



**FABC  
OSC**

# COMMUNICATION INFO

*Newsletter of the FABC Office of  
Social Communication (OSC)*

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## Message from the Executive Secretary

### Communication Challenges and Opportunities for a Synodal Church

Effective communication offers numerous challenges for the church in Asia. As we come closer to the final session of Synod on Synodality, the church invites all communicators to explore ways to engage digital and new media at the service of its mission. Study on the mission of the church in the digital environment, it may be noted, is among the ten themes for which Pope Francis has established Study Groups. The Groups are mandated to follow up on issues emerging from the Synthesis Report of the Synodal on Synodality.



Church's communication ministry calls for in-depth understanding of how communication, especially the digital media, operate and influence people today. The media engagement of the church calls for careful planning and effective strategies. Church institutions must examine the relevance of existing structures, investments and activities and must be bold enough to abandon outdated activities and adopt new and relevant programs.

Digital media and artificial intelligence and other developments in the communication field are opportunities for the church to explore fresh avenue for communicating the good news of Christ. Episcopal conferences and dioceses must deepen their understanding of these media, develop effective pastoral plans, and also invest in formation of pastoral personnel capable of communicating the gospel in the new media environment.

In the current issue of the *FABC OSC Info*, we focus on some of the major communication events which provide

opportunities for our ongoing reflection and action. Let those who are entrusted with the responsibility of leading communication in episcopal conferences, dioceses and other church communication sectors, take up more earnestly the challenge of responding to the signs of the times under the guidance of the Holy Spirit, the principal protagonist of communication and mission.

*George Plathottam sdb  
Executive Secretary*

## Synod on Synodality Seminar held in Nepal

### Kathmandu, Nepal

A two-day seminar on Synod on Synodality in the context of Nepal was held at the Assumption Church, Kathmandu, May 13-14. About 50 participants consisting of pastors, religious and lay leaders from the Vicariate attended the event. The program was organised by the Vicariate of Nepal under the leadership of Bishop Paul Simick and animated by Fr George Plathottam sdb, Executive Secretary, FABC Office of Social Communication.



The Catholic Church in the Himalayan nation of Nepal is a minority with over 8500 Catholics in a population of 33

million. Majority of its people are Hindus and Buddhists. The missionary personnel in the Vicariate consists of a small number of local priests and religious, and several missionaries from India and other countries. They include members of some twenty religious congregations and apostolic institutes. The seminar included an overview of the synodal journey so far, the main principles of synodality as a new way of living communion, fostering participation and witnessing to the mission of Christ in the context of the country. Through input sessions and group sharing, the participants deepened their awareness of the richness of synodality which emphasises listening, servant leadership, inclusiveness and openness to the socio-cultural realities of the people, focus on family, youth and the dignity of the baptised.

The participants discussed and identified some of the major challenges for the Church in Nepal and its missionary personnel and resolved to form study teams and strengthen various commissions. Particular emphasis was placed on the pastoral care of the families, faith formation of children and youth, fostering of vocations, climate change, reaching out to the peripheries and rural areas of the country.



## Pastoral Literature Translation Workshop

### Bangkok, Thailand

The Federation of Asian Bishops' Conferences Office of Social Communication (FABC-OSC) conducted a Pastoral Literature Translation Workshop, June 4-10, 2024 in Bangkok, Thailand. The workshop brought together 44 translators from 16 languages across Asia. The program was aimed at enhancing their skills in translating synod documents, papal messages and other pastoral literature, fostering better communication within the diverse linguistic landscape of the region.

In an online inaugural message, Cardinal Sebastian Francis, Chairman, FABC-OSC, said a translator

becomes the connecting point between the author and the reader. He urged all participants to be 'missionary disciples' through their work.



The workshop was facilitated by a team from SIL Global and FABC OSC. The sessions covered a range of topics, including translation principles, methods, tools, and strategies, equipping participants with practical knowledge and skills.

Yesu Karunanidhi, a participant from India, expressed his enthusiasm, saying, "The workshop has opened me to the languages of the world and the world of languages." Caroline Maria Damayanti Nugroho from Indonesia appreciated the networking opportunities. She said, "I can connect to different people who are involved in the work of translation. The workshop has enabled me to network and collaborate." Mr. Chun Chien Wu from Taiwan remarked: "I have improved my confidence level in translation."

Nawalage Lovi Godfrey Cooray, a veteran translator-participant from Sri Lanka remarked: "This workshop reminded me that I am not alone in this entire endeavour of translation."



The event was organized by Fr. George Plathottam SDB, Executive Secretary, FABC Office of Social Communication. The workshop was well planned and executed. A resource book titled *Handbook for Translators* published by FABC OSC containing hands-on lessons and guidelines. The book, given to the

participants, served as the main resource book for the workshop. This workshop marked a significant milestone in enhancing the quality and reach of pastoral literature across Asia, contributing to more effective communication and understanding of church documents related to synod and other pastoral literature within the Church's diverse communities.



## Communication Delegates' Conference Malaysia – Singapore- Brunei

### Sibu, Sarawak, Malaysia

The Annual General Meeting and Formation of the Episcopal Regional Commission for Social Communication (ERCSC) of Malaysia, Singapore and Brunei was held, June 10–14, at Wisma Laudato Si Centre, Sibu, Malaysia. The meeting was attended by 35 delegates for all the dioceses of Malaysia and Brunei, Daughters of St. Paul, Catholic Publications – Herald, Cardinal Sebastian Francis, Chairman, FABC OSC and of ERCSC inaugurated the event. Fr George Plathottam sdb, Executive Secretary, FABC OSC participated in the event and presented sessions highlighting the communication perspective of the Church, Synodality and the FABC perspectives.

The participants were given an exposure to a Long House, a traditional indigenous cultural symbol of the people of Sarawak province of Malaysia. They spent an evening with the inmates, interacting and celebrating community living and sharing a fellowship meal with them.

## Synod Communication Seminar in Bangladesh

### Dhaka, Bangladesh

A three-day seminar on Synodality was held at the Catholic Bishops' Conference of Bangladesh (CBCB) Centre in Dhaka, June 27-29. The seminar was on the theme “Synod on Synodality in the Church of Bangladesh” which was animated by

Sister Nathalie Becquart, XM CJ, Under-Secretary for the Secretariat of the Synod, the Vatican, and Father George Plathottam, SDB, Executive Secretary, FABC Office of Social Communication. Archbishop Bejoy D’Curze of Dhaka, President of the Episcopal Conference, and a member of the Synod, spoke of important pastoral challenges for the church in the country. The seminar was the third national level event on Synodality organised by the FABC OSC in Asian countries, the previous ones being in Cambodia and Nepal.



Participants included Cardinal Patrick D’ Rozario, former Archbishop of Dhaka, Archbishop Bejoy N. D’Cruze and other bishops of Bangladesh and some 80 delegates, consisting of major superiors, priests and lay leaders from the eight dioceses of the country. The event was organised by the FABC OSC in collaboration with the Secretariat of the Catholic Bishops Conference of Bangladesh (CBCB) and the Office of Social Communication (OSC). The participants using the conversation in the Spirit method, deliberated on synodality as a new way of being church and the challenges and opportunities the church in Bangladesh faces in its pastoral ministry and evangelisation.



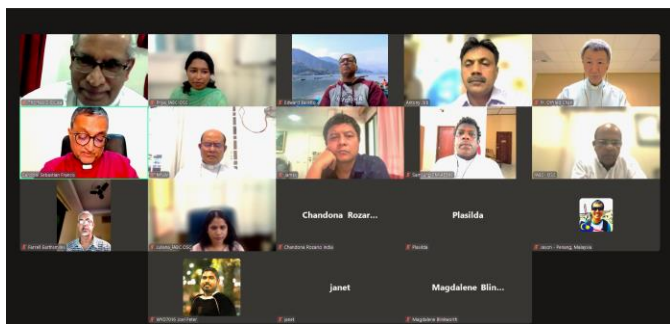
The participants listened to the story of the journey of the two disciples on the road to Emmaus during which Jesus walked with them and spoke to them. This passage, Fr George and Sr Nathalie said is an important scriptural reference point for the synodal journey of walking together with his disciples.

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## New Website for Synodality in Asia Launched

### Kolkata, India

A new website for promoting synodality in Asia, called [synodalityasia.net](http://synodalityasia.net), was launched by Cardinal Sebastian Francis, chairman FABC-OSC on August 9. Several social communication leaders in Asia participated in the online meeting. The new site, developed and maintained by the FABC Office of Social Communication serves as a one point stop for all synod-related information in the Asian context. The major features of the site include vernacular language translations of synod documents, commentaries and social media platforms to share Asian voices on synodality. The Cardinal hoped that the new website would be a means to assist the worldwide consultation of the people of God as desired by Pope Francis in the context of the vast Asian continent with its rich diversity.



The FABC-OSC has been working closely with the Synod secretariate in the Vatican and the Asian episcopal conferences and OSCs of Asian countries. The Office organised workshops to enable translation of synod documents in Asian languages. It has also set up a team of volunteers to promote synodality through social media. Archbishop Thomas D'Souza, member of the FABC OSC, speaking on the occasion hailed the website as a bridge connecting the Vatican and Asian churches by sharing information with the relevant audience.

Fr George Plathottam, the Executive Secretary of the FABC OSC, said the new website is expected to serve as a platform to host news, commentaries, translations, infographics and social media, bringing the synodal documents and resources closer to the people. The various translations of the documents into Asian languages reflect the diversity of the local churches in Asia, and foster online engagement during the upcoming and final session of the Synod in October 2024 and beyond.

Synod's Communication Manager Dr Thierry Bonaventura in his message highlighted the importance of the Synod Asia platform in fostering dialogue, participation, and connection. FABC OSC has urged everyone to visit the Synod Asia website and follow its social media channels to stay updated on Synod-related news, events, and resources with its focus on the Asian context.

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## Monthly Webinar Series on Synod on Synodality

FABC OSC 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 digital media volunteers, reporting stories and features, and creating a platform for listening to Asian voices on Synod. Steps were adopted to train and coordinate translation services of Synod and other pastoral documents in Asian languages.

The FABC-OSC's monthly webinar series on synod began in February and has gone on to its 7<sup>th</sup> edition in August. They are aimed at deepening understanding of the synod from Asian perspective. These sessions are open to all media persons associated with FABC-OSC, secretaries and delegates of the Office of Social Communication (OSC), members of the Advisory Committee for Synod Asia (ACSA), volunteers and collaborators of the Synod Communication Asia team, students of VAISCOM, and anyone else interested to know about synod on synodality in the context of Asia.



**Synod Animation 4** The fourth webinar held on May 18 was animated by Momoko Nishimura, on the theme: "Conversation in the Spirit, Experience of Synod.". The session was led by Momoko Nishimura, a consecrated woman from Japan and one of the president delegates of the Synod.

Nishimura shared her insights and experiences related to the Synod on Synodality, emphasising the importance of spiritual dialogue and communal discernment within the Church. The session aimed to deepen participants' understanding of synodality and foster active engagement in the ongoing Synod process. The webinar provided a platform for participants from across Asia to engage in meaningful conversations and reflect on the Synod's significance in the region.



**Synod Animation 5** The fifth webinar, held on June 22, was animated by Sr Lalita Thomas SJT of the Sisters of St Joseph of Tarbes and member of the Synod in Rome. The presentation and discussion centred on the theme of synodality and the identity and mission of women in the church. Sr Lalitha shared her insights in the light of the synod on the crucial roles that women play within the church and how their identities and mission are being shaped and acknowledged in the context of synodality. She shared her perspectives on the evolving landscape of women's participation in ecclesiastical structures and decision-making processes, highlighting the importance of inclusivity and collaborative dialogue in the Church's mission.



**Synod Animation 6** FABC-OSC held the sixth webinar in July 27, led by Fr. Clarence Devadass from the Archdiocese of Kuala Lumpur as the resource person. Fr. Devadass, a former Executive Secretary of

the FABC Office of Theology, shared his insights drawn from his participation in the Synod Assembly sessions of October 2023, as well as his involvement in the Asian Continental Assembly of the Synod. The webinar focused on the ongoing processes and key themes emerging from the Synod on Synodality.



**Synod Animation 7** Fr. Yesu Karunanidhi was the resource person for the seventh zoom webinar. Fr. Karunanidhi is Secretary of the Conference of Catholic Bishops of India (CCBI) Office for Bible, and national coordinator for the Synod for a Synodal Church and the national Facilitator for Jubilee 2025. The webinar focused on the theme "Whither Synodality in Asia: Acceptance, Indifference, and Resistance towards Being a Synodal Church in Asia," exploring the varying responses to synodality across the continent.

### Fr Mervyn Carapiet Memorial Session in Kolkata, West Bengal

Fr George Plathottam sdb, Executive Secretary, FABC Office of Social Communication presented a session on pastoral guidelines and Catholic perspectives in social media during a memorial seminar held in honour of Father Mervyn Carapiet at Archbishop's House, Calcutta,



25 August. He highlighted the importance of engaging social media for fostering solidarity and service, attentive listening and building bonds of relationships in the family, church and society. The session focused on the pastoral instruction, 'Fully Present' issued in 2023 by the Vatican's Dicastery for Communication, in which Fr Plathottam is a consultant. During the interactive Q/A session, the participants raised a number of issues related to the challenge of digital communication and artificial intelligence.

### Vaiscom Announces 100 Scholarships



FABC OSC's institute for formation of pastoral personnel in communication, Veritas Asia Institute of Social Communications (VAISCOM) has established a scholarship for candidates from economically needy local churches in Asia for pursuing the online diploma course titled "Communication for Pastoral Leadership (CPL)."

The course is recognised by Saint John's University (SJU), Bangkok, Thailand. On completion of the course, the candidates will get a Diploma in Pastoral Communication jointly issued by Vaiscom and SJU. The CPL is a comprehensive online program offered by VAISCOM. It consists of three courses- Basic, Advanced, and Integrated - catering to different levels of expertise and needs.

In order to make the course available and accessible to candidates in special need, Vaiscom is offering 100 scholarships to select candidates from countries and contexts that need financial support. Those who are interested may contact the Executive Secretaries of the Office of Social Communication in their respective countries. The forms can be downloaded from [www.vaiscom.org](http://www.vaiscom.org)



### Signis Asia Assembly, Japan

SIGNIS Asia plans to hold its continental assembly, September 23-27 in Tokyo, Japan. Signis is a global Catholic lay ecclesial movement for professionals in the communication media, including the press, radio, television, cinema, video, media education, the internet, and new technology.



The theme of the assembly is "Human Communication in the Digital World for a Culture of Peace."

Participants from across Asia will deliberate on a variety of issues intersecting technology, humanity, and peace. They will also study Pope Francis' message for the World Day of Communication on Artificial Intelligence.

### October 2024 Synod Assembly and Communication



Communion



Mission



Participation

#### Plans

The three-year old worldwide event of Synod on Synodality in the church is drawing to a close with the second session of the 16th Ordinary General Assembly of the Synod of Bishops, in Rome, from October 2-27, 2024.

The theme of the session is "For a Synodal Church: communion, participation, and mission".

Following studies and reflections on the Synthesis Report published in October 2023 and the Working Document for the 2024 session, the local churches have been

holding consultations in preparation for the final Assembly session.

A four-page letter from the Synod Secretariat underscored the importance of the experience lived by those who took part in the first session of the Synod in October 2023, recalling that “their account constitutes an inalienable part of the gift we have received, conveying the richness of an experience that no text can condense.”

The section on communication in the Secretariat of the Synod in collaboration with the FABC OSC is planning to share with the local churches in Asia news, information and insights from the October 2024 session. The plans include translations of important texts, press releases and newsletters in major Asian languages for the people of God.

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### Plenary Meeting of Dicastery for Communication

The Dicastery for Communication will hold its plenary meeting, October 28-31 in Rome. The theme of the Plenary is “*For a Constitutively Synodal Communication.*”

It will discuss the theme of digital communication and mission as proposed by Pope Francis for one of the ten study groups. FABC OSC Executive Secretary, Fr George Plathottam, who is a Consultant to the Dicastery, will participate in the plenary.

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### Asian Seminar on Indigenous Peoples of Asia

A seminar on Indigenous Peoples of Asia named Celebrating Synodality and Indigenous Living Traditions in the Asian Church, is being held at Kathmandu, Nepal November 10-16, 2024. The seminar christened Nepal Forum is the fruit of joint discussions and deliberations of a number of organisations and a few FABC Offices. It intends to study and deliberate on indigenous people, synodality and pastoral ministry. Some 50 participants from various Asian countries are expected to participate in the event. The FABC-OSC Executive Secretary is heading the committee to organise this event.

The Forum is expected to provide a common platform for Asian pastoral leaders to reflect on how the church can



further enculturate the indigenous cultures and spiritualities, by listening to their voices, and thus hear and respond to the voice of the Holy Spirit who is already active in indigenous communities. This initiative

is part of the journey of 'synodal conversion' which Pope Francis has urged the entire church to undertake.

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### Annual Bishops Meet 2024

The 29th Annual Bishops Meet on the theme – Communication for a Synodal Church in Asia, is being held at Episcopal Conference of Indonesia Centre, Jakarta, Indonesia, November 25-29, 2024. The annual event provides an opportunity for all the Chairman Bishops and Secretaries of the Office of Social Communication in the FABC member countries to come together to be animated, to discuss and share about the work of communication ministry at the service of the countries in Asia. The annual meetings end with a statement each year outlining the priorities in the area of communication ([fabcosc.org](http://fabcosc.org)).

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### Jubilee of Communication

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,” will be held in Rome on January 24-26, 2025, followed by an international conference of formation and sharing on 27-29.



DICASTERIUM  
PRO COMMUNICATIONE

The programs are open to young communicators, bishop and secretaries and those who hold responsibility for communication commissions in episcopal conferences

and local churches. The Jubilee of the World of Communications will bring together communication professionals and practitioners from around the world to share their experiences and reflect on the most important topics in today's communication context.

The Global Jubilee Conference will also bring together on January 22-23 religious sisters who are actively engaged in both traditional and digital media, fostering a rich exchange of ideas and experiences. The nuns are expected to discuss their roles in the evolving media environment. The event will also provide opportunities for religious sisters to engage with international experts, share insights from diverse communication backgrounds, and contribute to discussions on igniting hope through media.



The Christian community should be at the forefront in pointing out the need for a social covenant to support and foster hope, one that is inclusive and not ideological, working for a future filled with the laughter of babies and children, in order to fill the empty cradles in so many parts of our world.

Pope Francis  
from the Message for the Jubilee of Hope for the Year 2025

### Training on the Use of Canva

FABC OSC in collaboration with Vatican's Synod Secretariat is conducting a training session on the use of Canva for social media presentations, with special focus on communication of the Synod. The program will be on Saturday 14 September at 11.30 am (India), 2.00pm (Taipei).



The program is open to anyone who is interested, especially social media volunteers, Vaiscom students and those who are working with the Offices of Social Communication. As seats are limited, kindly register your name in the form below.

[Click here](#)