

A Report on the 12th Annual Meeting of the Tamil Nadu Canonists' Association

The 12th annual meeting of the Tamil Nadu canonists was held on 27 and 28 January 2004 at St. Paul's Seminary, Trichy. 26 members participated in this meeting which began with a prayer at 9.30 am on 27th January 2004.

Rev. Fr. Xavier Arulraj, the secretary of the Legal Cell of Tamil Nadu Bishops' Council inaugurated the meeting. Fr. M. Rajasekaran, Vice-President of the association welcomed the chief guest, the Rector, the minister and the participants.

In his inaugural address, Fr. Xavier Arulraj spoke about the prevailing political situation in India, which is characterized by saffronization and quite at odds with the minority rights. Even the judiciary system of our country is corrupt. Our church is eroded when we subject ourselves to civil courts. Therefore he highlighted the need for an **Ecclesiastical Arbitration Council** to sort out the conflicts arising within the church among the clerics, the religious and the bishops and to arrive at a just and equitable solution. After coffee break, Fr. Y. Irudayaraj introduced the Rules drafted for the Ecclesiastical Arbitration Council by the Legal Cell. The discussion went on till the evening and the members suggested some modifications in the draft.

Since Fr. Lawrence could not come for the meeting, he had sent his paper on "Affective immaturity and lack of internal freedom as motive for nullity of marriage", which was read out and explained by Fr. Y. Irudayaraj.

On the second day, the meeting started at 8.30 a.m. While giving a report on the translation work of the code, Fr. Y. Irudayaraj stated that it is being given final touches and would soon be sent for due approval. Fr. David presented his shorter study on "Pastoral Care for Refugees". Fr. C.M. Joseph spoke on "The Binding Force of Customary Canon Law and the Impediment of Consanguinity". The prearranged speakers Fr. Francis, Fr. Susai Manickam and Fr. Tharsius Raj did not turn up.

The newcomers Fr. Pascal Raj, Fr. Angel and Fr. Jose Vetiankal gave a synopsis of their dissertations. The participants were given the opportunity to share the problems connected to the marriage cases and other canonical issues.

It was decided to hold the 13th annual meeting at St. Paul's seminary on 25th and 26th of January 2005. The following Persons and topics were fixed for detailed study:

1. Fr. Angel: "Participatory structures in the church with a special reference to Presbyteral Council and Pastoral Council".
2. Fr. Philomindas: "Synodal statutes in the dioceses of Tamil Nadu".
3. Fr. Peter Thumma: "Alcoholism and consensual capacity".

The meeting came to an end with lunch at 12.30 p.m.