



INAUGURAL SESSION 03

Setting the tone for the Convention



PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

Dear Friends,

I am honoured to assume the role of President of the Indian Catholic Press Association (ICPA). As we embark on this new chapter, I want to express my heartfelt gratitude to each of you for your dedication to the common journalistic mission. ICPA is more than just an organisation – it's a family of passionate individuals and institutions committed to promoting quality journalism, upholding ethical standards, and serving the community and the country.

The enthusiasm and engagement displayed by our members during the Pune convention were truly inspiring, and we proudly acknowledge our association with the organisation. I would like to extend my sincere thanks to Fr Joe and his team for successfully organising the AGBM and National Convention at Inigo Sadan, Pune. The convention was a resounding success, thanks to the teamwork and hard work of the Pauline community and the former Executive Committee led by Mr Ignatius Gonsalves.

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IN MEMORIAM 08

Remembering our Pioneers



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Recognising contributions to the field of Media and the Press



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Infusing new blood into the association



I would like to express deepest gratitude for the exceptional leadership of Ignatius Gonsalves as President of the ICPA. His tenure has been instrumental in putting the association on a strong footing, rectifying anomalies, and documenting lapsed materials. His efforts have ensured a smooth transition and paved the way for ICPA's continued growth.

We are particularly grateful for obtaining government registration cleared for the ICPA and Edit aids, a significant achievement that will benefit the association and the members. His dedication, vision, and tireless efforts have made a lasting impact on our organisation. Pope Francis canonised Father Titus Brandsma, a Dutch Carmelite priest, in May 2022. He was more than a priest – a fearless journalist to the core. He was martyred in the infamous Nazi concentration camp at Dachau in Germany. He stood alone against a government that exterminated people by poison gas or shooting. Titus Brandsma would probably be the only journalist-saint in the family of the 'holy persons'. Like the prophets of the Bible who fearlessly took on the brutal and heartless kings of those days, Brandsma went hammer and tongs against the ruthless Hitler regime. The Dutch saint is a role model for catholic journalists and publishers. At a time when fascist tendencies are gnawing into the fourth pillar of the largest democracy in the world, journalism is at peril. The media that withstood the 'arm-twisting' tactics and pressures even during Emergency has been bending backwards of late. Instead of becoming voices of the oppressed, they have become mouthpieces of the government or exploiters of the people. Catholic communicators must get out of the safe zones of the newsrooms and overcome the temptation to sing paeans to the powers-that-be. Together, we can make the ICPA a vibrant and influential voice in the Indian Catholic and secular media landscape. Your active participation, support, and collaboration are crucial to the progress of our association. Thank you for entrusting me with the responsibility of leading the ICPA. I look forward to working closely with each of you and exploring new opportunities for growth and collaboration.

Fr. Suresh Mathew OFM CAP

President, Indian Catholic Press Association

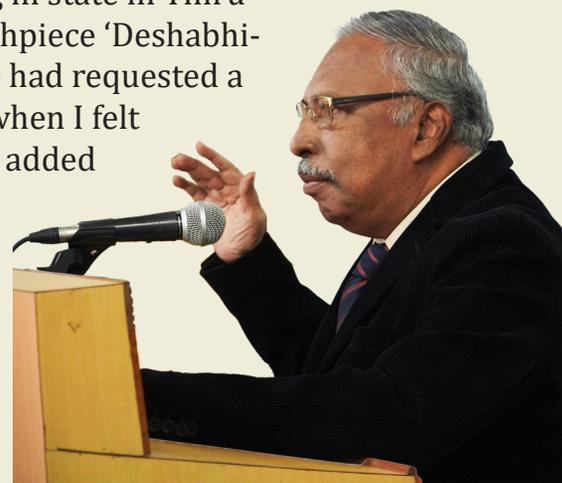
NATIONAL CONVENTION INAUGURAL SESSION

The 30th National Convention of Christian Journalists was held at Inigo Sadan, the PG Block of Jnana Deepa, Papal Seminary, Pune, on September 20. The theme of this year's convention was 'Print Journalism in the Digital Age: Staying Relevant and Navigating Challenges'. The event had an inaugural session followed by the actual panel discussion and the sharing of thoughts by various stakeholders coming from a wide spectrum of the Catholic media landscape.

PRESIDENT'S ADDRESS

Outgoing President Ignatius Gonsalves began by confessing that he too was skeptical about the fate of the print media until he witnessed something symbolic and poignant. He said while witnessing the body of former Kerala Chief Minister EK Nayanar lying in state in Thiruvananthapuram in 2004, there was a folded copy of the CPM mouthpiece 'Deshabhimani' on the chest of the late leader. "I came to understand that he had requested a copy of the CPM mouthpiece to be kept on his remains. That was when I felt that the future of the print was still hopeful," shared Ignatius, who added that "Adapting and changing is one thing and chanting doom is another." He also went back memory lane to the funeral of Pope John Paul II when a Book of Gospels was placed on the sealed coffin and its pages flipping in the blowing wind. He said it was a sign that the print is still alive.

Mr Ignatius then went on to say that everyone was living in a world of problems and most of them were relationship issues. They in turn resulted from lack of proper communication. "Communication is the lifeblood to build homes, communities and humanity," he said. He said that a lot of learning and unlearning was required today and went on to quote Alvin Toffler who predicted that the illiterate of the 21st century will be those who cannot learn, unlearn and re-learn.



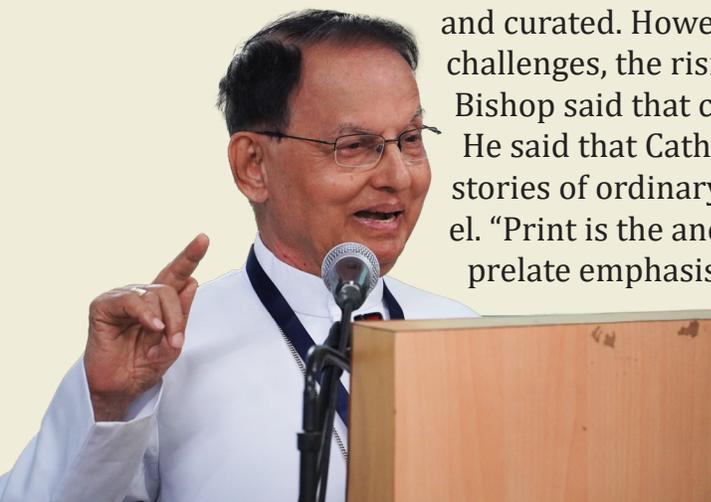
BISHOP HENRY D'SOUZA

Speaking at the inauguration of the National Convention, Bishop Henry D'Souza emphasised that the print media still holds a sacred and irreplaceable role. He said that the Church cannot isolate itself from this scenario. Ink in the paper stands for credibility, depth, permanence and values,

he stressed. He added that print was an act of contemplation as it is verified and curated. However, he warned that there was no question of denying challenges, the rising costs and the prominence of digital platforms. The Bishop said that challenges were opportunities to adapt and adopt.

He said that Catholic print media should focus on communities and tell stories of ordinary people and religious at the parish and diocesan level. "Print is the anchor while digital media is the outreach," he said. The prelate emphasised that print media will be a trusted witness in the age

of confusion and it will function as a beacon of credibility, beauty and hope.



FR DOLICHAN KOLLARETH, SJ

President of Jnana Deepa

Professors in the seminary are facing major hurdles when it comes to student assignments. How much ever the contextualisation takes places, students tend to use ChatGPT to finish the assignment, he rued. We are facing a a lot of challenges and so does print media, he added. The real challenge is how to rediscover depth in an age of distraction.

FR FRANCIS GONSALVES, SJ

Author & Former President of Jnana Deepa

Fr Francis spoke on how print is facing massive challenges in the digital age. He then went to dwell on the concepts of Christian, Context, Content, Cost, Creativity, and Criticality.

Regarding the Christian identity, Fr Francis said all are anointed ones and that is the greatest force that animates everyone. Regarding Context, he said that each one is in a specific place and print can indeed bring context. Regarding Content, he went to say how we are drowning in a whirlpool of data. "We 'byte' more than what we can."

Speaking on Cost, he said how digital media has reduced the cost of production and dissemination of information. However, there is still a segment of the population that prefers print. Coming to Creativity, Fr Francis said everyone has a propensity to be creative. Giving a personal touch to anything we create is a reward in itself, he explained.

About Criticality, he said the challenge was to champion the vulnerable. He also went on to explain how the Church suffered from the cancer of communalism as it is bickering over caste, rite, region and language. "We are duty bound to fight this cancer," he said adding that the printed materials once written stands written and can be retrieved any time.

PANEL DISCUSSION



Moderator

Fr Joby Mathew, SSP

Provincial of India, GB and Ireland

Fr Joby addressed the gathering saying that the event would feature the sharing of personal experiences and ways to navigate the challenges in the print landscape. He expressed conviction that the print would always be alive and active. Serious reading always involves hard copies of books and publications, he said, while expressing hope that there would be a lot of sharing from stakeholders about how to stay relevant apart from spelling out the challenges.

Introducing the Theme **Fr Suresh Mathew, OFMCap**

ICPA Secretary and Former Editor of 'Indian Currents'

Fr Suresh said that he began his career with the 'Indian Currents' magazine serving in various capacities and is now with Catholic Connect, the digital portal of the CBCI.

He explained that he has been conducting programmes for friars, priests, nuns and bishops and six years ago 30 percent of them read newspapers daily. He went on to say that just six weeks ago, he found only a handful do so. He then asked the young seminarians and nuns studying in JD if they knew who Fali Nariman, Shubhanshu Shukla, Banu Mushtaq were. Seeing the poor response, he asked how could future priests, bishops and nuns become leaders without proper reading. Fr Suresh then went on to explain how in India we are drowning in what he called constant update buzz. He said WhatsApp journalism, fast and fake, was deeply biased and emotional. Print cannot keep up with the viral velocity of the digital media, he said.



KEYNOTE ADDRESS

Carol Andrade—Veteran Journalist and Media Educator active journalism

Carol Andrade worked in the mainstream media organisations such as Times of India, Midday, Afternoon Dispatch and Courier. After leaving the mainstream media, she worked with St Paul's Institute of Communication Education in Bandra serving as Dean before stepping down in 2025. She began by saying that she has closely watched the changes that have been happening over the years as a media educator. Staying relevant is by adapting and changing she said. Carol referred to 'Fahrenheit 451' and '1984', which she said had apocalyptic significance. Coming to the year 1984, she said it was a landmark year because Maharashtra witnessed its first communal riots then followed by the assassination of Prime Minister Indira Gandhi. The year also witnessed the Bhopal Gas Tragedy. There was one tragedy after the other. Carol recalled

how Mrs Gandhi was shot at 9.30 am and the cable arrived confirming her death only at 1.37 pm. We did not know how much the earth was going to tremble,” she reminisced. “We had to wait a whole day to witness the whole impact of the Bhopal tragedy,” she added.

Referring to the digital media, she cited how the whole world came to know of Charlie Keri’s assassination a few minutes after it took place. Technology has made the world so small, said the veteran journalist. She said how she analysed the manner in which the mainstream papers handled the death of Kirk as they were no longer objective as they used to be. She warned of more deaths in print journalism. There will be enough to remind us that we need to adapt and change, she explained. She then explained the Indian media landscape saying that 450 million people still preferred print in the regional languages. However, generally speaking, 71 percent prefer online media and there are millions of people with more than one smart phones. The keynote speaker said that overall 40 percent decline was witnessed by print and ad revenue has shrunk by 25 percent. She added that legacy organisations such as TOI and The Hindu have digital platforms as well as part of a strategy change.

Carol told those assembled that there was room for hope as print media still has relevance because of its credibility and trust. The front page news of a newspaper still carries weight, she added. Print is also the only way in which in-depth stories and analysis pieces can reach the readers. Another comforting fact is the strong presence of print in the regional languages segment as the Net penetration is still patchy. The need of the hour is print with a strong online edition, she added. The keynote speaker also said that it was imperative to immerse journalism students in technology and train them to thrive across platforms. They need to be taught to write, prepare short videos and do fact checking in a seamless manner all the while holding on to accuracy and objectivity, said Carol.

THUS THEY SPOKE

Fr Sajith Cyriac SSP
Author and Media Educator

In his presentation, noted author and media educator Fr Sajith Cyriac SSP spoke on the synergy between Print and Digital Media. He said print is not disappearing. Instead, it is evolving. He pointed to challenges such as declining ad revenue and circulation with the changing tastes of the younger generation who prefer apps and portals rather than newspapers and publications. Fr Sajith said the future belonged to the hybrid model wherein print went hand in hand with the digital media.



Fr Biju Alappat
National Secretary, CBCI Office for Social Communications

Fr Biju Alappat began by saying that journalism’s mission remains the same: proclaim truth and be of service to the public. However, the tools change, he said. Print journalism must adapt holding on to depth, accuracy and values, he stressed. He said the screen has become the new medium so much that the TV news anchor window has dwindled in size with text occupying more space. He opined that the survival of print depends more on adaptability and less on paper, he said, adding that it will still continue influencing minds and hearts.





Fr Cedric Prakash SJ
Noted Human Rights Activist

Fr Cedric Prakash began his intervention by referring to a historical fact. He said it was the Jesuits who first brought the printing press to India in the 16th century. He then went on to drive home his point by allegorically citing the story of the Emperor's New Clothes from the Fairy Tales of Hans Christian Anderson. He said the emperor was arrogant, going on foreign trips using tax payers' money and there are dailies that celebrate the emperor with full page advertisements. "We need to ask ourselves are we researching and studying? Or is it just copy pasting? There has to be serious reading. Catholic publications should look at its content and shake free of clericalism, he stated.

Diana Martin
Amazon India

The next speaker was Diana Martin from Amazon India who shared her perspectives from the corporate angle. She said that organisations still feel that both the digital and print media matter a lot. Though there is no escape from the digital onslaught, print still matters. It still stands for credibility, fact checking and rigorous processes. The physical act of holding a newspaper or magazine in the morning is something unique, she explained. Adding that today's readers are attuned to consuming information in short capsules, Diana said that hybrid is the option for print to stay afloat. Special interest stories, investigative reports, analyses and QR codes can do the trick.



Renjith Leen
ICPA Joint Secretary and Senior Journalist

ICPA Joint Secretary and senior journalist Renjith Leen minced no words in stating some unpleasant truths. He said many Catholic publications run by congregations and dioceses were unprofessional to the core and they were run by priests and religious who had little idea about the job. He cited an instance how a priest in charge of a prominent Catholic news weekly in Kochi approached him with an offer to join the team but the salary offered was a pittance. He said it was an affront to his professional experience and calibre. Renjith also cited how those at the helm of certain Catholic media houses tend to take things for granted with the feeling that Providence would take care of everything. He called for an end to the intrusion of unprofessional cassocks and veils in Catholic print media and for more lay participation in the Spirit of Synodality.



Fr Anthony Charanghat
Former Editor of 'The Examiner'

Fr Anthony Charanghat said there was no need to fear the various media inventions that are taking place. He said journalists ought to be open to criticism and have to be truthful. He then went on to speak on synodality and the need to walk with each other. "Only when we sit together and iron out differences will we find the way," he said.

Fr Antony Pancras
Editor, 'The New Leader'

The editor of the Chennai-based New Leader for more than 16 years, Fr Antony Pancras elucidated on ways to tide over the crisis and stay afloat. He spoke on the need to understand the pulse of the leader, give due importance to their feedback. Fr Pancras also said that creativity and innovation had to go hand in hand and new ways to present stories have to be chosen. He spoke of the need to have reserve funds apart from revenue from subscriptions and advertisements for the financial health of Catholic publications.



Fr Gaurav Nair OFM Cap,
Editor, 'Indian Currents'

In spite of the bias of the print media, it still enjoyed trust of readers, said Fr Gaurav Nair OFM Cap. He then cited the Indian Readership Survey which said that 300 million people still read newspapers in the country. He said the digital world is here to stay as there are 4.9 billion social media users in the world and 73 percent of people get news online. Fr Gourav said the way forward was navigating the future using the hybrid model. Print has to be there for depth and digital for speed, he said. He also said ICPA ought to rethink its charism and include digital media as well.



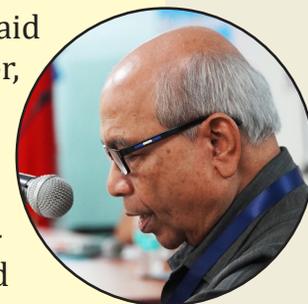
Fr Gratian Alvares
'Raknno'

Fr Gratian Alvares, who is associated with Konkani weekly 'Raknno' of the Diocese of Mangalore, said that print was still trusted more than digital media. The print offers analysis, reflections and permanence and there is no question of altering what has been already printed. He made it clear that print was not dying. Instead, it was just going through a phase of changes. Its future is all about embracing change, he said.



Lawrence Coelho Founder 'Secular Citizen'

Lawrence Coelho spoke on the changes he has witnessed over the years. He said newsprint used to cost Rs 15 a ream and today it has gone up to Rs 700. Earlier, costs were modest and print media could survive with loyal subscribers and readers. But that is not the case today, he elaborated. He said he has been witnessing changes ever since he started Secular Citizen 34 years ago at a time when computers were just making their presence felt in India. Today, you cannot survive without embracing both print and digital, he said. He also pointed to the need to have a national delivery network of Catholic publications by roping in more than 10,000 Christian institutions that dot the nation.



Audience Response

The moderator Fr Joby said that both print and digital media complement each other in the changing media landscape. He also observed that there is a lack of support from the Church when it comes to Catholic publications. Also, the habit of reading has to be inculcated, he said. Fr Alphonso Elanjikkal SSP pointed out the need of identifying target audience to bolster the print and he cited personal anecdotes to make his point. In response, Fr Charanghat pointed out how readership drastically dipped after the COVID pandemic.



Sumit Dhanraj from Indore exposed a grave issue wherein Catholic publications are not reaching subscribers by post. He said this issue has to be urgently looked into. Fr Joby said the postal department has revised its tariffs and this has affected the posting and distribution of publications.



During the National Convention, tributes were paid to the late Pope Francis, and ICPA members Fr Xavier Vadakkekkara and Fr PJ Joseph SJ. Fr Joe Eruppakkat, the Treasurer, read out the obituary of Pope Francis. He quoted profusely from a beautiful well-crafted obit of a Malaysian Hindu entrepreneur who hailed Pope Francis for his tireless advocacy of the marginalised and fearless proclamation of the Gospel in a fragmented world.

It was then the turn of Fr Gaurav Nair OFM Cap to read the obituary of Fr Xavier Vadakkekkara OFM Cap, who was a veteran journalist and former Editor of 'The Indian Currents' magazine as well as 'Assisi', a publication in Malayalam.

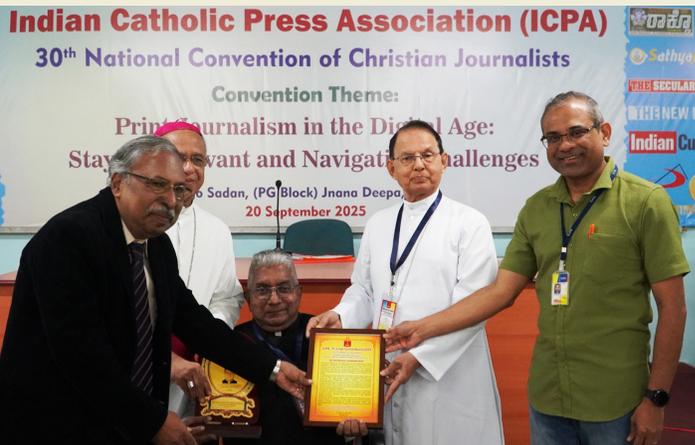
ICPA Vice-President Sr Tessa Jacob read out the obituary of Fr PJ Joseph SJ who be-



longed to the Kolkata Province of the Society of Jesus who served as the Director of Chitrabani, a reputed media training academy located in the West Bengal Capital.

KUDOS TO THE AWARD WINNERS

As usual, the National Convention was followed by the awards ceremony held at Inigo Sadan on Saturday, September 20.



FR ANTHONY CHARANGHAT *Louis Careno Award*

The Louis Careno Award for Excellence in Journalism went to Fr Anthony Charanghat, the former Editor of “*The Examiner*” in Mumbai. Fr Charanghat, who retired as Editor of *The Examiner* on May 31, 2024, after a remarkable 30-year tenure, is being recognised for his outstanding contributions to Catholic journalism. During his time at the helm of the 175-years-old publication, Fr Charanghat set high standards for writing

and transformed the magazine in terms of presentation, style, reach, and standards.

Fr Charanghat, ordained a priest for the Archdiocese of Bombay, had an association of almost 50 years with ‘*The Examiner*’. Besides editing ‘*The Examiner*’, Fr Charanghat served as director of the Catholic Communications Office and spokesperson for the archdiocese and he has also served under four cardinal archbishops. Accepting the award, Fr Charanghat told the audience that the ‘*Examiner*’ carried the Word of God and the Word cannot be destroyed. He expressed gratitude over ‘*The Examiner*’ being feted in its opal jubilee year.

The award is a joint venture of the Mumbai Province of the Salesians of Don Bosco and ICPA.

FR CHERUBIM TIRKEY *Swami Devanand Chakkungal Award*

This year’s Swami Devanand Chakkungal Award for Contributions to Hindi Literature went to Fr Cherubim Tirkey hailing from Chhota Nagpur. Fr. Cherubim Tirkey, a prominent figure in Hindi journalism and a passionate communicator among the tribal communities. He was a founder member of “*Tarang Bharti*,” a Hindi weekly which was started in May 2002 by the Regional Bishops Council of Bihar Jharkhand and Andaman. In 2006 he became

its Editor and worked in this capacity till 2008. A significant part of Fr. Tirkey's contribution to Hindi journalism is through “*Jharkhand Express*,” a Hindi fortnightly newspaper he founded and has been publishing regularly since 2009. It highlights and apprises the people of Jharkhand and particularly the tribals of the social, economic, educational and cultural issues which have direct bearing on their lives. Fr. Tirkey has also authored several books in Hindi including “*Marriage Traditions and Marital Problems among the Adivasis of Chhota Nagpur*,” “*Preparation for*



Marriage and Prenuptial Investigation,” “The Catechism of Catholic Church,” “Why Mixed Marriage is a Bad Idea,” “Revolutionary Ideas to save the Tribals,” and “Fifth Schedule.”

Fr Tirkey said he was dedicating the award to the readers of ‘Jharkhand Express’ and Bishop Vincent Barwa, who owns the weekly.

RESHEL BRETNY FERNANDES

J Maurus Award

Young author Reshel Bretny Fernandes from Mangaluru was bestowed with the J Maurus Award for Best Published Author. The award recognizes outstanding literary contributions that uphold human and social values, celebrating Reshel’s profound vision of the youth as the torchbearers of national transformation in her book *“Bharat @ 2047.”* It is a testament to the limitless potential of Bharat’s young generation and its resilient

spirit. Reshel, the first young author to explore this significant theme, takes readers on an inspiring journey toward “Viksit Bharat” by 2047, envisioning youth as the guiding force of change. Drawing insights from stalwarts such as Sardar Patel, Aurobindo Ghosh, Dattopant Thengadi, and Swami Vivekananda, she presents a vision marked by optimism, courage, and persistence.

Reshel’s passion for writing began in childhood and has blossomed into a remarkable literary journey. In addition to “Bharat @ 2047,” she has authored three other books: *“The Environment Bond of Coexistence,” “Light of Education Brightens World,”* and *“Essays on Collective Topics.”* With over 150 achievements and several prestigious national and international awards to her credit, her contributions have been acknowledged by eminent dignitaries including the President of India and the Prime Minister of India. She is currently pursuing her LL.B. at SDM Law College, Mangaluru. Accepting the award, she said it was a proud moment as a young author. Reshel said she focuses on the youth who are the assets of the community and society. Instituted by the Society of St Paul in collaboration with the Indian Catholic Press Association (ICPA), the J. Maurus

Award honours the legacy of Fr. J. Maurus, the Italian missionary whose writings, translated into several languages, continue to inspire readers worldwide with their emphasis on human values, social issues, and spiritual wisdom.

SR LISMY, CMC

Blessed Alberione Award

‘Camera Nun’ Sr Lismy CMC was given the Blessed Alberione Award for Excellence in Media. With a prolific portfolio that includes over 25 short films, 250 video albums, 150 documentaries, and 100+ interviews, Sr



Lismy has made a remarkable impact in the field of media ministry. Her works are deeply rooted in social issues, aiming to inspire moral living and foster a sense of responsibility among viewers. This recognition celebrates her exceptional contribution to raising awareness of social morality through impactful and thought-provoking cinematic storytelling.

One of her recent short films, “*Pidakozhi*,” which focuses on the journey of a young girl, delivers a powerful message about resilience, solidarity, and the transformative strength of community support. Inspired by real-life experiences in an orphanage, the film calls for empathy and collective action against violence.

Demonstrating both creativity and technical expertise, Sr Lismy successfully constructed a fully functional digital recording studio without the assistance of an engineer. She has also been instrumental in setting up media units in various religious congregations. Her digital platforms, including Nirmala Media TSR, the Camera Nun YouTube Channel, and related social media pages, have collectively garnered over 8.3 million views worldwide, delivering uplifting and inspirational content to audiences across all age groups.

This nun has established herself as a passionate advocate for social change through media. Her unique ability to blend artistry with advocacy has earned her accolades in esteemed circles. In 2025, she was invited to participate as a panellist at the Global Communication Gathering in Vatican City, where she was the only representative from India to receive this honour.

Sr Lismy said she was grateful to receive the award and lauded the efforts of the ICPA. She said the award belongs to the CMC congregation, Nirmala Media and students.

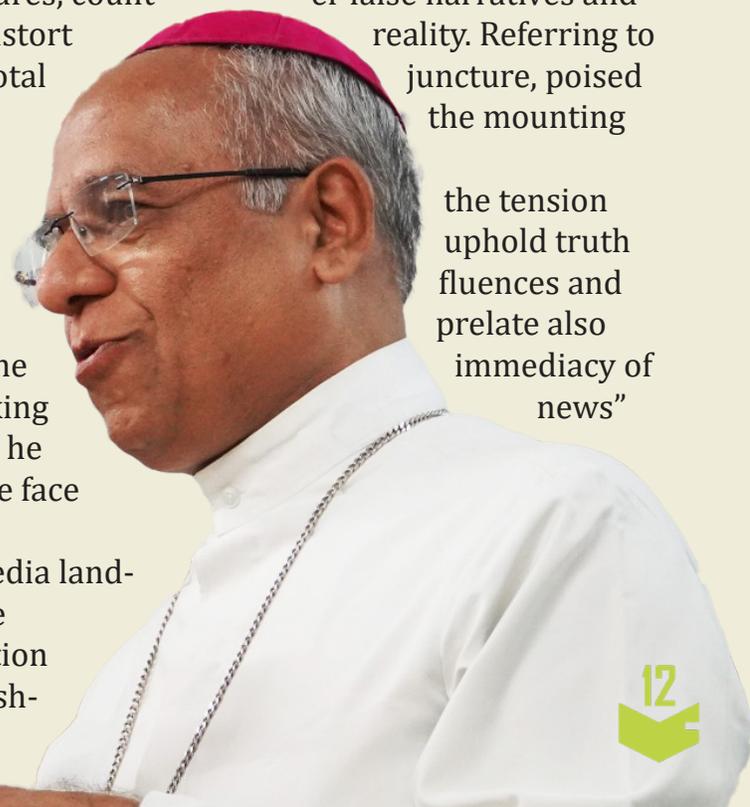
GO BEYOND CHURCH NARRATIVES

Bishop Malcolm Sequeira

Christian journalists in India are called to embody the voice of truth, amplify the cries of the voiceless and articulate the collective conscience with unyielding integrity and courage, said Bishop Malcolm Sequeira of Amravati while inaugurating the award ceremony of held on the sidelines of the National Convention on September 20 at Inigo Sadan in Pune. The prelate said that they must navigate the turbulent waters of political pressures, counter false narratives and stand resolute against hidden agendas that seek to distort reality. Referring to the print media in the country, he said it was at a pivotal juncture, poised between its sacred role as a prophetic witness and the mounting constraints on press freedom.

Bishop Malcolm said the print was grappling with the tension between financial exigencies and the imperative to uphold truth and between the weight of powerful political influences and the constitution guarantee of free expression. The prelate also pointed out how the print media is competing with the immediacy of mobile devices which vibrate ceaselessly with “breaking news” alerts. Citing the surge in digital media consumption, he said one needed to think if the print can endure in the face of this digital overflow.

He exhorted everyone to take note of the evolving media landscape that is witnessing, the threat to freedom of press, rise in sensationalism, changing readership, misrepresentation of minorities, financial strain, and external pressure. Bish-

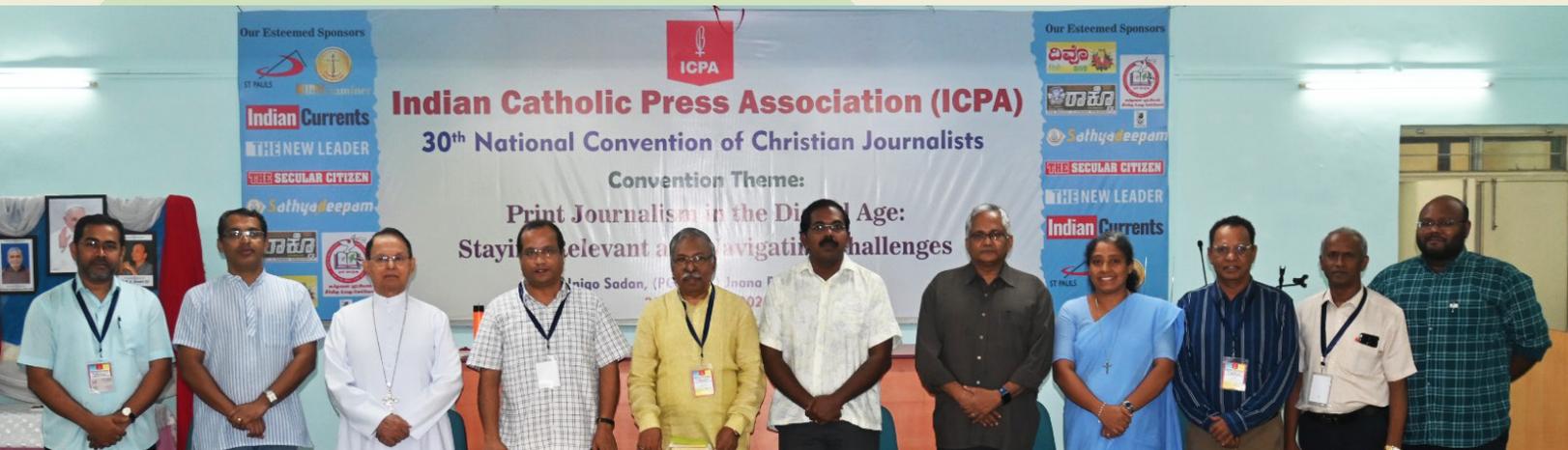


op Malcolm said in such a hostile scenario, Christian journalists have a sacred mandate to report with unwavering truth, fearless conviction and a profound commitment to justice. As the late Pope Francis urged, let us liberate communication from the shackles of prejudices, resentment, fanaticism and hatred, he said.

In spite of challenges, print journalism retains its unique and irreplaceable strengths, he reminded everyone. “Newspapers and magazines preserved as tangible records, become part of our shared history, offering future generations window into the truths of today.” While Christian journalists are called to be heralds of truth and beacons of hope, they also ought to broaden perspectives by moving beyond “churchy narratives” to engage with the broader tapestry of society, said Bishop Malcolm. He concluded by urging everyone to reject aggressive, divisive communication in favour of a dialogue that fosters peace and amplifies the voiceless, echoing the words of Pope Leo XIV.

CHANGE OF GUARD

During the AGBM held at Inigo Sadan in Pune on Sunday, September 21, elections were held to select new office bearers. Incumbent Secretary and former Editor of “Indian Currents” magazine Fr Suresh Mathew OFM CAP was unanimously elected President of the Association. He succeeded veteran journalist, author and media educator Ignatius Gonsalves who served for two terms. Vice-president Sister Tessy Jacob SSpS was elected unopposed as Secretary of the Association.



Treasurer Fr Joe Eruppukkat was named the Vice-President and the vacant position of Treasurer was filled by his confrere Fr Sajith Cyriac SSP, who has several books to his credit. Incumbent Joint-Secretary and senior journalist Renjith Leen was re-elected unopposed. Fr Gaurav Nair, Editor of “Indian Currents,” was named the Executive Committee member representing the North while Fr Dr S Rajasekaran, Editor-in-Chief of Chennai-based Tamil Catholic magazine “Nam Vazhvu,” was chosen as the representative from the South.

Western region EC Member Rajesh Christian was re-elected while Fr Antony Pancras, Editor and Publisher of “The New Leader” magazine in Chennai, was named the Institutional Member during the event. The election was conducted under the auspices of Returning Officer Lawrence Coelho, CEO of “The Secular Citizen,” a Catholic weekly from Mumbai.

HONOURING VENERABLE PUBLICATIONS

During the Award Ceremony, the ICPA honoured the legacy of some venerable Catholic publications. President Ignatius Gonsalves felicitated 'The Examiner' weekly of the Archdiocese of Bombay which is celebrating its 175th anniversary by presenting a memento to its former editor Fr Anthony Charanghat. He also feted 'Cherupushpam' magazine run by the OCD friars in Kerala as it is celebrating its centenary. Ignatius handed over a memento to Fr Antony Ittikunnath who represented the magazine named after St Teresa the Little Flower. Fr Ittikunnath expressed gratitude and joy on behalf of the OCD friars and said the honour was in recognition of the pioneering role played by the Carmelites in the media in Kerala.



Next in line was the Society of St Paul, which is celebrating the 95 anniversary of the beginning of its ministry in India. SSP Provincial Fr Joby Mathew accepted the memento on behalf of his congregation. He thanked the Indian Church and the people of the

country for the 90 fruitful years of the apostolate of the Pauline Fathers in the country. He also paid encomium to Fr J Maurus who initiated the print ministry in India and established two magazines apart from publishing more than 100 books in English.

The next to be honoured was Chennai-based Tamil Catholic publication 'Nam Vazhvu' that is celebrating its golden jubilee. Its Chief Editor Fr Rajasekaran received the memento from the ICPA president. On the occasion, he dedicated the honour to the Tamil Nadu Bishops' Conference and to the pioneers of the publication.



HONOURING THE AUTHORS

As usual, the National Convention also witnessed the authors among ICPA members being feted. There were five this year and they included:

- » **Fr Sajith Cyriac** who wrote a biography of Pope Leo XIV within days of his election and another book targeting teachers.
- » **Fr Joe Eruppakkat** who brought out an illustrated Children's Bible.
- » **Babychan Arthiyil** who published a book on the shooting and release of the hugely successful movie 'Face of the Faceless' and another one entitled 'Holy Spirit: Strength and Consolation'
- » **Ladislaus D'Souza** who authored 'Bold and Bald Trio and 50 Other Stories'
- » **Fr Irudhaya Jothy** who brought out a book 'Apostle of the Sunderbans' on missionary priest Fr Ante Gabric.
- » **Marshal Frank** who wrote 'Amavasiyile Nurunguvettam' (The Faint Light on a No-moon Night).



THEME BOOK RELEASE

The Panel Discussion was followed by the release of the theme book for the year 2025. Its editor Fr Sajith Cyriac gave a brief explanation about the book that contains five sections. He paid kudos to the hard work of all who strove to bring out the book. He lauded Sr Tessa Jacob who coordinated the collection of articles and Mr Ladislaus D'Souza for editorial assistance. Fr Sajith made it clear that this time, there was a record number of contributions that has made the volume much thicker.

Bishop Malcolm Sequeira released the theme book by presenting a copy to the dignitaries on the dais. Fr Sajith, the Editor, was honoured with a copy of 'The Rainbow', a festschrift honouring President Ignatius Gonsalves brought out by his former students.



STATEMENT OF THE ICPA 30TH NATIONAL CONVENTION OF CHRISTIAN JOURNALISTS

We, the members of the Indian Catholic Press Association (ICPA) met for the 30th National Convention of Christian Journalists and the Annual General Body Meeting (AGBM) on 19 - 21 September, 2025, at the Inigo Sadan (PG Block), Jnana Deepa, Pune.

The theme of our Convention was 'Print Journalism in the Digital Age: Staying Relevant and Navigating Challenges.' The theme was not only challenging and relevant but also provided us with directions to respond to the fast - changing and complex reality we live in today.

During our Convention, we were privileged to listen to a wide - range of excellent speakers. Each of them, given their wealth of experience and expertise, dealt with the theme through various dimensions. The insightful and inspirational presentations, besides giving us much food- for-thought, have also challenged us to act now, with urgency.

The ordinary citizens of India are faced with many problems. These include growing communalism and corruption and the frequent assaults on the democratic and pluralistic fabric of the country. Truth and justice have taken a backseat. To add to the woes of the common person, most of the media, has abdicated its role and responsibility as the fourth pillar of democracy. It is not without reason that in the 2025 edition of World Press Freedom Index, India still languishes at an abysmal 151 out of 180 countries. This is a clarion call for all of us to do all we can to defend and promote the Constitutional Freedom of Speech and Expression.

Print journalism today is alive and vibrant! We are convinced that it must continue to play its unique and indispensable role. We do not deny the importance of digital media today; as those engaged with the print media, we need to find creative ways and means to complement our efforts, in our highly digitalised world. To stay relevant and face the challenges of today, we are also called to seriously introspect on the content of our publications, check if they respond to the signs of the times and to see how best we can conscientise our readers, in more effective ways.

As an integral part of our Convention, we also released a meaningful and contextual book on the theme, with excellent contributions from media experts and journalists. This book could serve as a handbook to all those who seek the need for and importance of print media in today's digital world.

We are nearing the end of the Church's Jubilee Year, in which we are invited to be pilgrims of hope. At this convention, we remembered with gratitude our beloved Pope Francis who was called to his eternal reward in April this year. He was a communicator par excellence who left no stone unturned to make communications more contextual today. Significantly one of his last messages whilst on this earth, was for the 59th World Day of Social Communications which we observed on 1 June 2025. In that message he emphatically stated, *"Always spread hope, even when it is difficult, even when it costs, even when it seems not to bear fruit. Try to promote a communication that can heal the wounds of our humanity. Make room for the heartfelt trust that, like a slender but resistant flower, does not succumb to the ravages of life, but blossoms and grows in the most unexpected places. It is there in the hope of those mothers who daily pray to see their children return from the trenches of a conflict, and in the hope of those fathers who emigrate at great risk in search of a better future. It is also there in the hope of those children who somehow manage to play, laugh, and believe in life even amid the debris of war and in the impoverished streets of favelas."*

Finally, we the members of the ICPA pledge to do all we can to stay relevant and navigate the challenges of today. We do so, by demonstrating the prophetic courage to be heralds of truth and beacons of hope, communicating with our heart, the Gospel values of compassion, justice, and peace to all.

21 September 2025

Pune

HEARTY WELCOME TO NEW MEMBERS

During the AGBM held in Pune on September 20, five new members were welcomed into the fold of ICPA. The first to be inducted was Deborah Albuquerque, the wife of member Olav Albuquerque. Hailing from Mumbai, she has worked in the 'Free Press Journal' and has published articles in 'The Examiner' and 'Teenager Today'. She was followed by Sr Molly Fernandes belonging to the Sisters of the Holy Family of Nazareth Congregation in Goa. She contributes articles to several English as well as Konkani publications, including the O Herald daily, and has published two books. Then it was the turn of Mr Praveen from Indore who works with Radio Veritas Asia in the Hindi section. He also contributes articles for local dailies and Catholic publications. He was followed by Sr Soniya Chacko from Kerala who is passionate about writing as well as photography and video production. This nun who belongs to the Daughters of Charity congregation has more than 300 videos to her credit and is an active blogger in English and Malayalam. The last person to be inducted was Sr Udaya Kallukaran of the Kerala-based Holy Family Congregation. The historian and archivist of her congregation, she is an avid videographer with more than 2000 videos on diverse subjects.



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2025-2028

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