Unity and Love

The Roman Catholic Archdiocese of Calcutta
Pastoral Plan for Social Communications
2015-2018

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A pastoral plan serves as a roadmap for our journey as a Catholic Christian community, identifying key priorities and goals on the path ahead. It is rooted in prayerful reflection upon the Bible and our living tradition of faith. It also involves a thorough, accurate and honest assessment of our current pastoral situation, both the challenges and the opportunities before us.

Although our faith does not change, the circumstances in which we live our faith do change, constantly. For that reason, a pastoral plan will always be a work in progress, since we regularly need to take a look at where we are, and where at the moment we should particularly direct our energies.

The Gospel encourages us to be faithful stewards of all that has been entrusted to us, and so, we should ask ourselves how we are currently sharing our time, talent and treasure, in order to serve others and to give thanks to God. In the parable of the talents, each servant is called to give an account of his stewardship; each of us is responsible for fruitfully using the gifts we have received from God. A pastoral plan should help us to do that better, both individually and as an archdiocesan community.

Stepping back and considering what our key priorities as an archdiocese should be at this time, we can more effectively work together, and focus our efforts, and have a way of assessing how we are doing. This is what a pastoral plan allows us to do; it also helps us to discover the tools we need to fulfil our mission, and to use our resources more wisely. "

"In many and various ways God spoke of old to our fathers by the prophets; but in these last days He has spoken to us by a Son, whom He appointed the heir of all things, through whom also He created the world."

- HEBREWS 1:1-2

Prayer of Catholic Communicators

God our loving Father, in the days of old You communicated to our ancestors through the prophets, and in the fullness of time You spoke to us through Your son Jesus. He taught us the mysteries of the Kingdom through simple stories of life. In our own times we are challenged to make real Your life-giving Word through numerous means of social communication. Father, help us to understand and communicate the power of your Word, enable us to use the modern means You inspire to communicate Your love, so that all might experience the fullness of life in Jesus, the Word Eternal. *Amen.*

Introduction

Communication and community lie at the heart of the Church's mission because God's self revelation draws every believer into the faith community. After the family, people experience the Church first in the local parish, where bonds of charity begin and where the worshipping community takes shape. This occurs through communication: the sharing of faith, the preaching of the Word, the celebration of the sacraments, service to the poor and marginalised, and the union of the larger body. All church communication, even her technologically or mass-mediated communication should flow from the foundation of God's self-revelation.

Human communication in the Church mirrors the communication of the Trinity, the Divine community, in whom we discover the fullness of communion and communication. The Church, formed by the Word of God, nourished by that Word, and given life by the Spirit, seeks through her communication to make real the desire for communion, the formation of community, the proclamation of God's word, and the voice of God's little ones. She recognises that modern society increasingly defines itself by communication - newspapers, magazines, books, telecommunications, radio, television, film, electronic mail, digital media and, mindful of Christ's command that she preach the Gospel to the ends of the earth (Mt 28:19), asks once again how she can image and echo God in this world.

In her formal reflections, the Church has long acknowledged that communication media have a role in fostering community and in spreading the Gospel. The media of social communication can contribute a great deal to human unity (*Communio et Progressio*, 9). The Church would feel guilty before the Lord if she did not utilise these powerful means that human skill is daily rendering more perfect. It is through them that she proclaims 'from the housetops' the message of which she is the depositary (*Evangelii Nuntiandi*, 45).

Since the very evangelisation of modern culture depends to a great extent on the influence of the media, it is not enough to use the media simply to spread the Christian message and the Church's authentic teaching. It is also necessary to integrate that message into the new culture created by modern communications. This is a complex issue, since the new culture originates not just from whatever content is eventually expressed, but from the very fact that there exist new ways of communicating, with new languages, new techniques, and a new psychology (*Redemptoris Missio*, 37).

It is an undeniable fact that all over the world the influence of new media and the consequent change has, as its epicentre, the urban sphere, particularly metropolitan cities. In India – as in most nations of the modern world, the powers that influence and control life from families to politics, from the personal to the public, reside in the metros. At the heart of our archdiocese is the metropolis of Kolkata with its authority and culture, moulding the lives not only of the millions who live in the city but also those in the far-flung villages of the state of West Bengal.

Mandated by the local Church to take up the challenges and explore the opportunities offered by Social Communication for evangelisation, and for the good of all; and in responding to *Aetatis Novae*, we humbly endeavour to provide an overall plan for the use of the mass media, both traditional and new media and new and evolving technologies which may be appropriately utilised. We believe it is an ability, and a responsibility, of the Church to use these media to promote community life, spiritual growth and proclamation of the Gospel, contributing to vibrant Church participation in the life of our nation and the welfare of all humanity.

The Pastoral Plan for Social Communications

The Vatican II documents *Inter Mirifica* (Decree on the Means of Social Communication - 1963), *Communio et Progressio* (1971) and *Aetatis Novae* (1992), make it abundantly clear that the Church gives utmost importance to Social Communications, i.e. all types and ways of communicating in human society - from traditional forms like storytelling, creative art, drama, dance and music to traditional print and electronic media, and new media including the web, blogs and social networks.

We have endeavoured to make this Pastoral Plan:
• God-centred and Asian in values. (*Ecclesia in Asia*, 29)
• Promote the common good. (*Communio et Progressio*, n. 16)
• Encourage people-oriented communication. (FABC BM, '97)
• Facilitate communication that empowers people.
• Integrate the Good News into the new media culture. (*Redemptoris Missio*, n. 37, *Ecclesia in Asia*, n. 48)

The Pastoral Plan for Social Communications, under the **Social Communications Cell** of the Archdiocese, is to be carried forward and implemented by the **Archdiocesan Social Communications Commission (ASCC)**, a component of the Pastoral Plan of the Archdiocese of Calcutta.

The Commission is composed of nominated Catholic Media professionals of the archdiocese and other competent lay persons, religious and clergy.

Church documents dealing with communications and guidelines by the Catholic Bishops Conference of India (CBCI) have already specified a number of principles that should guide Church efforts in communication. In the creation of this document, the Pastoral Plan for Social Communications, the ASCC has followed these **Principles for Church Communication**:

• The model for all church communication arises from the communion of God in the Trinity and urges us to foster human communion (*Communio et Progressio*, 8).
• A public dialogue of faith characterises church communication (In the Sight of All, 2).
• Church communication should support dialogue wherever possible (*Communio et Progressio*, 115_125).
• Communication is connected to the nature of the church and to human community (*Aetatis Novae*, 6; *Communio et Progressio*, 92).
• The Church must tell the truth promptly and is accountable for doing so (*Communio et Progressio*, 123).
• The Church should be present in all areas of the communication world (*Aetatis Novae*, 17, *Inter Mirifica*, 3) and to all people (*Communio et Progressio*, 24).
• The Church should foster multiple but complementary approaches to communication through sharing resources, collaborating with others (both within the Church and inter-religiously). This cooperation should characterise church work in communication (*Communio et Progressio*, 84_99).
• The Church should take the side of the oppressed and marginalised (*Aetatis Novae*, 13, *Communio et Progressio*, 92_95).
• Communication must be judged by its contribution to the common good (*Communio et Progressio*, 16).

Vision and Mission for Social Communications in the Archdiocese

Vision
Communication does not lie on the periphery of the Church; rather, communication must lie at the heart of the church community [*Aetatis Novae*, 6]. *Building a communicating community of all peoples, in the footsteps of Jesus Christ, the Master Communicator* is our Vision for Social Communications.

Mission
Clear Mission objectives are required to realise our Vision of Social Communication. These objectives are:

- **To proclaim the Good News** through the means of Social Communications.
- **To train our Priests, Religious and lay persons,** especially those working for the Church, in Social Communications.
- **To promote and put in place a culture of interactive communication** at all levels of our Catholic Christian community.
- **To cultivate media and public relations competence** within and outside the church.
- **To advance advocacy and create public opinion**, especially to uphold dignity and human rights of all.
- **To promote universal media education.**
- **To publish/produce need-based media programmes** for the archdiocese.
- **To promote cultural media**, such as folk arts, classical arts, drama, dance, music, etc.
- **To provide transparent and effective communication among all the ministries** in the archdiocese by mobilsing and allocating human and financial resources of the archdiocese.

Action Plan

- **To proclaim the Good News by:**

- Making the Archdiocesan website the hub of communications for our Catholic Christian community as well as a resource for all other people, many of whom come with great burdens and looking for answers. Interactivity and responsiveness, together with informative, appealing and up-to-date news coverage and other content is the goal. Integration with the parish Social Communications/Media Teams must be implemented. Current technologies and social media must find a place, as this is where our communities are most active online.

- Interacting and assisting Catholic media organisations, communication institutes/centres (Nitika, Chitrabani, The Herald, OMO/Website, etc.) in the archdiocese for a collaborative and united face with more relevant service to the archdiocesan community and society.

- Identifying and motivating appropriately talented church personnel and training them for communications service: their active participation in the new opportunities created by the social media and information technology makes it easy to share the Good News in an increasingly digital world.

- Acting as a watchdog on sectarian propaganda and other media issues, to defend and protect the integrity of the Church with suitable responses, and good media documentation.

- **To train our Priests, Religious and lay persons in social communications by:**

- Identifying and appointing talented and professional PROs/spokespersons who can network at different levels – deanery/diocesan/regional/national.

- Promoting and regularly organising programmes in communications for all leaders of the community - bishops, priests, religious and lay leaders so that they can effectively discharge their duties for evangelisation and defence of the just interests of the society and the Church.

- Encouraging adequate media formation of seminarians and their formators, through introduction of a proper media course in the seminary curriculum, including communicative language skills.

- Assisting other church commissions e.g. Education, Health and Youth in providing communications components in their respective services.

- Developing people skills in our church personnel to be responsive, polite and helpful while interacting with the community and general public.

- **To promote and put in place a culture of interactive communication by:**

- Sensitising church personnel to promote a culture of communication through interaction, consultation, participation and collective action.

- Making the church periodicals, websites, newsletters, and bulletin boards channels of interactive (two-way) communication.

- Training clergy, seminarians, religious and other church personnel in communication skills and media education (e.g. on-camera personality and interaction skills with the Media)

- Evolving an action plan to manage communications transparently in the event of a crisis (management, aftermath and recovery).

- Periodic upgrading of communication technology and equipment to average current standards for better communication network in the archdiocese. Make use of modern methods of communication, such as instant messaging and VOIP/telepresence services.

- **To cultivate media and public relations competence by**:

- Networking with local Christian media professionals and other like-minded persons/institutions and the secular media inviting them for periodic dialogue and friendly interaction.

- Training of lay persons in each parish to form Parish Media Teams. These local media persons besides running parish papers, social networks or blogs can be a resource pool of archdiocesan media talent.

- Identification and encouragement of creative and talented young Catholics to pursue a career in the media, and directing/assisting them to join short and long term training at institutes like NISCORT in Delhi, Xavier Institute of Communications in Mumbai, Santhome in Chennai, Notre Dame in Patna, St. Xavier's College and Nitika in Kolkata.

- Initiating media awards for outstanding Catholic/Christian media persons and recognising talents in various other fields during one's lifetime, thereby encouraging others, too.

• **To advance advocacy and create public opinion by**:

- Networking with members of other churches, NGOs, Media professionals of other faiths to promote values and human rights through the media.

- Making media productions/publishing articles on human rights and human dignity.

- Sensitising media professionals to human rights.

- Defending the rights of media professionals and others in the freedom of expression.

- Establishing well-trained anti "troll" groups on social news networks and websites to address hate campaigns and propaganda.

- Having a Documentation Cell for Media advocacy in the archdiocese.

• **To promote universal media education by:**

- Imparting media education, through a Facilitator's Team, which is concerned with helping media consumers develop an informed and critical understanding of the nature of the mass media, new media, the techniques used and their impact.

- Organising Media festivals and training camps in the archdiocese.

- Discerning the Fruits of the Digital Age and recognising the technologies which can improve our lives – we use technology more wisely when we recognise how it affects our lives.

- Creating a Social Communications Appreciation syllabus that can be used at Sunday school across the archdiocese.

• **To publish/produce need-based media programmes by**:

- Producing programmes (recorded A/V and live events) for proclamation, faith formation and social/human development and webcasting an Internet TV channel on the archdiocese website.

- Improving Catholic periodicals, publications (e.g. The Herald, particularly the Bengali edition) and media productions by bringing in more and professional talent, making them truly communicative; besides being effectively managed and financially sustainable.

- Looking out for opportunities to participate in the local radio/TV (Satellite Channel/Cable Networks) programmes.

- Encouraging local talent to participate in the local media facilities/opportunities and produce needed content.

- Periodically conducting feedback/surveys to identify people's communication needs and to assess the effectiveness of the Church's communications work, leading to improvement and implementation of relevant ideas.

- **To promote cultural media by**:

    - Encouraging and giving a platform to alternative/traditional media such as folk arts, puppetry, dance, drama, music, *kirtan, jaatra*, street-plays, Creation panoramas, Christmas cribs, Passion scenes etc. to reach out to all in a non-threatening manner, which educates and informs. Popular culture can also be used to spread the Good News.

    - Celebrating 'World Communications Day' annually, with a meaningful liturgy and relevant programmes such as contests, seminars, film festivals, media workshops, etc. in all parishes and to translate and disseminate through the secular media the Pope's WCD message to all.

- **To provide transparent and effective communication among all the ministries by:**

- Properly maintaining all official records and assets of the Social Communication Cell which should be and handed over to the new incumbents when the new team of officers takes over. Copies of the handover must be sent to appropriate regional/national Commission Chairmen for information, continuity and transparency.

- Preparing an annual report of the activities of the Social Communication Cell, including the ASCC, and send at the prescribed time to the CBCI Commission for Social Communications, each year. Diocesan reports are used in preparing a national consolidated report by the CBCI.

Structure of Social Communications Cell – Calcutta Archdiocese

The Social Communication Cell of Calcutta Archdiocese shall be constituted by the Archbishop of Calcutta in his capacity as Chairman. He would issue the required formal letters of appointment to Social Communications Secretary and other officials.

The Social Communications Secretary will present to the Archbishop a list of possible members and facilitate the process of constituting the Archdiocesan Social Communications Commission (ASCC) under the Pastoral Plan for Calcutta Archdiocese.

Members of the ASCC shall meet regularly to take forward and coordinate the activities of the Commission, and work to implement the Action Plan laid out in this document.

Acceptance of the Plan and Pledge of Implementation

We accept and commit ourselves to implement this **Pastoral Plan for Social Communications in the Archdiocese of Calcutta**, with resolute confidence and dedication.

The plan will hold good for a period of three years.

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+Thomas D'Souza
Archbishop of Calcutta
Chairman, Social Communications Cell

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Secretary / Director – Social Communications Cell / ASCC
Archdiocese of Calcutta

A brief History of Social Communication in the Church

The first Meeting of experts, which was held in the Pontifical Academy of Sciences in the Vatican, in April 1953, emphasised the need for in-depth study in the educational domain of the problems arising from the development of all audiovisual media and their growing effect on the spiritual life of the world and the ministry of the Church, and above all warned of the impact that television would soon have on society.

The statutes of Pontifical Commission for the Cinema, Radio and Television were approved by the Pontiff on December 31, 1954 and published in the *Acta Apostolicae Sedis*. The College of Experts was considerably enlarged and divided into three sections: films, radio, and television, and working groups were set up to prepare the material required for Pope Pius XII's address on The Ideal Film, delivered to meetings on both June 21 and October 28, 1955, and for his encyclical letter *Miranda Prorsus* on the motion picture, radio and television, published on September 8, 1957.

When John XXIII acceded to the Papacy that the new Pope had no hesitation in dedicating to it one of his first solemn documents, the *motuproprio Boni Pastoris*, with which the Pontifical Commission was aggregated to the Secretariat of State and made a permanent Office of the Holy See. This took place on February 22, 1959. Then some months later, on 16 December of the same year, the Pope instituted and approved the statutes of the Vatican Film Library, entrusting its management to the Pontifical Commission.

It was no surprise, therefore, when on June 5, 1960 the *motuproprio Superno Dei Nutu* established within the Pontifical Commission a Preparatory Secretariat for the Press and the Entertainment World as one of the twelve preparatory organs for the Second Vatican Council. It was the above Preparatory Secretariat's task during the two years of its existence to identify the problems raised by the press and the audiovisual media and, while recognising the individual character of each sector, to assemble all this material into a single study which would yet leave room for future developments in which the different instruments of social communication, as they were called from then on, would find their proper place and receive due consideration within the Church's renewed ministry. Even though some may consider that *Inter Mirifica*, the Council Decree promulgated three years later on 4 December 1963, did not go far enough, they must objectively acknowledge the significance of the fact that Vatican II dedicated special and far-seeing attention to this sector.

Pope Paul VI's accession to the Papacy led to the constitution of the Council Committee for the Press under the direction of the President of the Pontifical Commission, which set to work, with notable success, to improve relations immediately between the Council and the world of news and journalism.

Without waiting for the end of the Council, His Holiness Paul VI acted on the Council Fathers' vote and by his *motuproprio In fructibus multis* of April 2, 1964 transformed the existing Commission into the Pontifical Commission for Social Communications, responsible for dealing with all the problems raised by the cinema, radio, television, and the daily and periodical press in relation to the interests of the Catholic religion. In addition, in the following years the Holy Father approved the Regulations for the audiovisual transmission of Ceremonies and Places

directly under the authority of the Holy See on August 13 1965, at the same time instituting a Service for Audiovisual Assistance within the Pontifical Commission, and later he promulgated the Regulations of the Press Office of the Holy See, also within the competence of the Commission, under the direction of Mons. Fausto Vallainc, formerly Director of the Vatican II press office. In view of the increase in the Commission's activities, Pope Paul VI also thought it opportune to nominate a Vice-President in the person of Bishop Agostino Ferrari Toniolo April 23, 1969.

The Pontifical Commission took on the character of a post-Council Office, composed of Members *ad quinquennium* chosen from among the cardinals and bishops who were presidents of national commissions for social communications, and of 36 ecclesiastical and lay Consultors chosen for the same period from among professional and pastoral users of the media. The presidents of the three international Catholic organisations for the cinema, for radio and television, and for the press – OCIC, UNDA, UCIP (*Union Catholique Internationale de la Presse*) became Members *durantemunere*.

With the apostolic Constitution *Pastor Bonus* promulgated by Pope John Paul II at the Consistory of 28 June 1988, the Pontifical Commission for Social Communications became, on 1 March 1989, the Pontifical Council for Social Communications, and, as such, an Office of the Roman Curia in its own right. In accordance with Article 169 of the above-mentioned Apostolic Constitution, the Office "will deal with questions concerning the instruments of social communication, so that also by these means the message of salvation and human progress may serve the growth of civilization and morality". The Apostolic Constitution specifies that "in the performance of its functions, the Pontifical Council shall proceed in close liaison with the Secretariat of State". At the same time the Press Office of the Holy See becomes "the special office" under the First Section of the Secretariat of State for the publication and distribution of "official communications concerning both the acts of the Supreme Pontiff and the activities of the Holy See".

In 1989, on the 25th anniversary of the promulgation of the Council Decree *Inter Mirifica*, the Pontifical Council for Social Communications published two important documents: Pornography and Violence in the Communications Media: A Pastoral Response (7 May 1987), and Criteria for Ecumenical and Inter-religious Cooperation in Communications (14 October 1989). Both documents were the fruit of approximately three years of work engaging Members, Consultors and Experts of the Office.

Some significant Church Documents on Social Communications

2008: May, Address of His Holiness Benedict XVI to the participants at a convention on the theme: "Identity and Mission of a Communications Faculty in a Catholic university" organised by the pontifical council for social communications

2005: Apostolic letter of the Holy Father John Paul II to those responsible for communications

2003: Post-Synodal Apostolic Exhortation "*Pastores Gregis*"

2002: Feb, Ethics in Internet

2002: Feb, The Church and Internet

2001: *Engdiscorso 70 mo radio vaticana*

2000: Holy Father`s address to the jubilee of journalists

2000: June, Ethics in communication

1999: Towards a pastoral approach to culture

1999: Letter of His Holiness Pope John Paul II to artists

1999: Post-Synodal Apostolic Exhortation *Ecclesia in Asia* of the Holy Father John Paul II

1997: Feb, Ethics in Advertising1995 –1996: 100 Years of Cinema

1995: Encyclical letter "*Evangelium Vitae*"

1992: Instruction on some aspects of the use of the instruments of social communication in promoting the doctrine of the faith

1992: Feb, *Aetatis Novae* A Revolution in Human Communications

1989: Oct, Criteria for Ecumenical and Interreligious Cooperation in Communications

1989: May: Pornography and Violence in the Communications Media A Pastoral Response

1986: Guide to the training of future priests

1979: Sept, address of the Holy Father John Paul II to professional journalists and members of the communication media

1978: Sept, address of His Holiness John Paul I to representatives of the international press

1975: Apostolic exhortation *Evangelii Nuntiandi*

1973: June: An appeal to all contemplative religious

1971: May: *Communio et Progressio* Pastoral Instruction on means of SC

1963:   Encyclical letter *"Pacem in terris"*

1963:   Conciliar decree *"Inter Mirifica"*

1961:   Encyclical letter *"Mater et magistra"*

1959:   *Eng Statuto Filmoteca Vaticana*

1959:   Encyclical letter *"ad Petri Cathedram"*

1959:   Apostolic letter *"motuproprio boni pastoris"*

1957:   Encyclical letter *"Miranda prorsus"*

1955:   Apostolic exhortations of his holiness Pius XII to representatives of the cinema world

1954:   Pontifical commission for motion pictures, radio and television

1936:   Encyclical letter *"vigilanticura"*

Light and Shadow: Communications in Archdiocese of Calcutta

Light Situation:

- The Herald, the oldest Christian weekly in India, is published in the Archdiocese. The 'Bangla Herald' gives coverage in Bengali since year 2000.
- Education Media Research Centre (EMRC) is the only Christian centre making professional broadcast TV programmes. It has its programmes on air regularly on the National Network, reaching not less than 20 million people all over India. This is the only Christian presence (on a regular basis) on Indian television in the whole country.
- Chitrabani is the only organisation making radio programmes and regularly on air reaching millions of people especially in the rural areas of west Bengal and Bangladesh. CHITRABANI publications have around 17 titles.
- Nitika - Don Bosco Communication Centre is serving the Church more directly by producing catechetical material. It conducts training programmes in catechetics besides having around 12 titles under its belt. The centre also publishes the magazine *Catechetics India.*
- St. Xavier's College Dept. of Mass Communication, Kolkata, prepares professionals in the media world.
- The Pauline book and Media Centre: the place where one can get good written and audio-visual material for purchase and reference.
- Christo Pujan Prakashini publishes Liturgical material in Bengali and has about 203 titles.
- While these are church organisations, the laity have made significant contributions to the media. Catholics work as presenters at radio stations; there are Catholic journalists in several newspaper houses; there are Catholics in group media like theatre, puppet shows and in the world of fine arts, as well.
- Christian and specifically Catholic musicians have composed hymns that are constantly being used by the faithful. In addition, cassettes have been made which go beyond the periphery of the church.
- There are Publications such as: *Streams of Living Water*, *Mohona*, *Our Lady of Bandel* and a few newsletters brought out in the parishes.
- Catholic Media institutions in the archdiocese have the required facilities for the training in media skills, production of communication tools and creation of media professionals.

Shadow Situation:

- Communication Apostolate appears not a priority in the Archdiocese.
- Insignificant and inadequate support in terms of finance and trained personnel by the Archdiocese.
- Lack of co-ordination and collaboration among the centres and personnel. Talented persons not identified and promoted.
- Lack of professionalism in Catholic publications and AV productions.

- Insufficient opportunities for involvement and participation by the community in the training programmes.
- Complacency on the part of the communicators to benefit from the expertise available at the local and regional level.
- Lack of visibility and availability of Church Leaders in mainstream media.
- Disproportionate involvement of clergy in communication apostolate. Less lay involvement.
- Too many responsibilities assigned to a single person appointed as Communications Director/Secretary.
- Frequent change/transfer of personnel.
- Insufficient motivation given within the seminary formation curriculum.
- Appointment of amateur personnel or leaders functioning as ad hoc.
- Insufficient promotion of productions/broadcasting and training programmes.
- Badly planned and poor content at workshops.
- No gender equality in the communication apostolate.
- Lack of lay leadership in Media apostolate.
- Weak and insufficient public relations, on the part of the Church, with the secular media world.
- Archdiocese lacks appropriate infrastructure for media apostolate. There is no impact on the secular world and media due to a huge gap and insufficient collaboration with professionals in the city.
- Difficulties are experienced in the formation and functioning of the commission for social communication.

Introduction

The Pastoral Plan for Social Communications

Annexures

Introduction