

A MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT

Dear Friends,

I am happy to know that we shall soon be publishing yet another issue of ICPA News letter, after a gap of one year. Though over the past two years, we have made different attempts to publish the newsletter at regular intervals, we have not been quite successful at it, yet. It is at this juncture, that Mr Jose Vincent, the National Secretary, has volunteered to take up the responsibility of publishing the newsletter, if possible every month, though traditionally it has been the responsibility of the Joint Secretary.

On behalf of all the members of the ICPA, I sincerely thank Jose Vincent for volunteering to take up this additional responsibility on his shoulders, which are heavily laden already. On our part, let us assure him our full co-operation in this very important initiative that will keep us in touch with one another, and also keep us informed of the different activities and achievements of our members in different parts of the country. May I specially request the different regional representatives of the ICPA to encourage the members to send timely news briefs to the Secretary so that we have sufficient material for each issue.

At my side, I want to inform you that I am transferred from Guwahati to Mumbai. I am already in Mumbai, and my superiors have asked me to take up the responsibility of editing The Teenager, now a third time. The magazine has entered its 55th year of publication, earning for itself the unique record of being the oldest surviving national youth magazine in the country. Ever since the magazine has moved from Allahabad to Mumbai, The Teenager has also been a member of the ICPA, as well. Please pray that I may do the ICPA proud in this capacity, using the print medium to bring the best reading material to the youth of the nation.

-- Fr Alfonso Elengikal

ICPA HOLDS 23RD NATIONAL CONVENTION IN INDORE

The Indian Catholic Press Association (ICPA) organised the 23rd National Convention of Christian Journalists at the Universal Solidarity Movement (USM) of Value Education for Peace, Indore on March 9th 2018.

Originally scheduled to be held at St Arnold's Seva Sadan, the SVD Provincial House, Indore, the programme and the stay of the majority of participants had to be shifted to USM at the eleventh hour due to a practical problem. All the same, eight participants stayed at Seva Sadan. The convention began with the traditional lighting of the lamp while an invocation song was sung by the congregation present.

Fr. Jacob Peenikaparambil of USM introduced the keynote speaker Dr Ram Punyani to the audience.

Delivering the keynote address at the convention, author and writer Dr Ram Punyani said: "Indian Constitution is the backbone of Indian democracy. For the past few years, it is under attack from various quarters." The theme of the convention was "Print Media and Indian Democracy."

According to Dr Ram Punyani, the organizations that do not want democracy in the country have come to power. The politics being done today in the name of Hinduism has nothing to do with Hinduism, he said. Today religion is being used to attack democracy. Hinduism is abused left right and centre.

Bishop Salvatore Lobo, the bishop of Baruiapur diocese and chairman of the CBCI Office for Social Communications, in his inaugural speech recalled the appeal made in the statement of the Catholic Bishops' Conference of India meeting held recently in Bangalore calling upon the members of the Church "to make the Constitution of India more widely known in all sectors of Church and society, particularly highlighting some salient features such as the equality of all citizens, the freedom of religion, the freedom of conscience and the freedom of expression".

Bishop Lobo urged the print media to take up the duty of making known the constitution especially its preamble and "to show the beauty of our Constitution which is the best." He also said that we need a journalism that stands for peace, trust, harmony being the voice of the voiceless.

He quoted the message of Pope Francis on National day of communication, May 13, urging the ICPA members to promote journalism and make it an instrument of peace and love.

First Session

At the first session on the convention theme moderated by ICPA Vice-president Ignatius Gonsalves in the morning, prominent journalist A J Philip from Delhi said: "Even though social media is getting prominence today, the print media is playing a crucial role in the life of the people of India." Today democracy has become the autocracy of the majority. The role of the media is to bring out truth, he said.

Philip gave a brief history of the print media and the function of the press as the Fourth estate. It is a fact that the Print is declining. Perhaps the



Bishop Salvatore Lobo Lighting the Lamp



Dr. Ram Punyani Delivering the Keynote address

Hindi medium is growing and not the English. Media will change, but will never die. Because people always want to know what is happening around. Even when the Judiciary failed, the judges took to the Press. Therefore, media will never go down in a democracy, he said

Editor of Indian Currents, Delhi, Dr. Suresh Mathew contented that the Media in India today are controlled by the government through harassment and threats. The arrest of cartoonist G Bala and the CBI raid on the office of Pronnroy Roy were pointed out as examples of harassment. During the last four years the Prime Minister has not addressed any press conference. His engagement with public is limited to tweets. According to Dr. Suersh, the widespread fear among the journalists is due to the vindictive attitude of the government. The purpose of the media is to communicate to the rulers the aspirations and agonies of the ruled, he said.

Second Session

At an afternoon session moderated by Dr Jacob Kani, Editor of Youth Action, Indore, Senior journalist Shraavan Garg lamented that the print media is not informing the people what is happening in the society. In the context of India nobody is dictating the media, nor is there censorship now. Even then things are not being reported. There is a fear of something unknown among the journalists. According to his analysis, after the September 11 terrorist attack

in the USA, a lot of things are happening all over the world in the name of National security. In the name of protecting citizens the rights of the citizens are being taken away. In our country all our personal data is with the government and the government is watching all our movements.

Director of USM, Fr. Varghese Alengaden said both democracy and print media have become hallow. Today the whole lot of MLAs and even the governments are purchased. Media people are also purchased because of the degeneration of values. "How many of us are ready to tell the truth?" he challenged the journalists present at the convention. He said that the journalists have to become prophets or conscience of the society. This requires a radical shift from ecclesio-centrism to Christo-centrism. He also said that the content of Christian journalism should be for the whole society and not for Christians alone.

INDIAN CURRENTS BAGS ICPA LOUIS CARENO AWARD 2018

Indian Currents received ICPA's prestigious annual "Louis Careno Award for Excellence in journalism" 2018 at a colourful function at USM, Indore on the evening. of March 9. The award was given to Indian Currents for its bold stand against communalism and fundamentalism and was received by its Editor, Dr Suresh Mathew.

Accepting the award, Dr. Suresh Mathew said: "This award goes not to Fr. Suresh but to all those who write, subscribe and read Indian Currents". What is urgently required for the leaders of the Indian Church is to read and promote the Indian constitution, support Indian Currents and read newspapers diligently, he added.

Fr Dr M D Thomas, Founder-Director of the Institute of Harmony and Peace Studies, New Delhi received the Swami Devanand Chakkungal Award for Best Hindi writer for his exceptional contribution to Hindi Christian literature. Chinmay Mishra from Indore, a writer, thinker and social activist was also honoured by ICPA for his contribution to the promotion of art and literature.

Fr Thomas thanked the ICPA for selecting him for the award and said that Kabir motivated him to enter into interfaith harmony. The passion for Hindi transformed him. He suggested to bring the scriptures of all religions out of the control of the priestly class and reach it the houses of the common people in the language of the people and poetry. "We have to take a rebirth in the Hindi language," he said.



Dr Fr Suresh Mathew, Editor receiving the award



Dr Fr M D Thomas receiving the award

ICPA Vice-president Ignatius Gonsalves and senior members Fr Varghese Paul and Babychen Aerthayil were honoured for their achievements during the year. While Ignatius has been chosen to head a Christian news channel called SHEKINAH TV as well as he was the Jury chairman for this year's UNICEF Media Awards, Fr Varghese Paul received the Lifetime Achievement Award from the National and International Compendium, New Delhi. Babychen was chosen for the literary award 2017 of the Bishop Mankuzhikari Cultural Academy for his book "Udayanagarile Sukruthatharakam" on Blessed Sister Rani Maria. He also won the News India, Chennai, Golden Jubilee Award for the same book early this year.

Chinmay Mishra, a senior local journalist who was honoured on the occasion, said; "We live in period of contradiction. Even reality is not convincing. Journalism is truth. Many aspects of social life have left journalism, especially art and literature. We live in a period of tension."

The award function was presided over by Bishop Salvadore Lobo. Renowned painter, writer and film Director Prabhu Joshi was the Chief Guest. In his address, Prabhu Joshi said that democracy is in crisis. If the change is imposed from outside, we face a cultural melancholy. The entire motto of our journalism is consumerism. Democracy has gone to the highest bidder. The government has sold education, health, and transport to all private parties. We have surrendered before the WTO. Now the government has only the Judiciary. Can we maintain democracy in this country, he asked..

GENERAL BODY MEETING HELD AT USM, INDORE

The 54th Annual General Body meeting of the Indian Catholic Press Association (ICPA) was held at the Universal Solidarity Movement (USM) of Value Education for peace, Indore on 10 March 2018. The meeting began with a hymn to the Holy Spirit led by Srs. Tessy and Rosely and a prayer by Fr. Varghese S.J.

President Fr Alfonso Elengikal welcomed the members expressing regret for the inconvenience caused due to change of venue from St Arnold's Seva Sadan to USM. He requested the members to help each other to bring up the Organization. He appreciated Fr. Suresh Mathew and team for their wonderful work and support to ICPA and especially to set up our office in Delhi.

Bishop Salvatore Lobo, the Ecclesiastical Advisor of ICPA and Chairman of the CBCI Office for Social Communications, in a brief address to the members before the meeting, expressed the need to encourage more young people into the Organization. He felt that this AGM was special for two things: Firstly, because it is a place close to Bl. Rani Maria's martyrdom and the city where she was beatified. Secondly, it is in the diocese of Bishop Chacko, who has always been media savvy, and who is also the former chairman of the CBCI Media Commission as well as the FABC Media chairman. Bishop Lobo also appreciated Fr. Varghese Alengaden who lights a candle in the hearts of many young people.

Secretary Jose Vincent presented the minutes of the last AGM held in Nagpur. The report was proposed to be passed by Fr. Francis Britto and seconded by Fr. Varghese Paul.

Later, a working report of 2017-18 was presented by the Secretary.

Treasurer Fr. Jayan Nakapuzha presented the audited account till December 31, 2017 and it was proposed to be passed by Fr Varghese Paul and seconded by Mr Lawrence Coelho.

Constitution Update: Vice-president Mr. Ignatius Gonsalves, the Chairman of the Constitution Update Committee, said that very few had suggested any major changes when a word version of the the present constitution was circulated among the members seeking an update. However, he said that the old Constitution has been thoroughly updated with a lot of things which were missing, for example, the landmark events in the life of ICPA. He requested the members to go through it thoroughly when the copy of the amended constitution would be circulated.

Venue & Date for next AGM: Some members suggested the Eastern Region for holding the next AGM. Fr. Sunil said that in Odisha region there is the possibility except that flights at present are not available to Jharsuguda. But the possibility of having it in Bhubaneswar also could be looked into. The consensus, however, was for Jharsuguda, if it is held in that region. Mr. Reggie David from Jablapur expressed the willingness to host the AGM at Jabalpur. Thus, both the possibilities were kept open.

A theme proposed for the next AGM was "Role of Media in Promoting a Pluralistic Society."



A group photo of the participants

NEWS IN BRIEF

Visit to Blessed Sr Rani Maria's Tomb: Twenty-one members who took part in the ICPA indore programme visited the tomb of Blessed Sr Rani Maria in Udainagar, some 50 km away from Indore, on March 10, 2018. Six priests offered Mass in the church where the Blessed Sister has been laid to rest. We were offered tea by the parish after the Mass. On our return, we also stopped near the monument where Blessed Rani Maria breathed her last.

Auditing of Accounts: A major achievement of the ICPA since the last General Body meeting has been the updating the audit of the accounts of the Association. The newly appointed auditor Mr Jose Maveli of Vishnu Rajendran & Co, Kochi, along with his team, completed the auditing work for submission before the Office of the Registrar in Ernakulam. After this, the Association received its registration Certificate renewed on 8th January 2018.

The Auditor also prepared the Income Tax Returns of the Association for the years 2015-16 and 2016-17 and submitted to the Income Tax office.

Executive Committee Meeting in Kochi: The Executive Committee of ICPA met at the SSP House, Kaloore in Kochi on 3rd June 2017 which was attended by six members. Several issues, including the forthcoming National Convention and AGM at Indore, were discussed. This meeting formally approved Indore as the venue of the Convention.

Delhi office arrangement: Vice-President Mr Ignatius Gonsalves and Secretary Mr Jose Vincent went to Delhi for about a week in the second week of October, 2017, as per the suggestion of the President, to arrange the records in the Delhi office. Though the files that came from Bangalore were taken out earlier from the boxes and kept separately, a lot of dusting still had to be done, before they were arranged. They were able to give some shape to the ICPA documents and more or less categorised them under various heads. They were able to salvage from a dilapidated, untitled file some documents, including the audited details of the amount received from the Rohit House compromise settlement through Fr John Vallamattom, that could help Auditor Mr Jose Maveli in the auditing process.

The ICPA Constitution Update Committee had an hour-long meeting in the house of Fr Suresh Mathew in Suryanagar on October 15.



In front of the Tomb of BL Sr. Rani Maria

TRIBUTE TO MSGR GEORGE VELIPARAMBILL

The Vice-president, Secretary, Treasurer, Fr Varghese Paul and Mr Sebastian Kallarackal attended the funeral of Msgr George Veliparambil, who was a former President and Secretary of the ICPA, on May 16, 2017, at his native Parish of Our Lady of Perpetual Help, Cheranalloor of Ernakulam District. The Vice-President and Secretary placed a wreath on the body of Fr Veliparambil on behalf of the Association. May his soul rest in peace.



ICPA Website: Joint Secretary Fr Francis Arackal, who offered to help build ICPA website, contacted Mr Siam Naulak in Delhi and was entrusted the task. Siam prepared a draft website of the Association by mid-December 2017 and is in the process of finalising it. You may please visit indiancatholicpress.org to see the present details.