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## .: NEWS .:

### Philippines : Marikina - Solidarity and Faith Amidst the Flooding (01/10/2009)



Rain: it wasn't unexpected because the newspapers had announced that there would be an abundance of it over the weekend. At first, the FSPs of Marikina were not worried because the relentless downpour was not accompanied by high winds. But on Saturday, 26 Oct., the accumulating water turned muddy and its level began to rise rapidly-so rapidly that our sisters were unable to save any of the book center stock or their household belongings. Everything on the ground-floor level was ruined, including the entire contents of the book center and stock room. There was not even time to remove the Blessed Sacrament from the adjacent prayer room. When rescuers in rubber boats floated past the house, urging our sisters to climb aboard, they told the men to give priority to the people living in one-story houses.

At about 8:00 p.m. the rain finally stopped and at dawn the skies began to clear. Our sisters say the sight of the ruined contents of the book center was heart-rending, their grief compounded by the sight of the damaged wooden walls, fixtures and furnishings of not only the book center but all the buildings in their compound. Everything destroyed! But the shock, the loss and the pain were lightened by the spontaneous compassion of others, by the faith of the sisters, and by the humor of the people even in this dark moment.

### Canada : A Successful Book Launch (30/09/2009)



More than 150 people filled our Pauline book center of Montreal, Canada on 9 September to participate in the launch of the delegation's latest publication: *In Search of the Absolute: Meditation according to Five Religious Traditions*. The five authors, who belong to the Hindu, Buddhist, Jewish, Christian and Islamic Faiths, propose meditation paths that are different from one another but in many respects also similar and convergent.

The book is an attempt to respond to a frequent question of people today: "So then, who is God?" The authors do not describe God but instead offer five testimonies of faith that force readers to question themselves profoundly.

The fact that the book launch was so successful illustrates that there is much to be gained in learning about how different people search for God.

### Italy : Theme for World Communications Day 2010 (30/09/2009)



For World Communications Day 2010, Pope Benedict XVI has chosen the theme "The Priest and Pastoral Ministry in a Digital World: New Media at the Service of the Word."

A statement from the Pontifical Council for Social Communications said that in his message for the Day, which will be released on 24 January, the Feast of St. Francis de Sales, the patron of journalists, the Pope "wants to invite priests in a special way, during this Year for Priests and after the celebration of the 12th Ordinary General Assembly of the Synod of

Bishops, to recognize the enormous potential of the new media in their ministry at the service of the Word. He also wants to encourage them to face the challenges springing from the new digital culture."

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### **Madagascar : Toliara - National Catholic Youth Day (24/09/2009)**



*Young Catholics, fortified by the Holy Spirit, work for the unity and reconciliation of all people in Christ.* this is the theme of Madagascar's 6th National Catholic Youth Day, held in the city of Toliara from 2-6 September 2009.

About 15,000 people from the country's 22 dioceses gathered to celebrate the Day, which was not only an ecclesial event but also embraced the civil dimension because it provided the participants with an opportunity to contribute to healing the wounds of a country lacerated by powerful internal conflicts. In this context, the

young people joyfully witnessed to their faith through their profound communion with one another.

To respond to the need of young Catholics for deeper reflection and study, the Daughters of St. Paul enriched the Day by preparing two formative aids entitled, *The Holy Spirit and Jesus Way, Truth and Life*, as well as a booklet on the meaning of life. They also held book displays at the four main points of the meeting so as to give participants from dioceses without Catholic book centers the chance to stock up on good reading.

Toliara is located on the southern end of Madagascar. The next National Catholic Youth Day, scheduled for 2012, will be held in Antsiranana, on the northernmost tip of the island.

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### **Brazil : Course on the Various Ways to Teach Literature to Children (19/09/2009)**



The FSPs of Porto Alegre recently held their second course on the various ways to teach literature to children (the first course was held last year). The purpose of this formation course is to teach educators to use suitable methodologies to promote reading among school children and help them develop a taste for it.

Under the guidance of experts, the participants-teachers, librarians, and others with a passion for the subject-reflected on the importance of reading in the learning process. At the end of the course, the 365 participants received a certificate of attendance from Don Bosco School in Porto Alegre.

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### **Congo R. D. : Kisangani - FSP Book Center Threatened by Fire (17/09/2009)**



Once again our sisters of Kisangani have experienced the saving power of God.

On Thursday, 11 September, their entire neighborhood was turned upside down by a fire caused by a short circuit in the electrical wiring in a building in the area. The flames rapidly enveloped the surrounding buildings, including the central headquarters of the government tax office.

Our book center clients and people in its adjacent reading room fled outdoors in panic, but many also braved the smoke and heat to help our sisters and the staff try to save as much of the center's stock as possible. Thanks to their courage and generosity and the prompt intervention of a team of electricians and UN "Blue Berets," the fire was

contained before it could do extensive damage, even though a good number of homes and businesses were destroyed. As always, scavengers were on hand to take advantage of the opportunity for looting, but they were prevented from doing so by vigilant bystanders, including many priests and religious who had arrived on the scene to help the victims of the fire.

The fire was contained literally on the doorstep of our book center, which escaped unharmed, causing the local people to remark in awe that Christians have a very powerful God and must be under his protection. Our sisters too frankly say that once again God was with them and that their lives and property were saved through the intercession of St. Paul, who intervened as he did at Susa to save our sisters from another disastrous fire at the very beginning of our Pauline history. The FSPs of Kisangani are deeply grateful to not only the Apostle, but also to the Blessed Mother and Maestra Thecla, who certainly interceded from heaven not only on our behalf but on behalf of all the residents of the neighborhood

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## **..: BANCA DATI ..:**

### **Comunicazione - Signs of Hope and communion, M. Agnes Quaglini (29/09/2009)**

Often our times may appear to us to be “a season of confusion” in which men and woman seem disoriented, unsure, without hope, afraid to face the future. There are various elements in play here: an interior void, a loss of meaning for one’s life, the fragmentation of our existence, the multiplication of divisions and oppositions, the feeling of being alone, the inability to communicate. Still, in the depths of our hearts the insuppressible longing for hope remains.

As communicators, we cannot not face the human drama of our times without a fundamental attitude of faith in the Lord who guides our history. The Gospel which we announce is a Gospel of hope, a Gospel that opens us out to the contemplation of all the new things worked by God that are challenging people and societies at each moment and in every place. The Good News that we bring is that God has loved us first and will love us to the end. The vocation of the Communicator-apostle for this reason asks us to be a credible sign of love; our communities are called to be “schools of communion and of communication”; together we can go to meet men and women who are disheartened and without hope, bearers of the love of the God who comes to seek them out.

We must announce the Gospel of hope, we must celebrate it and serve it, knowing how to interpret and live in our times with its questions and troubles, awaiting a response of faith and hope that will give them new life. We need to develop this in a context of friendly rapport, of communication, cooperation, participation, of a missionary awareness, attention, service, of mutual forgiveness and good example. Every communicator who proclaims the Christian message needs to make every effort to be a credible evangelizer who sheds around oneself the light of joy, love, hope, so that many who see these good works will give glory to God (Cf. Mt 5:16), and will feel themselves to be conquered and infected with enthusiasm. We need to become leaven that transforms and gives life to each cultural expression from within. Thus we make the beauty of the Gospel shine from within our own lives, offering our courageous personal and communitarian witness of new life in Christ. We need never tire of denouncing every form of injustice, opening ourselves to universal horizons, and learning to interpret the ecumenical journey as “moving forward together towards Christ”.

In Christ we discover the astounding news which we are to announce to the world. His Gospel points out to every man and woman the hope for thier journey into the future. Without a vision of the future there can be no hope, just as without hope there can be no future. A communication that does not transmit this vision lives on the sidelines of a history that each day renews itself and that asks for new incarnations of those who would share actively in its changes. A communication of hope is for this reason conditioned by the events and the different cultures that move along the road of history. It is also subject to the transformations that arise within the People of God who are on their pilgrim journey toward the Kingdom.

Carlo Molari wrote that humanity “is living through one of those crucial passages in its adventure on this earth, that together constitute the numerous epochal turning-points in its long history. It is a process of gestation to new ways of living together, and it provokes turbulence and conflicts, sufferings and misunderstandings.” This involves all of nature, human life and politics, the diverse cultures, the life of the Church itself with all those crises of life and of faith that often “can no longer stand up to the developments of scientific culture and need to be reformulated”.

Let us ask ourselves: How can our communication open up a passage to hope and make it shine to the world? How can we help the people of our time, who for a long time have lived as though their hope was eclipsed or submerged under bewilderment, fears and insecurity? How can we make hope come again to the fore as a necessity for building our future, and for discovering new horizons of fraternity and peace for the present life and the life to come?

The hope we want to communicate perhaps cannot be described only by words, even those clothed in beauty, light and color, by images and sounds offered in the modern instruments for communication. Because hope is in the “not yet”, it is the place where something positive blossoms that stops us in joy and wonder; it is something so great and splendid, but also extremely fragile, that needs to be cared for and cultivated. It is a relational and therefore a communicative reality, but also one of life, and shines forth even in the pain and anguish that accompany our days.

Hope guides us to look within ourselves to the causes of the events that are the signs of our times, so that we can look beyond, because hope is like the prophecy that carves itself onto history; it is the unstoppable desire to move forward, it is the exodus and the longing for meeting, the scaling of the walls and blockades, the ability to see new things, to go yonder where “justice and peace shall kiss”(Ps. 85:11). It is the shout that reaches between God and all people that, as Martin Buber says, “does not hover over creation, but embraces it”.

Each one of us can and must become hope for others; so we need to cultivate it in our hearts as a precious treasure and communicate it with renewed imagination, with courageous creativity, with the intelligence of one who knows that we must be equal to the new challenges that face us and never stop studying, seeking out with tenacity and patience the contents and the most effective ways to influence the building of a more human and fraternal life. We will then become seeds of life that God continues to scatter in the furrows of this our poor world, offering reasons for hope to those who seem to have none left, without tiring in announcing the Good News of Jesus, sure as we are that happiness for us all rests essentially in loving as he taught us to, in growing together as we share the gifts each of us bears, and all this with the strength that comes from Him who is the Light of Life and the gift of Peace.

Best wishes from the Paoline *Online* editorial team

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