

**Minutes of the 23<sup>rd</sup> Annual Meeting of the Tamilnadu  
Canonists' Association: St. Paul's Seminary, Trichy,**

**27 & 28 January 2016**

The 23<sup>rd</sup> Annual Meeting of the Tamilnadu canonists' Association began on 27 January 2016, Wednesday at 9.30 am with a song by the seminarians of St. Paul's Seminary and a prayer invoking the gifts of the Holy Spirit by Fr. Peter Thumma of Madras-Mylapore archdiocese. The secretary, Fr. D. Xavier, invited the chief guest Fr. S. Sebastian, the rector of St. Paul's Seminary, Fr. A. Rayappan, the president of Canon Law Society of India, Fr. A. Azhagu Selvan, the President of TNCA, Fr. Solomon, the vice president and Fr. Louis Ruban OFM, cap to light the Kuthuvilakku. Then all were welcomed. Fr. Sebastian, in his inaugural address, exhorted the participants to be a motherly and merciful persons in implementing Canon Law following the model of Pope Francis. As the inaugural ceremony was over, the canonists introduced themselves with one another telling their name, diocese or religious order and their ministry. Out of the 42 registered, 38 canonists took active participation on the proceedings in the annual meeting.

In the first session at 10.30 am, Fr. John Diraviam of Madurai archdiocese dealt on the theme: "The juridical aspects of mercy to be observed in the Penal Laws of the Church". It was moderated by Fr. Charles Kumar of Madras-Mylapore archdiocese and the members had active participation in the discussion. The second session began at 11.45 and Fr. Angel Raj of Madurai archdiocese spoke on the theme: "The application of mercy in the diocesan tribunal". The session was moderated by Fr. Francis Joseph of Coimbatore diocese. After a brief interaction the members dispersed for lunch and siesta at 12.40 pm.

The afternoon session began at 3.00 pm. Fr. S. Antonysamy of Palayamkottai diocese presented his paper on "Mitis Iudex Dominus Iesus" (New Procedural Laws). The session was moderated by Fr. Pascal Raj of Pondichery archdiocese. After a fruitful discussion on the deliberations, the participants left for tea at 4.30 pm.

Fr. Norbert Thomas of Thoothukudi diocese presented with power point on "Transgender/Transsexual: A psychological, sociological, canonical and pastoral assessment" in the evening session at 5.30 pm. The session was moderated by Fr. G. Felix of Kottar diocese. After the discussion on the presentation, Fr. M. Philomindas, Treasurer read the account of the Silver Jubilee celebrations. Then there was Eucharistic celebration at 7 pm for those who did not celebrate Holy Mass in the morning.

Next day, i.e., Thursday on 28 January at 7.00 am the canonists had concelebrated Holy Mass which was presided over by Fr. A. Alagu Selvan who celebrated the silver jubilee of his priestly ordination. Fr. A. Rayappan preached. After the Holy Mass, we felicitated Fr. A. Alagu Selvan by cutting a delicious cake and presenting a gift.

The first session of second day began at 9.00 am with the paper presented on the theme, “The complaint and the preliminary process in dealing with the grave delict of sexual abuse of minors by clerics” by Fr. Karambai Sebastian of Thanjavur diocese. The session was moderated by Fr. Charles MMI. After brief discussion on the theme, the members dispersed for coffee break. The second session began at 10.30 am. Fr. A. Rayappan shared on “Recent Canonical Innovations and Canonical Updates”. Afterwards the new members Fr. A.J. Jegadesh of Vellore diocese, Fr. N. Suresh Kumar HGN and Fr. Merlin Renjith Ambrose of Kottar diocese presented the summary of their dissertation. The session was moderated by Fr. Merlin Renjith Ambrose.

It was followed by a panel discussion on marriage cases and other issues with the following panel members: Frs. G. Felix of Kottar diocese, Rayappan of Pondichery archdiocese and C.M. Joseph of Madras-Mylapore archdiocese. The session was moderated by Fr. A. Azhagu Selvan.

At 12.15 afternoon Fr. D. Xavier, the secretary briefly read out the report of the silver jubilee symposium held on 17 & 18 June 2015. Then it was proposed to read the report in the beginning of the first day and to keep a question box for questions to be answered in the panel. Then the president asked the members to fix the theme, date and venue for the next meeting. January 23 & 24 are the dates chosen for the two-day symposium. The venue will be Poondy and Fr. Philomindas will be the local organizer. Then there was a discussion regarding the choice of topics to be presented. It was decided to have the theme: The problems related with Mixed marriage. The resource persons for the symposium are: Fr. G. Felix on “Exclusion of Bonum Sacramenti in the context of growth of Pentecostal movements”; Fr. Philomindas on “Comparative study on Sacramental Marriage and Mixed marriages”; Fr. L. Sahayaraj on “Breaking down of marriages and receiving Holy Communion”; Fr. Peter Thumma on “The problem connected with inter ritual marriages”; and Fr. Norbert Thomas on “Fast development of genetic engineering and Canon Law”.

Fr. Azhagu Selvan thanked each and every one. Finally the session and the two-day symposium came to an end at 12.45 pm with a prayer.