred,” he posed another thought-provoking question — “Are we challenging the noisy landscape or becoming party to it?”

He also noted that journalism has reduced to compliance and silence, leading to erosion of trust in media. He also listed degeneration of language, collapse of empathy and the forgotten ability to listen as some of the fallouts of the bleak media landscape.

The final panelist, Rev. Father Cedric Prakash began his address by announcing that he will be speaking as a priest and a Christian. Drawing attention to the prophetic identity of Christian journalists, Father. Prakash stressed that the role of a journalist should be like that of a prophet who announces the good news. He also stressed on the importance of commitment, courage, collaboration and conscience.

The session closed with the panelists and the moderator taking questions from the audience.



# 25<sup>th</sup> National Convention: Key Note Address

## Journalism Today: Pragmatism Triumphs over Principles?

by Archbishop Anil J. Thomas Couto  
Archbishop of Delhi



It was Thomas Jefferson who said that if he were to choose between a government without the Press and Press without government, he would choose the latter. The topic of the day “Journalism today: Pragmatism triumphs over principles?” gains more relevance in the Indian context where watchdogs have been accused of becoming lapdogs.

Another American journalist and investigative reporter Wayne Barrett once described journalism as the only profession where you get paid to tell the truth. He did not, however, explain the cost journalists have to pay for telling the truth. Since Barrett passed away recently, there's no way one can ask him.

But we get the answer from writers and journalists like Perumal Murugan, G Bala, Prannoy Roy, or from the lives of journalist Gauri Lankesh, Leftist thinker Govind Pansare, rationalist Narendra Dabholkar and Kannada scholar M.M. Kalburgi who were snuffed out allegedly

by fascist forces.

The role of media is to inform truth and nothing but truth. But truth has become the biggest casualty in the last few years. Journalists, instead of exposing the government's failures, are busy mouthing the latter's version without questions being raised on the veracity of the claims. It is almost as if they are being paid to advertise what a wonderful government we have. Suddenly, all government schemes look good. Interviews are scripted to have politically right and safe questions.

The media seems to go after Opposition parties and leaders, forgetting its prime duty of keeping the government under its radar. Compare this with what then Prime Minister Jawaharlal Nehru told distinguished cartoonist Shankar during the inauguration of Shankar's Weekly: 'Don't spare me'.

With a few exceptions, the media is swallowing propaganda and peddling it as news. In the process, the media has forgotten a sacred axiom: Truth is what someone somewhere wants to hide; the rest is all advertising.

TV channels and newspapers, with some exceptions, have become cheerleaders of the ruling party and its leaders. Instead of truthful, balanced and objective reporting, people are fed with what the government wants them to read, hear and believe.

When was the last time the media had a free-wheeling interview with the Prime Minister? When was it that the media got a chance to ask searing questions to the top executive head of the State on a wide-range of issues that beg for answer? How many journalists do follow-up stories, a sine qua non of independent Press, on the much-touted government schemes and programmes, which are frequently announced? Does the media try to find out the genuineness of the figures put out by the government?

It was during the US invasion of Iraq that the usage 'embedded journalism' became a byword. It meant attaching of

# 25th National Convention: Key Note Address

journalists to military persons so that the former will have a better access to war news. However, it meant disseminating news which the government wanted people to know. The best example was the propaganda of falsehood that Iraq under Saddam Hussein was in possession of biological weapons. But one should not forget that the same media has not buckled under the pressure of President Donald Trump, despite being 'trampled upon' by the might of the US government.

It will not be exaggerating if someone coins a phrase 'government-embedded journalists' for the Indian media. They have stopped questioning, investigating, and analyzing what is handed out to them. They work as if an unforeseen force is controlling their hands and tongues.

After the Pulwama attack by terrorists and the bombing of Balakot hide-out of JeM terrorists by Indian Air Force, many media organizations had become 'war rooms' rather than news rooms. As journalists wore army uniforms and embarked on round-the-clock war-mongering, people watched helplessly the unfolding of drama rather than uncovering of truth.

The government's veiled threats and financial squeeze on the media houses owning television channels has worked well; most of the popular channels are now reverent to the government and hostile to the small Opposition.

Television debates often end up promoting the government agenda than highlighting issues that matter to the people most. Television anchors with high rating and decibels have given up the pretense of being custodians of public interests as they roll out debates in support of the government policies. Only a few are around to stand with the truth.

There may be two reasons for the news media coming down to this level: Either there is widespread fear of the government's vindictive attitude or there is little difference between the agenda of the government and those running media companies. Whatever be the truth, this is the time for soul searching so that the respect the Indian media enjoys at the world stage does not become a thing of the past.

The 'World Press Freedom Index 2019' ranked India at 140 out of 180 countries stating, "Violence against journalists including police violence, attacks by Maoist fighters and reprisals by criminal groups or corrupt politicians is one of the most striking characteristics of the current state of press freedom in India." At least six Indian journalists were killed in connection with their work in 2018. Doubts surround a seventh case, the Index noted. In reference to India, it found an alarming increase in hate campaigns waged on social networks against journalists who dare to speak or write on subjects that annoy Hindutva forces.

Mark Twain said, "Get your facts first, then you can distort them as you please." Unfortunately, now people end up getting no facts, but only distorted facts. Free expression of ideas, in whichever form, unless it goes against the provisions of the Constitution, is no crime; rather it is a fundamental right and a proof of vibrant democracy.

Constructive criticism is no wrong-doing; silencing it merely because it goes against the interests of the government and certain sections is tantamount to despotism. Bringing out the rot in the system is no offence; but, bidding to sweep it under the carpet is illegal. Singing paeans to powers-that-be is not the duty of writers and journalists; holding a mirror to them is the task of responsible journalism.

Lokmanya Bal Gangadhar Tilak once wrote that his objective in running *Kesari* was to make the rulers know about the aspirations and the agonies of the ruled and to make the ruled feel more fearless. The objective put forth by Tilak remains relevant today. The future of the Fourth Estate lies not in edifying nonsense but in nurturing many more Tilaks.

The 2004 general assembly of the CBCI held in Thrissur came out with a pathbreaking statement: "Media have a prophetic role, indeed a vocation: To speak against the false gods and ideals of the day, materialism, hedonism, consumerism and narrow nationalism."

As Christian journalists, you have a sacred duty to raise your voice against evils in the society and in the Church. You have a duty to highlight the impoverishment of millions of Indians, suicides by farmers, politics of hate, rampant corruption, violence against Dalits, minorities, women, and the marginalised. You must be visible and vocal when the Church fails in her sacred duty. The Church also should have the sagacity to read or listen to 'unfavourable and unpleasant' news about her. Ultimately it might help. Remember, today's journalists are yesterday's prophets. I wish courage for you to become John the Baptist of the day.



# ICPA Awards 2020

The 25th National Convention of Christian Journalists by ICPA also became a platform to honour some of the most phenomenal journalists and their works.



Dignitaries and participants reciting the Preamble of the Constitution



Mrs Susan Coelho welcomes Justice Kurian Joseph by presenting him a copy of the Indian Constitution.

The session began with the attendees reciting the Preamble of the Constitution.

The Chief Guest for this session was retired Supreme Court Judge Justice Kurian Joseph. He was joined on stage by Archbishop Emeritus Thomas Menampampil of Guwahati and Bishop Salvadore Lobo of Baruipur.

Justice Joseph began his address by reminding the gathering that it is our collective duty to safeguard the Constitution. He also asserted that journalism is a mission, more than a profession. Speaking about secularism, he said it is the basic structure that cannot be altered. He closed his speech by quoting an extract from Pope Francis' address to the Foreign Press



Justice Kurian Joseph presents ICPA's Louis Joseph Careno Award for journalism to Archbishop Emeritus Thomas Menampampil.

Association of Italy: "I therefore urge you to work according to truth and justice, so that communication is truly an instrument for building, not for destroying. for meeting, not for clashing; for dialoguing, not for monologizing; for orienting, not for disorienting; for understanding, not for misunderstanding for walking in peace, not for sowing hatred; for giving a voice to those who have no voice, not for being a megaphone to those who shout louder."

Justice Joseph then presented the prestigious Louis Joseph Careno Award for journalism to Archbishop Emeritus Thomas Menampampil. The award was presented to



Justice Kurian Joseph presents ICPA's Swami Devanand Chakkungal award for Best Hindi Writer to Rev. Father John Deepak Sulya, SVD from Indore.



Mr Jose Kavi receives (on behalf of Fr Santosh Kumar Digal) ICPA's award for best reportage on Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes from Justice Kurian Joseph.

# ICPA Awards 2020

Archbishop Emeritus Thomas Menampampil for his razor-sharp, relevant and analytical writing of the current socio-political landscape.

Addressing the gathering after receiving the award, Archbishop Emeritus Menampampil spoke about the importance of dissent, its legitimacy and its need for the emergence of common wisdom. He also urged the members of the audience to engage in intelligent dialogue for the truth to emerge eventually. He ended his speech by speaking about the need for values (dharma). "Let noble thoughts come to us from every side," he said, quoting the Rig Veda.

The ICPA then honoured 25 journalists who have been setting an example with their exemplary works.

Rev. Father Santosh Kumar Digal received the ICPA's award for best reportage on Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes for consistently being the voice of people's rights, especially of the tribals.

Rev. Father John Deepak Sulya received the ICPA's Swami Devanand Chakkungal award for Best Hindi Writer for his significant contributions to Hindi literature.

The vote of thanks was rendered by Rev. Father Jacob Kani. This was followed by cultural programmes.

The eventful and enlightening day ended with the audience singing the National Anthem.

*The organizing committee is grateful to all our sponsors who generously supported 25<sup>th</sup> National Convention and AGBM of ICPA. Thank you dear partners.*

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# 25<sup>th</sup> National Convention

## Statement of the Indian Catholic Press Association (ICPA)

New Delhi

29 February 2020



ICPA Members at the National Convention and AGBM in Delhi

**W**e, members of the **Indian Catholic Press Association (ICPA)** met at the Don Bosco Provincial House, Okhla, New Delhi on Feb. 29, 2020 for our **Annual General Body Meeting**. This was preceded by the **25<sup>th</sup> National Convention of Christian Journalists**, which was organized under the aegis of the ICPA. The convention, since the last twenty-five years, has served as a meeting ground for journalists to discuss the context, events and trends that affect contemporary journalism. Our theme this year was *‘Journalism Today: Pragmatism Triumphs over Principles?’*

As citizens of India, we are deeply concerned at what is happening in the country today on every possible front, be it economic, social, political or religious. We are disturbed that the poor and the marginalized, the minorities and other vulnerable groups, particularly women and children, have to bear the brunt of an unjust and dehumanizing system. Some of the recent legislation and policies (like the CAA, NPR and NRC) and some judicial pronouncements, are divisive, discriminatory and even draconian. Those who take a stand for justice and truth are often hounded and harassed; dissent is barely tolerated. Efforts are made to negate or dilute essential elements of the Constitution: rights pertaining to freedom of speech and expression and freedom of religion are blatantly disregarded. The secular and pluralistic fabric of the country is systematically being destroyed.

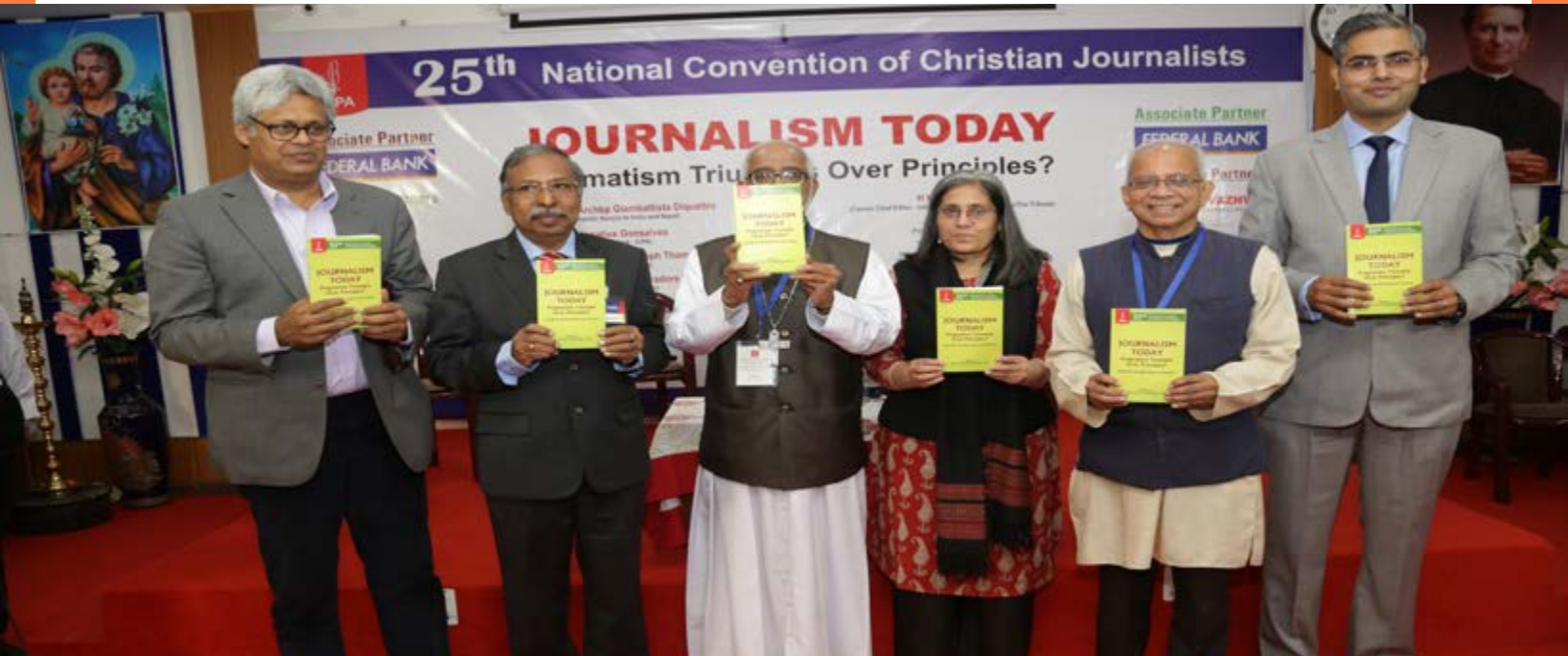
In the context of the above, we the members of the ICPA, **resolve**

- *to take a principled stand always, based on the person and message of Jesus*
- *to defend and promote the freedom and rights enshrined in the Indian Constitution*
- *to ensure that our writing is authentic :based on truth*
- *to be a voice of the voiceless for a more humane and just society*
- *to courageously play a prophetic role and distance ourselves from ‘truthphobia’*

Finally, we take inspiration from the words of Pope Francis who urged journalists, *“to work according to truth and justice, so that communication is truly an instrument for building and not for destroying... Freedom of the press and of expression is an important indicator of the state of a country’s health. Let’s not forget that one of the first things dictatorships do is remove freedom of the press or mask it, not leaving it free.... We need journalists who are on the side of victims, on the side of those who are persecuted, on the side of the ones excluded, cast aside, discriminated against.... The Church holds you in esteem, also when you put your finger in a wound, even if the wound is in the Church community.”* (Address to the IFPA, 18 May 2019)

# ICPA Convention Souvenir Book Launch

For the first time in the history of ICPA National convention, the noble thoughts have come out in the form of a book. To mark the Silver Jubilee of National Convention a souvenir titled “*Journalism Today: Pragmatism Triumphs over Principles?*” was released carrying articles penned down by eminent personnel. It is the best memento one could carry home since it contains rich and vast knowledge emerging out of principles and pragmatism. In his foreword, the President of ICPA has aptly said, ‘Here is something to hold on, something to take back. Please do read, reflect, react and act!’



(From L to R) Mr M. K. Venu, founding editor of the Wire; Mr Ignatius Gonsalves, President, ICPA; Bishop Salvatore Lobo; Ms T.K. Rajalakshmi, senior deputy editor with the Frontline; Rev. Father Cedric Prakash, writer and human rights activist and Mr Rohit Wellington, senior editor and anchor with NDTV.

Father Jacob Kani, one of the Editors of this special volume, summarized the rationale behind this initiative and introduced the major topics covered in the book. He then invited Bishop Salvatore Lobo of Baruiapur released the book and gave a copy each to all the panelists and other dignitaries.



Fr Jacob Kani, one of the Editors of the book, introduces the book.

Special Thanks to Father Jacob Kani and Mr Mariadasan John who took up the work of compiling the articles and bringing out the book with the help of Frs Suresh Mathew and Joby. Perhaps to get to know the origin and purpose of ICPA, and its call during an era of information explosion, this book will come in handy.

Word is truth and reading through the words, one gets to expose the truth in the world!

**Kindly note the new email id of ICPA office**  
**[indiancatholicpress@gmail.com](mailto:indiancatholicpress@gmail.com)**



# Words of Appreciation

“The proof of the pudding is in the eating!” So goes an old, 14th century proverb! When the members attending the Annual General Body Meeting [AGBM] in the year 2019 elected a new Executive Team [ET], little did the general body per se know what they were in for! The 3-tiered pudding dished out by the ET in the form of the 56th AGBM, the 25th Annual National Convention of Christian Journalists, and Awards Function at Don Bosco’s, Okhla, New Delhi, 29 February to 01 March 2020 was too delicious to be eaten once and forgotten for aye! So here goes....!

Compliments to every member of the ET on the meticulous planning that ensured the success of the said ICPA events! Notably, for the first time in a long while, many of the participants felt that they were attending an ICPA event that caused not consternation but delight. Indeed! The members of the ET obviously knew their onions as was evident from the way they each spoke when they had to, be it during the Convention or the AGM—to the point and in measured tones, with not a word out of place, even as the ever so approachable Secretary, Suresh Mathew OFM-Cap, rightfully made bold to exercise firmness with regard to the time factor.

Unarguably, choosing speakers for ICPA panels is no cakewalk! And so, my warmest appreciation for the calibre of the speakers enlisted, glitches concerning the time limits in the case of some of them (e.g. HK Dua and CK Rajlakshmi) notwithstanding! I was particularly enamoured of the Retired Supreme Court Judge, Justice Kurien Joseph. A genial human being, he conducted himself with courtly dignity and laughed with glee when I told him that though he had retired, he actually looked like a youth who had coloured his hair gray and white!

Cedric Prakash SJ was spot on when he challenged his listeners to literally be Christ by their willingness to call a spade, a spade. Speaking with verve on the need to live the Gospel by being promoters of justice and truth, he had the members of the ICPA and the rest of the audience eating out of his hands as it were, urging us all to stick our neck out, even if that meant placing it on the block, in the process himself emerging ever so convincingly as Priest-Prophet-and-King!

I must confess that I was deeply elated at having been invited to read aloud the citation concerning someone I had come to hold in awe to the point of desiring to see him elevated to the Cardinalate! Thomas Menamparampil SDB, Archbishop Emeritus of Guwahati, though having missed the red hat, looked every bit a cardinal with his Scarlet shawl worn over a dazzlingly white cassock! In his acknowledgement of the conferment of the Luis Carenio ICPA Award, he stirred the consciences of his listeners when he spoke of the need for all Christian journalists to consciously and conscientiously uphold the truth in all their writings, come what may!

Bishop Salvadore Lobo, Ecclesiastical Adviser to the ICPA, set his listener’s thinking when he spoke about the significance of the ICPA awards in relation to putting into practice the purpose for which they were being conferred.

It was nice to see Ignatius Gonsalves, ICPA President—the First Lady in tow!—and Sunil Damor SVD, ICPA Vice President, in their element after their recovery from their respective heart related episodes that had landed them in hospital. As for the cheery Joby Mathew SSP, he held his own when making his interventions in connection with the funds he handles as Treasurer, chirpy Tessie, the Joint Secretary, taking great care of the arrangements for Mass and the singing involved in its celebration.

Thank you dear members of the ET for the excellent arrangements — clean and comfortable rooms housed amidst a riot of colours topping lush greenery, food that deserved a huge THUMBS UP, and above all the tranquil atmosphere that made for great warmth and camaraderie!! The AGM was a really smooth affair — no arguments, no bickering and no dispute, its hassle free conclusion a sign of hope that the general body of the ICPA will in time rise in number and stature! The sightseeing tour was an added bonus that had members depart for their respective home destinations on an unforgettably happy note—a clear pointer to the possibility of a repeat record attendance at future ICPA events!

—*By Ladislaus Louis D’Souza*

# Words of Appreciation

Dear Ignatius, Suresh, Joby, Tessy, Sunil and all in the ICPA Governing body — A very BIG and sincere THANK YOU to each one of you and to all others concerned — for a WONDERFUL ICPA meet and a very meaningful National Convention! Each one of you put in plenty of effort and that is why there were such positive vibes from everyone all through! Thanks to the Don Bosco community for the warmth and hospitality!

Thanks especially to the volunteers from Father Suresh's parish and the *Indian Currents* staff who gave of themselves so cheerfully throughout! It was great being with each one of you! I certainly did learn a lot! Let's hope we can be in touch and together contribute effectively towards making Christian journalism in India more AUTHENTIC and PROPHETIC in response to the signs of the times and in keeping with the mandate entrusted to us by Gospel of Jesus, the Constitution of India and the teachings of the Church! God bless us all! With my love and prayers.

— Cedric Prakash SJ



**New ICPA Members:** Fr Milton Kalapura (L) from Alapuzha, Kerala; Fr Felix Anthony (second from L) from Miao, Arunachal Pradesh; Fr Augustine OCD and Fr Wilson OCD (extreme R) from Kochi.

**Lucy Gabriel Chattopadhyay:** Our emcee for the convention



# Profile of 25 Journalists Honoured at the Convention

## Aasha Khosa



Aasha Khosa is a journalist with four decades of experience in print and broadcast journalism. Recipient of many awards for her bold and truthful coverage of Kashmir situation during the challenging decade of the nineties, Aasha Khosa reported for *Indian Express* and the *Tribune* with a Srinagar dateline. The first woman journalist from J&K, she covered national politics, environment, social and women related issues for *Indian Express* and *Business Standard* from Delhi. She has done a fellowship on the environment from the Simon Fraser University, Vancouver, Canada and has travelled across Europe and Pakistan. Having chosen to be an independent journalist, she contributes to digital platforms on Kashmir and Pakistan regularly. She is now working on a book about her experience of reporting armed conflict in Kashmir. She has been contributing for *Indian Currents* weekly for the last six years.

## A. J. Philip



A. J. Philip is a senior journalist based in Delhi. He has been writing a column — the largest in the country — in the weekly *Indian Currents* for the last more than 25 years. He writes editorials in newspapers like the *New Indian Express* and the *Lokmat Times*. He has written over 10,000 editorials. He has spent 47 years in the profession. He began his career with the *India Press Agency* (IPA) in 1973, moved to *The Hitavada* in Bhopal in 1977 and held senior editorial positions in newspapers like *The Searchlight*, Patna, the *Hindustan Times*, Patna and New Delhi, the *Indian Express*, New Delhi, and *The Tribune*, Chandigarh. He was the founder director of Pratichi (India) Trust, founded by Nobel-Laureate Amartya Sen. He has written for many mainstream newspapers and magazines as a freelance journalist. He also worked for two years as a News Reader in the Malayalam unit of All India Radio.

## A.J.Thomas



An Indian English poet, fiction writer, translator and editor, Thomas has more than twenty-five books to his credit. He was Editor of Indian Literature, and is its Guest Editor now. He taught English in Benghazi University, Ajdabiya Campus, Libya from 2008 to 2014. He was also a Senior Consultant at IGNOU. A recipient of Katha Award, AKMG Prize (which enabled him to tour USA, UK and Europe in 1997) and Vodafone Crossword Award (2007), he won Senior Fellowship, Department of Culture, Govt. of India and was Honorary Fellow of Department of Culture, Government of South Korea. He has been invited as a Guest Speaker in writers' conferences and readings in South Korea (thrice), Australia, Thailand, Hong Kong and Nepal.

## Anju Grover



Anju Grover is a journalist with more than 27 years of experience in print, TV, Radio and online media. Founder of *Ngoneworld.com* and Associate Editor of *Rakshaknews.in*, she has also been associated with *Indian Currents* magazine for the last 5 years. Anju started her career with *Probe* magazine in 1990 and went on to work with *Patriot* newspaper. She joined Television in 1995. *Asian News International* or ANI, *APCA* and *Wah India* were three important organisations where she gained a lot of experience in TV news. She played an important role in the launch of India's *Nepal One* channel from Kathmandu in 2003 and *S One news* channel in 2005. In 2008, she played a key role in the launch of news channel *Focus TV* that focused on women related issues. Anju has made several documentaries on social issues for UNFPA and several NGOs. She has also produced a short film for DD.

## Bijay Kumar Minj



A Delhi-based journalist, Bijay Kumar Minj has worked for 20 years with UCAN, one of Asia's largest catholic news agencies. He has worked as reporter-cum-photographer, producer of video features and manager of back office. He has published articles and produced video features on health, social and religious issues across India.

## Bindu Shajan Perappadan:



Bindu Shajan Perappadan works as Special Correspondent with *The Hindu*. She has been working with the national daily for nearly two decades. In the first half of her career, she covered Delhi Government — policies, working and implementation. Currently, she covers health, social issues, and parliamentary affairs and is part of the national team.

## Cecil Victor



Cecil Victor is arguably India's most senior living writer on matters of defence, armed forces and strategic studies. At the cusp of his 80s, he writes regularly in important Defence studies journals, and his counsel is sought by scholars of India's military policy. Cecil spent most of his professional years in the *Statesman* and *Patriot* and *Link Group* where he rose to head the News Bureau and then the senior editorial positions in the critical years of the 1960s-1990s. A trained war correspondent, he covered India's military actions in the 1960s and 1970s

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## Ephraem Jacob



Ephraem Alphy Jacob hails from Varanasi. He has worked for the Hindi Section of the Vatican Radio in Vatican City, Rome from April 1996 to June 1998. Thereafter, Ephraem worked at the Catholic Bishops Conference of India under Frs. Dominic Emmanuel and Babu Joseph at the Public Relations Office from 1998 to 2011. He has contributed in bringing out the book, *Pope John Paul II Revisits India*, edited by Dr Dominic Emmanuel. Ephraem was the chief event manager at the birth centenary celebration of Saint Mother Teresa of Calcutta at Vigyan Bhawan in New Delhi. He is one of the media consultants for the All India Catholic Union of Delhi unit.

At present he is the Public Relations Officer at Our Lady of Fatima Convent Secondary School, Gurugram.

## George Abraham Kallivayalil



In his distinguished career of more than 30 years, George Abraham Kallivayalil has worked in various capacities in the Deepika group of publications as Sub Editor, News Editor, Resident Editor and Associate Editor at the units in Kottayam, Thrissur, Kannur and Kochi and also as reporter and Bureau chief in New Delhi, Trivandrum, Kochi and Kottayam. At the age of 33, he became the youngest Resident Editor in Malayalam newspaper industry. A winner of many awards for outstanding journalism, he has travelled to more than 50 countries across the globe and interacted with world leaders and international journalists. He has been Associate Editor and Chief of Bureau of *Deepika* in New Delhi since 2002.

## Jaswant Kaur



Jaswant Kaur is the Executive Director of *Deepalaya*, a 40-year-old non-government organization, working for the less privileged, with a vision of making people self-reliant. She is a columnist with the *Indian Currents* weekly, for which she writes fortnightly on economic issues, child and women rights. She is also on the board of VANI, another non-profit organisation that actively advocates the views of the non-profit sector on certain policy matters to the government of India. As the Executive Director of *Deepalaya*, she looks after overall NGO management, fundraising, programme management and monitoring & evaluation

## Jiby Kattakkayam



An engineer by training, he pursued higher studies in the US and worked as an IT consultant with a few US media companies for five years before the journalism bug bit him. Began his career as a reporter with *The Hindu* in Kozhikode in 2009 where he enjoyed doing stories on the farming sector. After a year, he moved to Delhi where he reported extensively for *The Hindu* on trial courts, labour issues and slums. He also covered many news-making incidents in Haryana and Western UP. He joined the Mumbai-based newspaper *DNA's* edit page in 2013. In 2017, he joined *The Times of India* edit page team. He has written close to 1,500 editorials in the past seven years mainly on Supreme Court judgements, politics, policy decisions and various regional developments. On his blog called Jibber-Jabber on the TOI website, he lets off steam on contemporary issues.

## John Dayal



In his almost 51 years in journalism, John Dayal has been sub editor, crime reporter, war correspondent, foreign correspondent, CEO, editor-in-chief, media professor, analyst, author of celebrated books, film critic and documentary film-maker. He has also found time to be one of India's foremost human rights activists, member of the *National Integration Council* and a two-term national president of the century-old *All India Catholic Union*.

## Jomy Thomas



Jomy Thomas has been a print journalist for the last 25 years. Currently, he is Special Correspondent with the *Malayala Manorama* group at its National Bureau. His areas of special interest include Parliament, politics, law, religions, political economy and literature. He has covered the 2001 war in Afghanistan, the earthquake in Gujarat, international summits including the UN General Assembly. He has translated a few books into Malayalam including the popular novel, *The Da Vinci Code*, and edited a few books including the *Gospel of St Thomas* and the free-thinker Paul Zacharia's writings on Christ.

## Jose Kalathil



Jose Kalathil is a senior journalist with more than four decades of experience in different publications in India and abroad. He began his career in the *Everyman's News Weekly* founded by Jayaprakash Narayan and later moved to *The Motherland* till it was closed down during Emergency. Soon he went for higher studies in different disciplines at Xavier University in the Philippines, Mount Carmel International Centre in Haifa, Israel and the Land Reforms Institute in Taiwan. On return, he joined the *National Herald* in 1980, then the *Hindustan Times*, Patna, *Observer of Business and Politics*, Delhi, *The Himalayan Times*, Kathmandu, *The*



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*Statesman*, etc. Except *Statesman*, he was in the launching team of other dailies. The other publications he was associated with include *Caravan*, *The Tribune*, *Patriot* and *Financial Chronicle*. He has also worked as Foreign Correspondent for *Taiwan News*, *Asian World*, *Fair Planet* and *Tuck News*. Apart from writing for some Asian publications he continues to be the Editorial Consultant to *Charis India*, with which he is associated since 2007.

## Jose Kavi



Jose Kavi entered the media world as an in-service trainee journalist of SAR (South Asian Religious) News. After the one-year training, he headed *Editaids*, a sister concern of SAR News. After four years with SAR News/*Editaids*, Kavi joined the *United News of India* (UNI) as a sub-editor in New Delhi. He started working for *Union of Catholic Asian News* (UCA News) as a stringer in January 1988 and in May 1989 took over as the first India bureau chief of the same agency. He set up a network of journalists for UCAN during his 25 years with the agency. He left UCAN in December 2012 to start *Matters India*, a news portal, with a group of likeminded journalists. The zero-budget news portal is completing seven years in March this year.

## Joseph Gathia



Former editor of the *Sanjeevan Hindi* weekly, Joseph Gathia is an author, motivational speaker, and human rights activist. His articles on various social issues were published in Hindi newspapers such as *Jansatta*, *Dainik Bhaskar*, *Sahara Samay*, *Aaj Samaj*, etc. He was the India representative of OMCT World Organisation Against Torture (1999- 2003) and member of the Child Workers in Asia, Bangkok (1992-2005). He has been a champion of children's rights particularly girl child and movement against child labour. Gathia has been member of many fact-finding committees of human rights groups. He has been very active in defending minority community rights and has been opposing communal polarisation and spread of hatred between religious communities. He has been Editorial Board Member of *Indian Currents Weekly*.

## Joseph Maliakan



Joseph Maliakan reported for *Indian Express* from 1979 to 2006 without fear or favour on local, national and international issues. He gave special attention to the problems of the scheduled castes and scheduled tribes and specially-abled people in his reports. He successfully campaigned for the government takeover of 26, Alipur Road building, the last residence of B.R. Ambedkar for a national memorial. During 1987-88, he had worked with Index on Censorship, London, monitoring the media for censorship in Europe, Africa and Asia.

He wrote extensively on the struggles of the African National Congress and the Palestine Liberation Organisation, and the bloodless revolution in the Philippines. Facing even threat to life, he reported the Sikh genocide of 1984 after the assassination of Prime Minister Indira Gandhi and continued to report on the plight of the survivors for two decades. He also covered the trial of Mrs. Gandhi's assassination.

## Karuna John



Karuna John is a Delhi-based journalist. After a career of 20 years in various capacities from Chief Reporter to Senior Editor in leading newspapers and magazines like *India Today*, *Times of India*, *New Indian Express*, *The Pioneer*, *Mid-Day* and *Tehelka*, she switched to independent assignments. At her last full-time job, she edited the Social Journalism portal *Saddahaq.com*, where she and her team raised the 10k hit rate to 2 million in just over 6 months. Since 2015, she has been an independent writer, reviewer of food, books and travel, consultant editor

for books, corporate journals and online portals, and a communication specialist for corporates and start-ups.

## Kay Benedict



Kay Benedict has over 30 years of experience in journalism. He worked with the *Indian Express* for eleven years between 1985 and 1996 as sub-editor, chief sub-editor, and principal correspondent at Chandigarh, New Delhi, and Patna respectively. From 1996 to 1998, he was special correspondent at *The Asian Age*, Delhi. He joined *The Telegraph* mid-1998 as Senior Asst. Editor and quit after seven years to join the *DNA* newspaper (Daily News and Analysis) as Deputy Editor at its Delhi bureau. He was Associate Editor at the *Mail Today* from 2008 to 2013. Since January 2014, he has been freelancing, and has written for the *Times of India*, *Hindustan Times*,

*Deccan Herald*, *Free Press Journal*, *Outlook*, and online portals such as *News18*, *thequint.com*, *The Wire*, *Scroll*, etc. He has been writing mostly on politics, parliament, and elections. He has also written on Church and minority affairs.

## Liz Mathew



Liz Mathew has been working in New Delhi as a journalist for the last 24 years. She started her career with Malayalam daily *Deepika*, and shifted to English media in 1998. She has been writing on national politics, law making and policies. She has worked with HT group in its publication *Mint*. Currently, she is with the *Indian Express* as an Associate Editor in its national bureau. She covers the BJP and its politics. She has covered elections in almost all the states in the country.

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## Lucy Gabriel Chattopadhyay



Lucy Gabriel Chattopadhyay has been working as an International broadcaster with All India Radio-General Overseas Service, External Services Division in Delhi for the past 24 years. She has also been a visiting faculty with few Communication Institutes for the past fifteen years. She is a registered trainer with STIP staff training institute of All India Radio for Cabin Crew and Soft skills. She has produced various programs and is the recipient of three *Akashwani Annual Awards* for Radio documentaries. She wrote and voiced for the award-winning Independent documentary on 'The Super Cyclone — Odisha', and 'Gujarat Earthquake' — Fund Raising Film for the Ministry of HRD. She scripted popular TV program "Computer for You" which had almost 600 episodes transmitted by Doordarshan National. She was also the editor of *Buland Prajatanthar*, a fortnightly published by the Bishops of North India.

## Marydasan John



Marydasan John is a former Senior Assistant Editor with *The Hindu*. He is currently a guest lecturer at media institutes and colleges. A journalist for over 35 years, he started his career as a sub-editor in *The New Republic*, a regional newspaper in Dhanbad. He moved to Delhi in 1988 and worked with *National Herald*. He joined *The Hindu* in 1991 and retired as a Senior Assistant Editor in 2016. He is the author of *Editing Today: Rules, Tools and Styles*. He is in the editorial board of two magazines — *Indian Currents* from Delhi and *Youth Action* from Indore.

## P.V.Thomas



P. V. Thomas started his journalistic career in Dehradun in a regional English newspaper. Shortly he moved to Shimla as the Bureau Chief when the daily launched its Himachal Pradesh edition. In Shimla, he worked for several national newspapers and news agencies including *Weekend Review* (*Hindustan Times*), *Times of India*, *The Indian Express*, and *UNI*. Thereafter, he moved to Hyderabad in 1986 as a roving correspondent with Newtime/Eenadu group. In 1989, he shifted to the Delhi bureau of the same group where he worked till 2003 as Deputy Chief of Bureau. He then joined *Jai Hind* television as its National Chief of Bureau based in Delhi. He has written for various Malayalam publications including *Kalakaumudi*, *Janayugam*, *Mathrubhumi weekly*, *Samakalika Malayalam weekly*, and *Madhyamam*. For the past six years, he has been writing a weekly column for *E-Malayalee news portal* (USA). He also writes for *India Life* and *Times* (USA). Apart from contributing to *Desabhimani* daily edit page on national politics, he participates in channel discussions in Malayalam and also Lok Sabha TV. He was associated with Stern (Germany) for a brief period as story idea provider (India) and has also worked as journalism educator at NISCORT media institute.

## Ronald Vivian Smith



Ronny Smith, as he is popularly known, is Dilli's best known chronicler. His books on the Old City are known across the world. He was News Editor of the *Statesman* when the newspaper was at its best, and continues to write for it. But it was after he retired from active journalism and focussed on his first love, Delhi, and the many columns he had written over the decades on the Seven Cities of Delhi started appearing in books that he became a byword among connoisseurs of history, culture and the monuments of Delhi. A linguist and student of culture, he remains a storehouse of known and unknown tales about Delhi, and those who ruled it long before the British built their capital on Raisina Hill. His book, *The Delhi that No-one Knows*, is a classic.

## Syed Nooruzzaman



Syed Nooruzzaman is a former Deputy Editor of *The Tribune*. He had been in-charge of the paper's Edit Page for 22 years and wrote extensively for the prestigious daily, known for its glorious history. With a career spanning over 45 years, he wrote editorials and articles on national and international issues on a regular basis during his over 34-year-long association with the paper. He contributed to *The Tribune* a weekly column on Pakistan till he retired in June 2013. He then shifted to Delhi from Chandigarh and has been writing articles for *Indian Currents* besides doing a regular column for *Tehelka* magazine and *Power Politics*, published from Delhi. He is also working on a book on his long association with the Edit Page and close interactions with top editors.