



FABC
OSC

COMMUNICATION INFO

Newsletter of the FABC Office of
Social Communication (OSC)

Number 02 | 2024

Message from the Chairman



Dear Brothers and Sisters in Christ,
With joy and gratitude, we present to you the latest newsletter from the Federation of Asian Bishops' Conference Office of Social Communications.

May the words contained within this publication be a source of inspiration and renewal for each of you, drawing you closer to the love and teachings of our Lord Jesus Christ.

I extend my heartfelt congratulations to the team who has worked to bring this newsletter to fruition. Your dedication reflects the spirit of service and evangelisation that lies at the heart of our Catholic faith.

In the spirit of communion, participation and mission, I invite all of you to not only read and reflect upon the contents of this newsletter but also to share its message with others. Let us, as members of the Body of Christ, spread the Joy of the Gospel far and wide, inviting others to join us on our journey of faith.

As we move forward, I encourage the faithful from every corner of Asia to contribute their stories, experiences, and reflections to the editor. By sharing our diverse perspectives and voices,

we enrich the fabric of our Catholic community and strengthen our collective witness to the Gospel.

With prayers and blessings,

Cardinal Sebastian Francis

Chairman, FABC - Office of Social Communication

Message from the Executive Secretary



I am happy to announce the relaunch of the *FABC-OSC Communication Info*.

I thank Ms Priya Das and Ms Juliana Baroi, who have joined as staffs of FABC OSC at our temporary office in Kolkata for their assistance in preparing this edition of the newsletter. I also thank Ms Grace Gacosta, who worked with FABC-OSC in Manila as a part time staff. She discontinues her work with FABC-OSC from the beginning May. I wish to thank her for her dedicated services.

We hope that the *FABC-OSC Communication Info* continues to be an important instrument of sharing news, views and information regarding social communication. May it help build communion with one another and strengthen our ministry.

I invite all the secretaries of communication in the FABC member conferences to share with each other and our readers whatever is useful in this sector, especially events from your country.

In this issue, besides brief reports of some of our important activities, we also present information on upcoming programs and activities from the Dicastery for Communication and from FABC and FABC-OSC.

On May 12, we will be celebrating the World Communication Day. Let us make the message of the Holy Father for this occasion as widely known as possible. Let us make the day an opportunity to reflect on the deeper significance of communication in the age of AI.

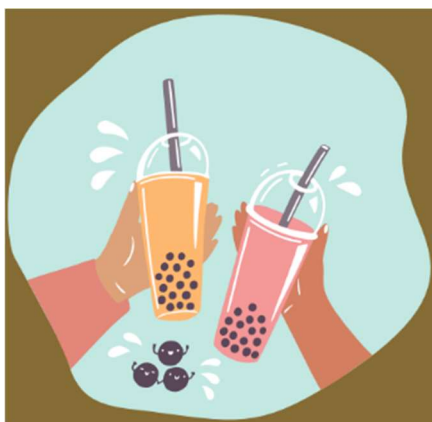
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George Plathottam sdb
Executive Secretary

news

Spilling the Boba Tea



The Dicastery for Communications of the Holy See in collaboration with FABC-OSC organised a webinar titled, *Spilling the Boba Tea: Towards Full Presence* on March 15, 2024. It

is part of a four-part dialogue series that highlights issues related to digital media in the local Churches in Asia, particularly in Southeast Asia.

“Spilling the tea” is a common slang amongst Millennials and Gen Z’s who make up the bulk of our primary audience.



The program provided localized snippets from the pastoral instruction on social media issued by the Dicastery last year, titled *Towards Full Presence*. The document draws attention to the spirit of the synodal church by listening and talking with communicators from other countries and start the discussion on the issues and problems within the community of church communicators.

The Chairman of FABC-OSC, Cardinal Sebastian Francis of Penang, Malaysia, during his keynote address offered invaluable guidance to the participants. He urged the need to strive for intentional listening, fostering genuine encounters, and discerning their presence in the digital realm.

He shared fresh insights on cultivating intentional listening in the digital age, drawing inspiration from the parable of the Good Samaritan and how one can navigate the challenges of information overload and attention fragmentation in order to foster authentic dialogue and encounter.

New FABC-OSC Office



The FABC-OSC Office has been re-located temporarily to Kolkata, India. The new office facility was inaugurated on 1 April 2024, by Archbishop Thomas D’Souza of Kolkata, and member of the FABC OSC.

The office is temporarily based at the Archbishop’s House in Kolkata, India. Two staff members have been appointed to work with the Office under the direction of the Executive Secretary.

FABC Central Committee and Offices

The FABC held its annual meeting of the Central Committee and Offices, February 20-22 at Camilian Pastoral Care Centre, Bangkok.

The two-day meeting of the Offices shared reports and budgets, program plans and priorities of each of the offices.

The meeting also discussed ongoing proposals for the restructuring of the FABC and its offices- a process which has been initiated during the Golden Jubilee of the FABC in 2022.

FABC-OSC was represented by Chairman Cardinal Sebastian Francis and Executive Secretary Fr George Plathottam sdb.

FABC Elects New Office Bearers



The Central Committee of the FABC elected new office bearers for the upcoming term starting January 2025.

Cardinal Filipe Neri Ferrao, the Archbishop of Goa,

and President of the Conference of Catholic Bishops of India (CCBI), was elected as President of the FABC and. Bishop Pablo Virgilio David, the Bishop of Kalookan, and President of the Catholic Bishops' Conference of the Philippines (CBCP) was elected as the Vice President of the FABC.

They will succeed Cardinal Charles Bo sdb, the current President, and Cardinal Malcom Ranjit, the vice-president beginning their first term on 1 January 2025.

Archbishop Tarcisio Isao Kikuchi SVD, has been re-elected as Secretary General of the FABC for a second term.

New Bishop Members Appointed



FABC Central Committee appointed two new members to the FABC-OSC to fill the vacancies arising from the retirement of former members.

The new incumbents are Bishop Maurice Nyunt Wai of Mawlamyine, Myanmar and Archbishop Kornelius Sipayung, OFM. Cap, Archbishop of Medan, Indonesia.



The later begins his term on 1 January 2025.

VAISCOM Courses Get University Recognition

FABC's communication training arm *Veritas Asia Institute of Social Communication* (VAISCOM) has received approval for its courses from into the Bangkok-based University of St Johns (SJU). A formal agreement has been signed between the SJU and Vaiscom for formal approval for its certificate and diploma courses in pastoral communication. The MOU was signed on April 2024 between the Rector and Vice Chancellor of SJU and the Executive Secretary of FABC Office of Social Communication.

Vaiscom, established in 2019 by the FABC's Office of Social Communication, aims to form church leaders in communication for Asia. It runs two certificate and a diploma course titled Communication for Pastoral Leadership or CPL.



The course is fully online and is designed to suit those who are engaged in various ministries. The students can learn on their own timeline through

online video lectures, study notes, projects and online

examinations. Vaiscom also offers periodic webinars and online meetings with the students to update them on latest developments in communication.

VAISCOM was founded in 2019 as an online program immediately prior to the outbreak of the Covid 19 pandemic, making the online course timely and relevant.

Besides several candidates from Asia, a few students from Europe and Africa are also currently pursuing the course. VAISCOM runs all its courses on its portal www.vaiscom.org.




Besides regular enrolments, the candidates can also apply for scholarships, an institution have the provision to take a group franchise for doing the courses.

For more information [click here](#).

VAISCOM Announces Scholarships

Veritas Asia Institute of Social Communication (VAISCOM) which offers online certificate and diploma courses in pastoral communication, has announced scholarships for a limited number of needy and eligible candidates.

The courses titled, Communication for Pastoral Leadership (CPL), is designed to equip pastoral personnel - priests, religious, seminarians and lay leaders - in Asia with effective communication competence and skills.

Course Titles		
 01 Basic Course Communication for Pastoral Leadership (CPL) Course Code: 01 CPL Basic	 02 Advanced Course Communication for Pastoral Leadership (CPL) Course Code: 02 CPL Advanced	 03 Integrated Course Communication for Pastoral Leadership (CPL) Course Code: 03 CPL Integrated

Those who wish to do so can apply on the prescribed form by [clicking here](#).

Synod Animation

FABC OSC has launched a series of programs in order to promote synodality and communication in FABC

member countries.



These include seminars in Asian countries, a dedicated website, animation and formation for young social media teams, reporting, creating a platform for listening to Asian voices on Synod. translation services of

Synod and other pastoral documents in Asian languages, animation on church teachings on social communication.

Since February 2024, the FABC-OSC has organised monthly zoom webinar for animation on Synod on Synodality. Each of the webinars have been attended by an average of 30 to 40 participants.

The seminar series is part of our monthly animation and formation program for the benefit of synod Asia social media volunteers, students of VAISCOM, OSCs of FABC countries, members of Signis and other media bodies all others who are interested.



In the first webinar held on February 3, 2024 Fr George Plathottam sdb, Executive Secretary, FABC OSC gave overview of the Synod, its journey so far and insights on the purpose and goals of the Synod on Synodality. an animated by was held. Fr Plathottam is a Consultant to the Dicastery for Communication of the Holy See, and attended the Synod Assembly held in Rome in October as a member of the international media team.

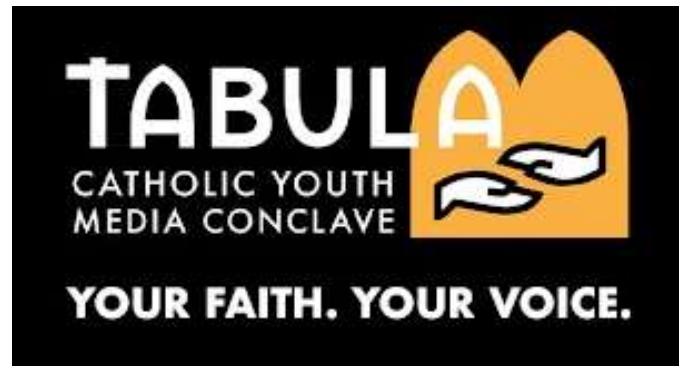


The Second webinar held on March 9, dealt with the theme of Synodal Leadership. It was animated by Archbishop Gilbert Garcera, Archbishop of Lipa, Philippines. Participation is free. FABC OSC Synod Asia will be organising sessions every month on important themes related to Synod on Synodality.



The third webinar was held on April 15, 2024 was animated by Mr. Charles Bertille, from Malaysia and Asia head of Porticus. Charles emphasized the importance of two key features of being a baptized Christian- living out the beliefs and values that baptism signifies, which is an integral part of the dignity of being baptized. The second feature, he said, is celebrating our baptism and incorporating it into our everyday life. These are both valuable and meaningful aspects of the Christian faith.

Media Conclave for Youth Leaders Held



A three-day media conclave for 35 youth and religious from 32 Dioceses of Kerala, was held at Pastoral Orientation Centre (POC) Kerala, April 12-14. The conclave titled Tabula- Your Faith, Your Voice, provided an interactive platform for youth leaders to discuss some of the cutting-edge issues in faith and communication.

The event organised by Fr Stephen, the Secretary for Youth Commission of KCBC brought together resource persons like the FABC-OSC Executive Secretary Fr George Plathottam sdb, media experts Tina Conil, Limson Paul, Dr P M Chacko, Praveen Isaac.

Fr George led sessions on challenges of media in post-truth era, media in the service of life and beauty, witnessing to a vision of life and authenticity in Media.

Asian Bishops Attend Communication Leadership Program



Thirteen bishops from four Asian countries attended a 5-day workshop titled: *Synodal Church: Episcopal*

Ministry and Communication in Bangkok, April 15-20.

The workshop is part of FABC-OSC's flagship program, Bishops Institute for Social Communication (BISCOM) is aimed at offering animation and ongoing formation for bishops.

This year's BISCOM was the ninth such program, and dealt with a wide range of issues in communication in the context of the synod on synodality underway in the church.

FABC OSC Chairman Cardinal Sebastian Francis in his inaugural message highlighted the close link between communication and synodality and invited the participating bishops to strengthen their episcopal ministry by means of effective communication.



The Prefect of the Holy See's Dicastery for Communication Dr Paolo Ruffini in his online address urged the bishops to strive for a communication that builds communion.

The secret of communication is not technique but love, he said. Like Christ's communication, "our communication must be marked by self-giving and not self-satisfaction prevalent in business and marketing," the Prefect pointed out.

The resource persons for the program included Dr. Christina Kheng, a leading Asian theologian from Singapore, Fr. Clarence Devadass, former Executive Secretary of the FABC Office of Theology from Malaysia, Dr. Peter Monthienvichienchai, Secretary General of Signis, FABC-OSC Secretary Fr. George Plathottam and Mr Limson Paul, a cyber security expert

from India. Mr. Daniel Roy Santiyagu provided technical support to the program.

Biscom 2024 covered a wide range of issues around the theme "**Synodal Church: Episcopal Ministry and Communication**", including the synodal journey and the synthesis report, the various communication documents from Inter Mirifica, crisis management and public relations, artificial intelligence in episcopal ministry.

Seminar on Synodality Sets New Goals for Church in Cambodia



A three-day seminar on Synod on Synodality organized by the FABC Office of Social Communication has set new pastoral goals for the Church in Cambodia to foster greater communion and collaboration among its pastoral personnel. The seminar was held at the Diocesan Pastoral Centre, Phnom Penh, April 25-27.

Bishop Olivier Michel Marie Schmitthaeusler M.E.P., Vicar Apostolic of Phnom Penh, in his inaugural message urged the participants to listen attentively to the Holy Spirit to bring to fruition the Synod in the pastoral context of the Church in Cambodia.

More than 70 church leaders, including Bishop Olivier, Msgr. Peter Soun Hangly, Apostolic Prefect of Kompong Cham, members of various religious communities, parish priests, lay men and women leaders and youth participated in the three-day event. The program was organised in collaboration with the Office of Communication (OSC) of Cambodia under the leadership of Fr Paul Chatserie, Vicar General of Phnom Penh and

Mr Sovanna Ly, Secretary for Social Communication. The resource persons were Fr George Plathottam sdb, Executive Secretary, FABC-OSC and Dr Jessica Joy Candelario from the Philippines.



The seminar dealt with the processes and different phases of the Synod with its three key themes- communion, participation, and mission. It was a moment of re-energizing the young missionary Church in Cambodia, a country which has suffered bloodshed and mass killings. The Church in Cambodia consisting of the Apostolic Vicariate of Phnom Penh, and the Apostolic Prefectures of Battambang and Kompong Cham is slowly emerging from the ashes of destruction with the renewed resolve for evangelization, is now re-building communities and churches, fostering unity and collaboration among the diverse missionary personnel. Then Catholic Church is still a small minority of only 20,000 faithful in a population of 16 million, which is predominantly Buddhist. The missionary personnel hail from more than twenty countries and belong to a variety of religious congregations.

The sessions highlighted the synodal journey through various stages and focused on the importance of living synodality in mission, spiritual conversation, listening, shared leadership. They also explained the documents on the pastoral reflection on social media, Fully Present, issued by the Dicastery for Communication of the Holy See, the Bangkok Document of the FABC 50, which outlines the major challenges and pastoral priorities for the Churches in Asia.

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World Communication Day 2024



The World Communications Day 2024 will be observed worldwide on May 12, Ascension Sunday. In his message for the 58th WCD, Pope Francis issued a message titled: *Artificial intelligence and wisdom of the heart: for a fully human communication.*

The Pope called to reflect on the new developments in communication such as AI and make them instruments of communication rather than face the risk of turning everything into abstract calculations that reduce individuals to data, thinking to a mechanical process, experience to isolated cases, goodness to profit, and, above all, a denial of the uniqueness of each individual and his or her story.

He urged all to grow together in humanity and as humanity. We are challenged to make a qualitative leap in order to become a complex, multiethnic, pluralistic, multireligious and multicultural society.



The representation of reality in “big data”, however useful for the operation of machines, ultimately entails a substantial loss of the truth of things, hindering interpersonal communication and threatening our very humanity.

Information cannot be separated from living relationships. These involve the body and immersion in the real world; they involve correlating not only data but also human experiences; they require sensitivity to faces and facial expressions, compassion and sharing, the Pope has said his message.

Jubilee of Communication



DICASTERIUM PRO COMMUNICATIONE

The Dicastery for Communication has planned to hold a number of communication events as part of the Jubilee Year of Hope 2025. The Jubilee of the World of Communication “Pilgrims of Hope,” on **January 24-26**, and an international conference of formation and sharing on 27-29, 2025 will take place in the Vatican.



These days are aimed at the young communicators, bishop and secretaries and others who hold responsibility for commission in episcopal conferences and local churches. For registration and other details [click here](#).



**May 12 – 14
Kathmandu**

Animation Seminar for the Church in Nepal on Synodality and Communication

**June 4 – 10 Sibul,
Malaysia**

Meeting of the Communication Delegates of Malaysia, Singapore, Brunei

**June 4 – 10
Bangkok,
Thailand**

Pastoral Literature Translation Workshop for Delegates from 16 major Asian languages

**June 11 – 14
Sibu, Malaysia**

Meeting of the Communication Delegates of Malaysia, Singapore, Brunei

**June 27 – 29
Dhaka,
Bangladesh**

Animation Seminar for the Church in Bangladesh on Synodality and Communication

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