



Dear Friend of Communicantes,

The year is drawing to a close. Board members and collaborators of the [Stichting/Foundation Communicantes](#) are preparing for Christmas, a time of joy and rest.

However, for us Dutch Catholics, these final days of 2011 have been quite eventful as you may have read in the press. On 16 December 2011, a Commission of Inquiry, headed by former Minister of Education Wim Deetman, presented its findings about sexual abuse of minors in the Dutch Roman Catholic Church from 1945 to 2010. The two most recent posts on the home page of our website deal with the matter: [Christmas 2011](#) and [Abuse of Minors in the Netherlands](#).

Then, please, allow me to draw your attention to some other posts on the Communicantes website.

English language posts on our website (July-December 2011)

– Blog “Church and Society”

[Communicantes Conference “Churches in Ukraine”](#) – held at Hernen Castle on 26 November 2011, the conference was organised by the Foundation Communicantes and the review “Pokrof”, and hosted by the Bredius Foundation. Interesting questions were raised. For example: Does religious education as it is really contribute to an open, investigative attitude needed in a democratic society? Is perhaps popular religion being used by the Church(es) as a means to instil an attitude of fearful obedience?

[Church Goes More Altruistic](#) – every two years The Netherlands Institute for Social Research SCP takes the temperature of Dutch society. The results were published last November. On Friday 25 November 2011 the “European Values Study” presented the second edition of their very interesting *Atlas of European Values*.

[Belarus: An Interesting Country](#) – a travel report in pictures of my stay in Belarus from 17 to 28 October 2011. See [Let’s go Belarus!](#) for some interesting links.

[Germanus Incredibilis](#) – recently was published an interesting book about my “hero” Athanasius Kircher SJ (1601/1602-1680), who was a remarkable scholar.

[The Market for Sexual Goods and Services](#) – in June 2011, I visited the programme “Aid to Victims of Prostitution and Human Trafficking” of Caritas Lithuania. This short article summarises some thoughts.

[Medvedev, Putin and Ecumenism](#) – on 24 September 2011 President Dmitri Medvedev of Russia announced that he will be stepping down from office next year to allow his Prime Minister Vladimir Putin a third presidential term. Are there any consequences for the ecumenical relations?

[Women Theologians](#) – the “European Society of Woman in Theological Research” published its year book 2011: *Women and Religion: Dignity of the Woman as Dignity of the Human Being*.

[“Rural Areas in Upheaval”](#) – the annual Renovabis conference (1-3 September 2011) was dedicated to the countryside in Central and Eastern Europe, where people suffer greatly under the deteriorating conditions of life.

– Blog “Church under Totalitarianism”

This is a time consuming activity, and, for that reason, the topic is still underdeveloped. There are just two entries now:

1. [Sources to the Pope Pius XII Controversy](#)
2. [Sources to the Pope Pius XII Controversy 2](#)

However, wanting to draw some attention to the partnership of the Ukrainian Catholic University in Lviv and the Hebrew University of Jerusalem, in the near future there will be a post about the Ukrainian Underground Army UPA and its attitude towards the Jews.

And have a look at some of our recent publications as well. Most of them are in Dutch, but summaries and links to sources (see below) will give you an idea of what they are about.

Sincerely,

Frans Hoppenbrouwers.

From the previous newsletter 2011/1

Travel Reports/Country Reports

- [Report. 3d Ecumenical Social Week in Lviv – Ukraine 2010](#)

Articles

See http://communicantes.nl/?page_id=617 (English, German, Dutch).

- [Spirituele survival. Arseni Zanin drie jaar kluizenaar in Abchazië, in Pokrof 58 \(2011\) nr. 1, p. 6-8](#). This article tells how the Ukrainian hermit Arseni Zanin found a place to dwell in Abkhazia, and how he survived the difficulties of solitary life. See the history of the [hermits in Abkhazia](#).

- [Orthodoxe kerk heeft rol in Ruslands relaties met andere landen. Wikileaks en de orthodoxe kerk in Rusland, in rkk.nl. Blad voor katholiek Nederland 9 \(2011\) nr. 3, p. 10-11](#). Some Wikileaks that originated from the US Embassy in Moscow deal with the Russian Orthodox Church. Among other things, they show that this largest Orthodox Church worldwide is very much entangled in the foreign policy of the Russian Federation and a keen supporter of authoritarian rule. See: [Wikileaks](#).

- [Nieuwe grootaartsbisschop voor de Oekraïense Grieks-katholieke Kerk](#), in [rkk.nl. Blad voor katholiek Nederland 9 \(2011\) nr. 6, p. 11](#). On March 24 2011, the Ukrainian Greek Catholic Church elected a new Mayor Archbishop as head of church. See also [One Magazine](#) and the Ukrainian religious news service [Risú](#).
- [Oecumenische doorbraak of is de realiteit te weerbarstig? De gesprekken van kardinaal Koch met metropoliet Hilarion](#), in [rkk.nl. Blad voor katholiek Nederland 9 \(2011\) nr. 7, p. 12](#). A recent meeting between the President of the Pontifical Council for Promoting Christian Unity Cardinal Kurt Koch and the chairman of the Moscow Patriarchate's Department for External Church Relations Metropolitan Hilarion of Volokolamsk was heralded as an ecumenical breakthrough. Frans Hoppenbrouwers of Communicantes was less optimistic. Read for example: [The Catholic Difference: Rome and Moscow](#) by the acclaimed pope biographer George Weigel.
- [Bastion der christenheid. Pastorale reis van paus Benedictus XVI naar Kroatië](#), in [rkk.nl. Blad voor katholiek Nederland 9 \(2011\) nr. 11, p. 12-13](#). Pope Benedict visited Croatia early June 2011 to advocate a more Christian Europe and a more European Croatia. See [Pope Benedict XVI in Croatia](#).

This newsletter will be distributed twice a year. If you don't want to receive emails from Communicantes, please let us know.