

Fourth Parliament of World Religions to be held in Barcelona

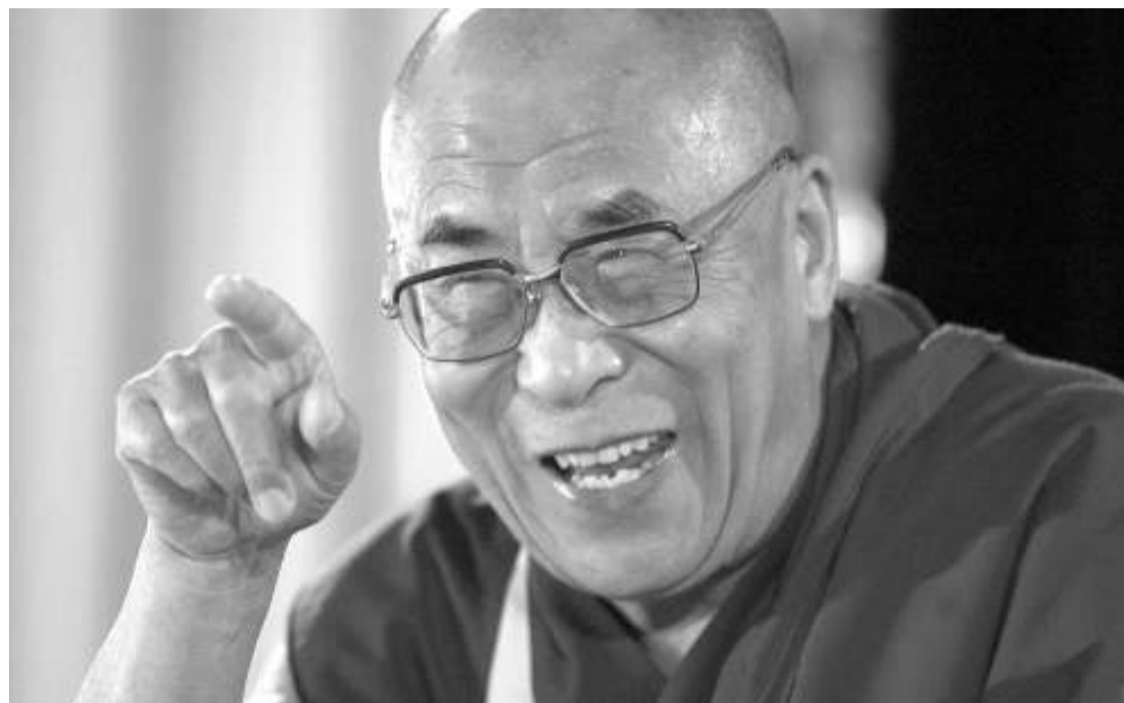
The Parliament will be debating a wide range of topics, including foreign debt and water shortages

MICHAEL BUNN

From 7 to 13 July, Barcelona is to be the venue for the fourth Parliament of World Religions, an event which will be taking place under the auspices of Forum 2004 and which will bring together somewhere between six and seven thousand people to discuss and debate such weighty matters as religious-based violence, immigration, secularisation and role of religions in the protection of the environment.

William Leshner, the president of the Council of the Parliament of World Religions, appeared yesterday at a press conference to present this event, which will feature over a thousand speakers including religious leaders, theologians and members of all the religious communities from seventy-five different countries.

This will be the first time that this conference has been held in Europe outside an Anglo-Saxon cultural setting, a fact which in itself repre-



The Dalai Lama, the leader of the Tibetan Buddhist faith, will be attending the opening ceremony on 7 July. / Archive

sents - to quote the organisers of the conference - a "step forward in the progress of the international inter-religious movement".

The Parliament of World Religions will be combining small working groups with symposiums, round tables and workshops. There will also be several large-scale meetings that will feature major religious leaders such as the Dalai Lama, to-

talling five hundred activities during the seven-day period of the conference.

By way of an introduction, from 5 to 7 July, four hundred religious and spiritual leaders from around the world will be meeting at Montserrat monastery, with the aim of providing answers to problems such as foreign debt, the shortage of drinking water, the situation of ref-

ugees and religious-based violence.

Francesc Torradeflot, the program coordinator of the Parliament of World Religions said yesterday that "religions are not just philosophies, they are an experience which should be celebrated".

The Dalai Lama is scheduled to make a speech in Barcelona during the opening ceremony of the Parliament of World Religions on 7 July.

Last marina on the Costa Brava until 2005 opened in Roses

MICHAEL BUNN

Last Wednesday the town of Roses officially opened a brand-new marina which will probably be the last to be built along the Costa Brava for a few years. One thing that is definite is that it will be the last marina to be built prior to the moratorium which has been decreed by the Catalan autonomous government concerning this type of structure, and which will last until January 2005.

The new infrastructure in Roses has a total cost of 18 million euros and has provided the town with an extra 480 moorings for large and small craft. The Roses marina has become the most important of its kind in the northern section of the Girona coast, as well as being the only one which can provide mooring space for large vessels of up to 35

metres in length.

The opening ceremony, which took place last Wednesday, was presided over by Joaquim Nadal, the minister for Land Policy and Public Works. Work began on the marina in September 2001, following a fierce controversy over the suitability and, more importantly, the location of this installation. Critics based their argument on the impact that the marina would have on the landscape, since this project has radically altered the appearance of the town seafront between the fishing port and La Perola.

Meanwhile, Carles Pàramo, the mayor of Roses, has said that in spite of the high cost of the works, the project "has not represented any great expense in real terms for the City Council because we will be re-



Roses marina, which was opened last Wednesday, will provide 480 new moorings

couping all the money through the sale and hire of the moorings". He added that "this has been a highly necessary project for the area, not

only to increase tourism, but to provide berths for existing vessels which until now have not had anywhere to moor in the vicinity".

ART IN SPAIN

Pigeons find hidden fresco

A Renaissance fresco hidden for 300 years has been discovered in Spain thanks to nesting pigeons. Art restorers working in Valencia's cathedral spotted the birds flying through a hole in what turned out to be a false ceiling and were intrigued. They stuck a digital camera in the gap and shot pictures that showed a well-preserved 15th century fresco, which according to experts is one of the most important examples of Renaissance art in Spain. The fresco, which depicts four angels against a starry blue background, was apparently painted by two Italians, Francesco Pagano and Paolo di San Leocadio, in the late 1400s.

INTERNET

Web browser prompts warning

Users are being told to avoid using Internet Explorer until Microsoft patches a serious security hole in it. The loophole is being exploited to open a backdoor on a PC that could let criminals take control of machines. The threat of infection is so high because the code created to exploit the loophole has somehow been placed on many popular websites. Experts say that the list of compromised sites includes banks, auction and price comparison firms, and that it is growing fast.

EUROPEAN BID

Vic may be cultural capital

The city of Vic in the Osona area has officially become a candidate for the 2006 Capital of Catalan Culture, the organisation announced yesterday. Vic is the eighth city to make a bid for this nomination, the others being Mollerussa, Calella, Manlleu, Montblanc, Sant Joan de les Abadesses, Sitges and Torroella de Montgrí. Other cities will be allowed to present themselves as candidates up until 5 October of this year.

CHILD ABUSE

Priest accused

A Catholic priest who has been giving classes in religion this year at the Gabriel Castellà school in Igulada has been suspended from work by the Catalan government following the accusation made by several parents that he has been sexually abusing his pupils. The priest, whose name has not been revealed to the press, will continue to carry out his duties at a church in the Anoia area, and his lawyer has said "my client completely denies the accusations and he will be happy to express his innocence before a court".

CONSTRUCTION

Necso awarded port contract

The firm Necso has been awarded a 41.9 million-euro contract for the enlargement project to be carried out at the port of Tarragona, it was announced yesterday. The project will involve the building of an additional 830-metre-long dike.