

A Report on the 10th Annual Meeting of the Tamilnadu Canonists' Association

The 10th annual meeting of the Tamilnadu canonists was held on the 22nd January 2002 at St. Paul's Seminary, Trichy. 17 members participated in this meeting.

After the scripture reading by Fr. Peter Thumma, Fr. Andrew De Rose welcomed Most Rev. Antony Devotta, the bishop of Trichy and the participants. In his inaugural address the Bishop asked the participants to discuss the possibility of solving various litigations among Christ's faithful of the local church by the diocesan tribunals at the first level.

The Tamil translation of book VII of the 1983 code of canon law was released by the bishop and Fr. Susai Manickam, the Rector received the first copy.

Fr. C.M. Joseph and Fr. Peter Thumma from Chennai presented a paper on the nature and functioning of ecclesiastical tribunal in which they elucidated the procedures to be followed at the level of the tribunal of the first instance and the second instance. They also expounded the matrimonial relief provided by the law in case of marital breakdown.

Fr. Arul Joseph of Madurai read out a paper on "Diocesan Curia in general and functions of the chancellor in particular". He highlighted the novelties in the new code with regard to the diocesan curia and explicated the role of the chancellor and notary.

Fr. Antonisamy of Karumathur gave a talk on the canonical and civil status of the Catholic Church in India. After explaining the right to freedom of religion and the right of minorities as granted in the Indian constitution, he went on to illuminate the catholic doctrine on religious freedom. Finally he analyzed the unique personal status to which all Christians are submitted in India.

The participants shared their problems connected with marriage cases and some other canonical issues. They also discussed on the progress made in the translation work of the 1983 code.

Fr. Philomindas, Fr. Antonisamy and Fr. Andrew De Rose were entrusted with the task of preparing a paper on the competence of the diocesan tribunal, in compliance with the request of the bishop.

The following were elected as the new office bearers:

President	: Fr. Y. Irudayaraj
Vice President	: Fr. Rajasekaran
Secretary	: Fr. Andrew De Rose
Treasurer	: Fr. Philomindas

Final statements, relating to the papers read out in the meeting, were made and approved by the participants.

It was decided to hold the 11th annual meeting at St. Paul's Seminary in January 2003 and the following topics and persons were fixed for the meeting:

The meeting came to a close with the proposal of vote of thanks and a hymn to Our Lady.

Fr. Andrew De Rose
St. Paul's Seminary
Secretary
Trichy
Tamilnadu Canonists' Association

January 2003

Final Statements

The Topics discussed:

1. The Nature and Functioning of Ecclesiastical Tribunal.
2. Diocesan Curia in general and the office of the Chancellor in particular.
3. Canonical and Civil status of the Catholic Church in India.

Proposals:

At the close of the meeting, the participants made the following proposals:

1. The competence of Diocesan Tribunals

The Most Rev. Dr. Anthony Devotta, Bishop of Tiruchirappalli asked the participants to discuss the possibility of solving various litigations among Christ's faithful of the local church by the Diocesan Tribunals at the first level. So far the diocesan and identified the following areas which come under the competence of the diocesan Tribunals;

- a) Vindicating the rights of physical or juridical persons (Contentious trials): Declaring juridical facts imposing or declaring penalties with regard to offences Cf. Can. 1400. Para - 1
- b) Settling controversies between physical or juridical persons of different religious institutes, between a religious person and a secular cleric etc. Cf. Can. 1427 Para 3
- c) Dealing with contentious cases in which the public good may be at stake, for example, faith and morals, Cfr.Can.1430. A three member committee was constituted to study these areas in detail and make concrete proposals to be sent to all the Bishops of Tamilnadu for their kind perusal and implementations.

2. A full-fledged Diocesan Curia:

Since the efficiency of the pastoral, administrative and judicial activities of the diocese depends to a large extent on the Diocesan Curia, the Diocesan Bishops are earnestly requested to establish a full-fledged Diocesan Curia according to the norms of canon law if they have not done it so far.

3. A Special Note:

The Tamil translation of the 1983 code of canon law is progressing well. This work is authorized by the bishops of Tamilnadu and is sponsored by Missio, Aachen, Germany. The publication of the Tamil translation is undertaken by St. Paul's Seminary.

31-01-2001

Fr. Y. Irudayaraj
President
Tamilnadu Canonists' Association