



**FABC  
OSC**

# **COMMUNICATION INFO**

Newsletter of the FABC Office of Social Communication  
Number 01/2023

## **Message from the Executive Secretary**

I am happy to present the relaunched version of the **FABC OSC Communication INFO** in a new digital format. Some of you might remember the single-sheet newsletter Fr Eilers started, in which he used to share important news and events about social communication. For some years this has been discontinued. Now we hope to bring out a digital newsletter and link it to our new website so that it becomes a means of sharing information and exchanging of news among the FABC member conferences and the Offices of Social Communication. I invite you to send relevant news and info from your country for publication.

As informed in my circular letter in February, we have launched the FABC-OSC website ([www.fabc-osc.org](http://www.fabc-osc.org)), which will serve as a point of reference for communication ministry for Asia. We hope to enrich this site with many useful and relevant content and links related to communication. Once again, I seek your collaboration in making it a useful site for all concerned. Kindly make the site known among the pastoral personnel and those who are in formation.

The FABC has appointed a new chairman in the person of Bishop Sebastian Francis, Bishop of Penang, Malaysia. With the appointment/renewal of other member bishops, the FABC-OSC is now complete. One of the major responsibilities of the FABC-OSC is the administration and management of Radio Veritas Asia (RVA). It is also responsible for the functioning of Veritas Asia Institute of Social Communication (VAISCOM), which is meant to

provide training, formation, and animation in pastoral communication.

FABC-OSC was established in 1974, hence in 2024 we will be celebrating our Golden Jubilee. In the coming months we shall organize zoom meetings to discuss and plan a program of action for the jubilee year. We hope that together we can revitalize the mission of the office of social communication in each and every member conference of the FABC. Please share your suggestions and ideas in this regard.

I wish each of you a fruitful and enriching ministry in communication. Let us serve our episcopal conferences by making our communication ministry more professional, pastoral and mission-centered. Networking and collaboration are at the heart of any successful communication program. Let us join hands and hearts to make the responsibility entrusted to us one that is rooted in the Gospel and the Kingdom of God.

Wish you the Peace of the Risen Lord.

*George Plathottam sdb*

*Executive Secretary, FABC OSC*

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## **57<sup>th</sup> World Communication Day: Speaking with the heart, “the truth in love (Eph 4:15)”**

On 24<sup>th</sup> January, Pope Francis presented the full text of the 57<sup>th</sup> World Communication Day message on the theme: Speaking with the heart, “the truth in love (Eph 4:15). The message for 2023 follows those of the past two years in which the Pope emphasized the

simple yet profound Gospel precepts: “go and see”, and ‘listen with the heart’.

It is the hallmark of Christian communication to speak the truth from the heart with sincerity and in a spirit of dialogue, with patience and without prejudice. The Pope reminds us that the heart can move us to an open and welcoming communication. He also reminds us that we have to speak the truth in love, and in doing so we need not be afraid.



The Pope underlines the importance of communicating from a pure heart as the best antidote against prejudice, indignation, indifference and misinformation – all of which are present in the world today.

The World Communications Day message is released on the feast of St Francis de Sales, the patron of Catholic journalists. This year is significant as we commemorate the 400<sup>th</sup> anniversary of his death, and the 100<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Church proclaiming him as the patron of Catholic journalists. The Pope presents Francis de Sales as a saint of gentleness, charity, and one who taught by precept and example how to communicate from the heart.

The 2023 WCD message assumes importance in the ongoing process of the Synod. In October the first session of the Synod will take place in Rome. Pope Francis has shared his wish to see an ecclesial communication that is gentle and prophetic, guided by the Holy Spirit, rooted in humility and ardent in charity.

As persons holding responsibility for social communication in Asian Bishop’s Conferences, let us strive to promote a communication marked by these qualities in our lives and ministry. Let us share the Pope’s message with our parishes, dioceses, and other ecclesiastical institutions. We can also enter into dialogue with media persons who work in

mainstream media, and organize study sessions and critical review of the media scenario in our countries.

## New Chairman for FABC OSC



The FABC has appointed **Bishop Sebastian Francis** of Penang, Malaysia, as Chairman of the FABC-OSC. Bishop Sebastian was born on 11 November 1951 in Johor Bahru. In 1967 he joined the St. Francis

Xavier’s Minor Seminary in Singapore. From 1972 to 1976, he studied at the College General, Penang. He was ordained a priest for the Diocese of Malacca-Johor in 1977. He was serving as Vicar General of Melaka Johor Diocese when in 2012, Pope Benedict XVI appointed him Bishop of Penang. Bishop Sebastian is currently the President of the Episcopal Conference of Malaysia, Singapore and Brunei.

### FABC OSC Team

#### Chairman

Bishop Sebastian Francis, Bishop of Penang, Malaysia

#### Members

Bishop Peter Nguyen Van Kham, Bishop of My Tho, Vietnam

Bishop Peter Hla, Bishop of Pekhon, Myanmar  
Archbishop Thomas D’Souza, Archbishop of Kolkata, India

Bishop Marcelino Antonio M. Maralit Jr., Bishop of Boac, Philippines

**Executive Secretary** Fr. George Plathottam SDB

*“The most important task in pastoral activity is the “apostolate of the ear” – to listen before speaking, as the Apostle James exhorts: “Let every man be quick to hear, slow to speak” (1:19). Freely giving some of our own time to listen to people is the first act of charity”*

*Pope Francis, WCD 2022*

# FABC OSC Website



FABC OSC has launched a website to provide useful content related to social communication.

FABC OSC Website: <https://www.fabc-osc.org/>

Email IDs: [exec-sec@fabc-osc.org](mailto:exec-sec@fabc-osc.org) ,  
[secretariat@fabc-osc.org](mailto:secretariat@fabc-osc.org) , [events@fabc-osc.org](mailto:events@fabc-osc.org)

**VAISCOM** [www.vaiscom.org](http://www.vaiscom.org)



VAISCOM offers leadership and management competence to pastoral personnel to enhance their ministry.

VAISCOM offers three online programs in communication to train pastoral leaders. These are: Basic course, Advance course, and Integrated course. For more details visit: [www.vaiscom.org](http://www.vaiscom.org)

## April Webinar

The Veritas Asia Institute of Social Communication (VAISCOM) is holding a webinar on FAITH COMMUNICATION IN THE DIGITAL WORLD at 2 pm. Manila time on April 13, 2023. The resource person is Adrian Banguis Tambuyat, a participant of

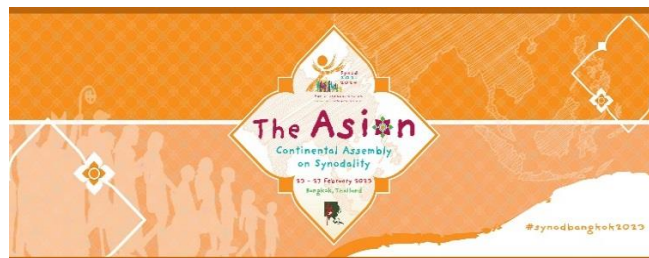
the Vatican Dicastery's Faith Communication program 2022.

The program is open to students of Vaiscom and all others who are interested. Join the event on zoom

<https://us06web.zoom.us/j/9505558871?pwd=c0drU1FOVTFXd3Q4QnhrNU0vUGhVQT09>

ID: 950 555 8871

Passcode: fabcosc



## Synod Continental Assembly - FABC OSC coordinates media services with RVA and other media partners

The FABC Office of Social Communication in collaboration with the Vatican Synod Secretariat and the Radio Veritas Asia (RVA) and OSCs of various countries coordinated the translation and dissemination of the events of the Continental Assembly of the Synod held in Bangkok, February 24-27, 2023.

The RVA editorial team and the language services worked hard to get the press releases and other events translated into its 21 language services within a few hours so that the people were able to follow the highlights of the continental assembly without delay. The Myanmar (Burmese) translation by RVA editorial member Fr Patrick was further translated into nine other RVA languages. In some of the countries where RVA services did not exist, episcopal conference offices, including the OSCs translated the materials into their respective languages. Fr Otfried Chan from Taiwan rendered the Chinese translations

which were widely disseminated through RVA Mandarin and other media outlets to Chinese speaking audience across the world. Similarly, the episcopal conferences of Korea, Japan and other countries were able to translate the content into their languages and disseminate them.

It was the first time that FABC OSC initiated a plan of this kind involving RVA and OSCs to get the content of a major ecclesial event translated simultaneously to reach the people in their own languages quickly. The work involved much advanced planning and real time involvement of translators who had to work overtime. In the process of doing this we also identified some of the problems encountered in translation of texts related to the church.

It is hoped that the FABC and FABC OSC can adopt the method to communicate other major events and news to reach people in different countries of Asia who do not follow English, the main language of deliberations used by the FABC.

The experience has also taught us how best communication technology can be utilized to disseminate content, to overcome language disadvantage and to make the local churches participate in important ecclesial events. This is bound to increase a greater sense of solidarity in the spirit of the Synod. Fr George Plathottam sdb, Executive Secretary of the FABC OSC who coordinated the event said this experience has given greater confidence to cover the October session of the Synod across Asia. FABC OSC, he said plans to organize capacity building workshops and webinars for translators within Asian countries.

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## Book on Synodal Reflections Released

Federation of Asian Bishops Conference President Cardinal Charles Maung Bo released a book titled ‘People of Asia Journeying with Jesus’ by Fr George Plathottam sdb by presenting a copy to Cardinal

Mario Greg, Secretary General of the Synod, Vatican, at Bangkok, February 24.



The 150-page book by Father George Plathottam sdb, Executive Secretary, FABC Office of Social Communication, contains snapshots and reflections on the synod on synodality expressed in prose, verses and art.

He called the book the fruit of the efforts of many people from across Asia who contributed testimonies, reflections, artwork and stories. The book reflects on various Asian realities and challenges for the Church. Cardinal Bo called the book a pastoral guide for reflection for the Church in Asia.

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## FABC 50 Document Released

The Federation of Asian Bishops Conferences (FABC) held its first general conference on the theme: **Journeying**



**Together as People of Asia**, from October 12-30, 2022, at the Baan Phu Wan Pastoral Training Center, Bangkok, marking the 50th anniversary of FABC’s establishment. Cardinal Charles Bo, President of the FABC described the final document as a visionary document that will energize and revitalize the church in Asia.

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## Cardinal Foley Scholarship

Catholic Media Council (CAMECO) Germany, has announced the Cardinal Foley Scholarships for the

year. The scholarship is meant to address the need for adequate professional formation for those who will be responsible for the future development of the Church's mission in the field of communication, particularly for candidates from Africa, Asia, and Latin America.

The scholarship has enabled many pastoral personnel to lead communication ministries in the local churches. They serve as church communicators in local training institutes, communication (and theology) faculties and major seminaries, and enhance the human resource of qualified priests, deacons, religious and lay people who are competent to further develop the communication ministry of the local churches.

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## ***Vatican Communication Dicastery:***

### **Faith Communication in the Digital World, 2022**

#### **Asian Participants Share their Experiences**

*The Vatican Dicastery of Communication has been organizing for the past two years a pilot project called “Faith Communication in the Digital World”, to formation program for young people from across the world in pastoral communication. As the Dicastery plans to commence the next batch, we asked three Asian participants of the 2022 batch to share about the program and their experience.*

#### **Adrian Banguis Tambuyat**



In November last year, I saw on social media an announcement that the Holy See's Dicastery for Communication was going to choose 16 young communicators from across

the globe for the project, “Faith Communication in the Digital World, 2022.”

The aim of the project is to equip communication professionals with the foundations of Faith-based communications and a practical application through the digital means. With little hope of being selected for the program, I applied and a few days before Christmas, I received the news that I was chosen!

I never thought of having this blessing to benefit myself alone, but also the communities and people I serve and volunteer for. The training-project involved theoretical foundations of Faith communications, an intensified face-to-face training in Rome for a week, and a practicum in a chosen Institution. Since February of the present year, the participants were able to join a series of online classes that are facilitated by various communication professionals.

By the end of May, participants travelled from across the globe to the eternal city for their residential week. I admit that I am overwhelmed at that time, but is filled with so much excitement and joy as I travelled from Manila to Rome for 19 hours, to finally meet my co-participants for the first time and cherish the moments of study, prayer and encounter with our mentors and the Vatican's communication officials. We stayed at a lodging house along Via Paolo VI, just across St. Peter's square, what I thought to be inconceivable, was already at hand. The landscape I have only seen in the media, has been a normal view from my window, and as participants of a Holy See-sponsored project, we were granted the privilege to access some areas inside the Vatican City-state that are restricted to the public.

On our second day in Rome, we were scheduled to attend the general audience of His Holiness. At that time, the papal visit to the Philippines suddenly flashed on my memories. I remember lining up along the streets of Manila, staying at the national park for 12 hours under the heavy rains, just to have a glimpse of the Pope and receive his blessings.

While we were informed of our itinerary ahead of time, no one from our mentors told us of a possible

encounter with the Pope. As the general audience ended, I was a bit observant when a papal security signaled our mentor-official from the Dicastery, and surprisingly, the fence that separates the audience from the Pope was opened, and we were ushered to line up going to the papal platform, along with select religious and diplomats.

Who would have thought that after seven years, I would have the privilege to meet him closely. I was truly elated by his gentle and fatherly presence. I was supposed to say something and ask a colleague to translate it in Spanish or Italian, but when it was our turn to talk to the Pope, I got goosebumps and simply uttered “*Santo Padre, ruega por nosotros en las islas Filipinas, y por mi familia y amigos,*” (Holy Father, please pray for the Philippine Islands, for my family and friends). I was on cloud nine that moment, my time seemed to stop. The Holy Father gave me a direct eye contact, carefully listened to each word I delivered, to which he nodded over me.

All of us in the training-project, I believe, would treasure that encounter forever. We went on further trainings the following days, got the chance to meet the first and only-layperson to head the Roman Curia, Dr. Paolo Ruffini, the Prefect of the Dicastery for Communication, and have visited the four major Basilicas, churches and institutions where communication is much needed.

Despite of exhausting moments of our training, my personal difficulties at home, I felt the security of being prayed for by the successor of Peter the Rock, “on which the Church is built by Christ.” I am indebted to the Dicastery for this opportunity, as much as I express my gratitude to my spiritual family and friends in the ministry in the Philippines - the Lay Dominican Fraternities and the Social Communications Ministry of the Diocese of Kalookan.

The lessons I learned and will continue to learn from this project, moved me to reflect the struggles of thousands of Filipino immigrants who are forced to live abroad to provide for their families at home; it reminded me of my companions who brawl against ecological injustices to bring the message of Laudato

Si' to life; it made me remember a handful of sacrifices which my friends in social communications ministries had to undertake to fulfill our duties for new evangelization.

*Adrian Banguis Tambuyat is a young communication practitioner specializing in online content strategy and broadcast journalism and Associate Director at Pastoral Communication Research Institute.*

## Taniya George



The Faith Communication in the Digital World project was an incredible opportunity for me to learn and grow as a young Catholic missionary. Although I work in the field of digital communication, I always felt insecure and inadequate. I was excited to be part of a diverse group of young communicators from different parts of the world, highly talented and focused on learning how to use digital tools to communicate the message of the Gospel more effectively.

The first step in our program was to get to know each other, a process through which a true friendship and community were slowly and steadily built. Throughout the project, we were able to interact with internationally renowned experts and outstanding witnesses of our time who provided invaluable insights into best practices for the proper use of digital instruments in the communication of the Faith. Some of the sessions I enjoyed most were the ones where my fellow participants shared their questions and inputs, which opened up new ways of perceiving how to live and transmit faith. While it was not always easy to come to unanimous conclusions, we always enjoyed mutual respect and freedom to express our thoughts and reflections.

By the time we came to Rome for the residential week, we had become good friends. The intense week of exposure to the Holy See, its spiritual and

artistic heritage, and the papal audience with a photo with the pope will always remain in our personal history. I found myself deeply moved by the faith and devotion of the people I encountered, and I will always remember the wonder I saw in my peers' faces as they encountered a transforming Church that is simple, accessible, open, and trying to live the gospel message with all its limitations.

In Rome, we also started the working sessions of the group. FC2, as we were called, was divided into four working subgroups. Each group worked with some Dicastery or organization related to the Holy See. My fantastic group worked with the COVID commission of Dicastery of Integral Human Development. We assisted in producing social media products and news items for the commission. I saw how a product can be formed through a synodal way of discussions, reflections, research, and hard work.

When I look back at the program, apart from all the knowledge and skills acquired, what comes to my mind are the faces of FC2 members. They are the finest treasures I have found in this sea of digital collaboration and learning.

Participating in the Faith Communication in the Digital World project has been a transformative experience for me. I have developed strong friendships, acquired new skills, and gained valuable insights into how to use digital tools to communicate the message of the Gospel more effectively. I am truly grateful for this opportunity, and I eagerly anticipate putting what I have learned into practice to serve the Church's mission. I extend a heartfelt thank you to the whole Dicastery of Communication of the Holy See for making this experience possible.

*Taniya George is a Missionary of Idente currently pursuing her doctoral studies in Rome.*

## Joy Infant

As a participant in the Faith communication program run by the Vatican Dicastery for Communication, I was fortunate to have a transformative experience.



The program provided me with a broad range of projects and learnings from leading scholars around the world, and an opportunity to visit the Vatican and spend a week there with co-members from various countries. As an Indian-Asian Catholic, I found the program to be especially valuable, as it provided me with an opportunity to engage with the theological and cultural perspectives of other Catholic communities around the world. One of the most profound experiences of the program was the chance to meet Pope Francis during our visit to the Vatican.

As someone who deeply respects his leadership and teachings, meeting the Pope was a humbling and inspiring experience. During the papal audience, he reinforced the importance of effective communication in spreading the message of Christ and encouraging social justice. His insights and encouragement continue to inspire me in my work as a Catholic communicator.

The program's emphasis on the use of technology and digital media for effective communication was also enlightening. As a Catholic communicator in India, I found that the program's emphasis on digital media was especially relevant. It provided me with the skills and tools to engage with younger Catholics who are increasingly using social media to engage with their faith.

Overall, the Faith communication program run by the Vatican dicastery for communication was an exceptional experience for me. It broadened my understanding of the role of communication in the Catholic Church, provided me with the skills and tools to communicate more effectively, and enabled me to engage with diverse perspectives from Catholic communities around the world.

*Joy Infant is currently based in Berlin, Germany, and works with a multi-national IT company. He is a collaborator and trainer with Radio Veritas Asia (RVA).*

# FAITH COMMUNICATION IN THE DIGITAL WORLD 2023:

## A SYNODAL PERSPECTIVE



After the fruitful two-year pilot project “**Faith Communication in the Digital World**”, the Dicastery of Communication has announced the next batch to commence in May for which applications are sought.

The Dicastery focuses on renewing its commitment to continue the experience of “learning by doing” in a synodal perspective of mutual listening and sharing about how to communicate the faith in the digital world. It plans to choose 16 youth for the program aimed at communicating the faith through digital media.

### **Aims**

- To promote best practices of spiritual formation and spread the inspiration for new and effective ways of Faith Communication through digital media.
- To foster the exchange of gifts with regions/countries where the Church faces marginalization; this year, we are focusing primarily on the Asian region.
- To build awareness of how Catholics, particularly the younger generation, use digital media in daily life.

### **When/where to apply:**

Candidates are invited to apply not later than **April 21st, 2023** by sending CV, letter of motivation, letter of recommendation, recent passport-size photo, and work samples by email to: [faith.communication@spc.va](mailto:faith.communication@spc.va)

**“We have a pressing need in the Church for communication that kindles hearts, that is balm on wounds and that shines light on the journey of our brothers and sisters.”**

***Pope Francis,  
WCD 2023***