

## **Minutes of the 32<sup>nd</sup> Annual Meeting of the**

### **Tamil Nadu Canonists' Association**

**TNBCLC Tindivanam, 24 &25 January 2023**

The 32<sup>nd</sup> Annual Meeting of the Tamil Nadu Canonists' Association began on 24<sup>th</sup> January 2023, Tuesday at 9.00 am with lighting the lamp by Rev. Fr. Britto Director, TNBCLC Director, Rev. Fr. S. Pascal Raj, Rev. Fr. Angel, Rev. Fr. Philomindoss, Rev. Fr. Antony, Rev. Fr. George Vincent, Sr. Martina Alphonse Mary FSPM. Then there was a song invoking the guidance of the Holy Spirit, reading of the scripture and prayer by Rev. Fr. Yakkobu. Fr. S. Pascal Raj, the President of TNCA welcomed all the participants. Rev. Fr. Angel had briefly spoken about the recently deceased members of the TNCA. Then we had a minute of silence to pay homage to the Late His Holiness Pope Emeritus Benedict XVI, Cardinal Pell and Fr. Jagadish OFM Cap. Rev. Fr. Britto Director, TNBCLC gave the inaugural address on the role of canonists in the local Catholic Church and the necessity of empowering the laity to know the laws of the Church and its application. The minutes of the previous meeting was read out by Fr. Anthony J, the secretary and was approved by the participants. 34 canonists attended the annual meeting.

In the first session Rev. Fr. John Diraviam – Madurai Archdiocese had presented the first paper on "**Synodality of the Church.**" He had spoken about the pathway of the Synod 2024 through the diocesan phase, continental phase and the final synodal meeting at Vatican. His hand on experience in animating the diocesan phase in the Archdiocese of Madurai and the response of the laity was the best bit of his presentation. The session was moderated by Fr. Jagadish of Vellore Diocese. Followed by the first session we had the coffee break. In the second session, began at 11.35 am, Fr. Sagayaraj MF had presented the paper on: "**Uniform Civil Code**" and Fr. James Anthuvan (Sivagangai Diocese) had moderated the session. The paper had driven home the salient features of this uniform civil code and the future impacts on the rights of the minority of our country. Rev. Fr. Alagu Selvan had invited the august gathering to plan and execute the translation of the Book VI (Sanctions) and some Canons in Book VII and other assorted canons amended in the recent past. The permission to translate the canons was sought to the TNBC and its present president Most Rev. Dr. George Anthonysamy had given the required permission to initiate the process of translation. He had recalled the then process of the translation of 1983 Code into Tamil, the collaborators, translators, editorial board (Fr. Y. Irudayaraj, Fr. A. Rayappan and Fr. Alaguselvan), publisher (Thedal Veliyedu, St. Paul's Seminary, Trichy) who were involved in the tedious process. Some of the participants had volunteered and some were chosen to assist in the translation of the canons. The editorial board was formed consisting of Rev. Fr. Pascal Raj, Fr. Alagu Selvan, Fr. Philomindoss and Fr. J. Anthony. Those assist in the translation of the canons were formed into two groups. Translation of Book VI - Fr. Alex Gnana Raj (Co-ordinator), Fr. John Diraviam, Fr. Arumainathan and Fr. George Santhanam. Book VII and other canons - Fr. Jagadish (Co-

ordinator), Fr. David Kumar OMI, Fr. Vincent A, Fr. J. Anthony and Sr. Martina Alphonse Mary FSPM. The interactions and suggestions of the participants were deemed useful in the planning of the translation work. The participants assembled for a group photograph. The members had dispersed for the lunch. The editorial board for the translation work of the Code, had met at 2.40 pm and finalized the *modus operandi* of the translation of the canons. The afternoon session began at 3.00 pm. Fr. Angel, Vice President of TNCA had presented to the floor about the initiative to release a book in honour and memory of the veteran canonist Rev. Fr. Y. Irudayaraj. The following members will serve to be the Editorial Board 01. Rev. Fr. Paschal Raj 02. Rev. Fr. Angel 03. Rev. Fr. Anthony J and 04. Rev. Fr. Charles Kumar N A. The articles could be themed on the marital consent, marriage preparation and the follow up programmes, and upbringing of the Children etc. The following persons have agreed to pen an article for the festschrift book. 01. Rev. Fr. Nobert Thomas - "Pre - Marital Sex and Living Together in Married Life: Canonical and Pastoral Perspective" 02. Rev. Fr. A. J. Jagadish - "Spiritual Life of the Newly Married Couples: A Practical Guide" 03. Rev. Fr. Alex Gnanaraj - Responsible Parenthood. 04. Rev. Fr. Philomindoss - Importance of Consent in Catholic Marriage. 05. Rev. Fr. Alaguselvam - Mixed Marriages + Disparity of Cult. 6. Rev. Fr. John Diraviam – Marriage Preparation and the follow up programme. 07. Rev. Fr. Maria Louis - Rectification of Marriages and implications of the Civil Law. 08. Rev. Fr. Anthony Raj - Accompanying the Divorced + Remarried. 09. Rev. Fr. Devasagayam Xavier – Addictions and its influence in the marital life. The Font Size: 12 Size Font Type: (Tamil) Latha; Pages : A4 Size - 10 Pages, Publisher : St. Paul's Publication, Trichy. It was decided in the meeting that the articles have to be sent to the editorial board by the end of April 2023. The participants had left for tea at 4pm. Sr. Martina Alphonse Mary FSPM, had presented a paper on "New Education Policy and its influence in the Catholic Education. It was an insightful session moderated by Fr. Maria Henry Louis. At 7.15 Pm, we had the holy Eucharist, presided by Rev. Fr. Maria Henry Louis.

The second day began with the morning prayer at 6.30 am followed by the holy Eucharist presided over by Rev. Fr. Pascal Raj, the President of TNCA. Rev. Fr. Vincent Raj (Vellore Diocese) preached the homily. Rev. Fr. Vino Alphonse had animated the choir and the morning prayer. The mass was offered for the repose of soul of late Holy Father, Benedict XVI, Cardinal Pell, Fr. Jagadish OFM cap. The first session of the second day began at 9.00 am. Rev. Fr. J. Anthony (Diocese of Chingleput) had dwelt on the recent changes in the Roman Curia: Praedicate Evangelium. This session was moderated by Fr. Hirudaya Lawrence. Rev. Fr. George Vincent (Kottar Diocese) presented a short paper on "Whether a cleric could be a Judge in the Civil Court. The session was interesting and insightful. Fr. Xavier Devasagayam had chaired the session. Rev. Fr. Philomindoss had presented the statement of the account and it was accepted by the participants. The new participants were presented the members. Rev. Fr. Johnson, Rev. Fr. Austin (Salem) and Rev. Fr. Muthu (Madurai) briefed to the floor of their research paper in canonical studies. We had a coffee break at 11.00 Am. Rev. Fr. Alagu Selvam of Salem Diocese enlightened the august gathering on "**Canonical Updates**". This third session was moderated by Fr. Arumainathan OFM Cap. The session on the recent amendments in the civil law, rulings and

judgements presented by Fr. Michael Anand OFM was very useful. The session was moderated by Fr. Johnson (Thanjavur Diocese).

The panelists, Fr. S. Pascal Raj, Fr. Alagu Selvam, Fr. Philomindoss, Fr. Angel and Fr. John Diraviam were seated at the dais to answer the questions of the participants. The office bearers of the TNCA and the participants were actively involved in the Business session to decide about the venue and date of the next meeting. Rev. Fr. Pascal Raj, the president, placed on record his sincere appreciation to the speakers of the sessions and thanked all the members who had actively involved in the preparation of the meeting. There was an observation about the fewer participants on the second day and the number of the participants who had left on the first day. It was opined by the floor to ensure two days of participation of all the participants. The dates of the next meeting would be 23 and 24 Jan 2023 and the venue could be Tindivanam TNBCLC. Fr. Johnson (Thanjavur) had agreed to present a paper on the topic "Relationship between Religious and Diocesan Administration. One or two sections could be dedicated to read the Translation work of the Code. Fr. Arumainathan OFM Cap. Fr. Muthu (Madurai) had consented to present a paper on "Untouchability in Tamilnadu and the Dignity of Human Life in the Light of Code". Fr. Maria Louis would present a paper on the follow up programme for the young married couples (Immediate, Remote followup programme). As per the custom, the canonical and civil updates will be part of the sessions of the TNCA meeting. It was suggested during the business session to conduct a meeting for the Judicial Vicars in Tamilnadu. There could be coordinators in each diocese to bring the canonists of the diocese to the meeting. It was suggested that we could organize session or a diploma course in canon law for the laity. The members had opined that it could be part of the initiative of the Laity Commission of TNBC. It was proposed during the discussion to propose to TNBC to form a commission for Canon Law which could be part of TNBC. A member of TNCA could represent and communicate certain observations, recommendations of TNCA and application of the canon law in the administration of sacraments and tribunal procedures in TNBC Meeting. The two days annual meet of TNCA concluded with vote of thanks by Rev. Fr. George Santhanam (Trichy). The meeting concluded with a sumptuous Lunch.