

Report of the 21st Annual Meeting of the Tamilnadu Canonists' Association

The annual meet of the canonists' began on 9 January 2013, Wednesday at 9.35 am with a song and a prayer invoking the gifts of the Holy Spirit by Frs. Pascalraj and Jesuraj respectively. The secretary Fr. Norbert welcomed the chief guest Msgr. Paulsamy, the Vicar General of Trichy diocese and the guest of honor Fr. S. Sebastian, the Rector of St. Paul's Seminary to light the Kuthuvilakku. The Vice President Fr. S. Solomon felicitated the guests with shawls in his welcome address. In his inaugural address, Msgr. Paulsamy appreciated the canonists for their yeoman service in various tribunals of Tamilnadu. He also left a plea to the canonists on the 'de facto' broken marriages prevalent in Tamilnadu for speedy solution for the rehabilitation of the innocent party.

As the inaugural ceremony was over, the canonists introduced themselves with one another and shared their various activities in their respective dioceses and also in various institutions. Out of the 30 registered, 28 canonists took active participation on the proceedings of the annual meeting.

In the first session at 10.30 am, Fr. Y. Irudayaraj of Trichy diocese dealt on the theme: "Exclusion of Bonum Coniugum" as an autonomous ground in matrimonial cases. He also stated that the cases dealing with Bonum coniugum could be accommodated very well in c. 1095 3° which deals with the psychic problems concerning the essential obligations of the partners in marriage. After a brief discussion, the second session began at 11.50 am. Fr. M. Philomindas of Kumbakonam diocese dealt on the theme: "Mutual Relations between Bishops and Religious". In his deliberations, he brought out the specific areas of pastoral submission to the diocesan bishop by the religious and also specific interventions of the bishop both in the Institutes of Pontifical right and of Diocesan right. After a brief interaction the members dispersed for lunch and rest.

The afternoon session began at 3.00 pm. Fr. L. Sahayaraj of Thanjavur diocese presented his paper on "Church Disputes in Reference to Civil Law". In his deliberations he pointed out the position of canon law in 'civil law and in common law systems' and also the areas of understanding of canon law in Indian civil courts, and the church disputes' with specific reference to Rights to Succession of catholic priests and nuns in Indian civil Code. After a brief discussion on the deliberations, the members dispersed for tea at 4.15 pm.

The post tea session began at 5.10 pm on the theme: 'Succession, Inheritance and Adoption and Civil Updates' by Fr. Jeyaseelan S.J. Some of the salient features: rules of inheritance concerning widow, lineal descendants, father, mother, brothers, sisters and their children. He also brought out some judgments in some civil courts concerning the succession rights of Catholic clergy and Religious.. The session came to an end at 6.20 pm.

After some refreshments, most of the canonists went to the Laity Centre, Pratiyur in Trichy for night meals. We render a word of appreciation to Bishop Antony Papusamy and the regional director of Laity Centre for sponsoring the night meal.

On 10 January, Thursday Fr. S. Solomon, the vice president, presided over the group mass of the canonists at the domestic chapel. The session started at 9.00 am with a

prayer. Fr. A. Alagu Selvan presented his paper on the theme: 'The Application of the Ground of Nullity on the ground of Good of the Spouses'. In his deliberations he brought out various Rotal judgments on the theme mentioned above. He also mentioned about the common understanding among the canonists to portray good of the spouses and an essential ground of marriage. At 9.50 am the new members Frs. Antony Jesuraj of Coimbatore and Charles MMI presented the synopsis of their Master's Thesis. Fr. M. Philomindas, the procurator read out the expenditures and the financial position. He was told to collect Rs. 1000/- from the new members as life subscription. After a brief discussion on this issue, the members dispersed for coffee at 10.45 am.

The final session of the canonist meet started with canonical updates presented by Fr. S. Antonisamy of St. Peter's Seminary, Bangalore at 11.15 am. He spoke on three issues such as: (a) CBCI procedures on 'the misconduct of clerics in the abuse of minor' awaiting approbation from the Holy See; (b) The complementary norms in Temporal Goods for the minimum and maximum expenditures issued by CCBI; and also (c) on the *motu proprio* of Pope Benedict XVI on 'the service of charity' issued on 1 December 2012. Then at 11.45 am a panel consisting of Frs. Felix, Y. Irudayaraj and Alagu Selvan was formed to take up matrimonial problems encountered in Tribunals. As there were not many issues on the topic and the panel discussion came to an end with a proposal by Fr. Alagu Selvan, the President of Canonists' association, regarding the creation of web site of TNCA. It was unanimously approved and Fr. Alagu Selvan took the initiative of feeding the website with guidelines. He was complemented by the members for his readiness to assist TNCA in the electronic media.

Then there was a discussion regarding fixing the venue and dates for the next canonists' association meet. After a brief discussion it was concluded that TNCA meet for 2014 will take place in St. Paul's Seminary, Trichy on 22 & 23 January (Wednesday and Thursday). The following were the topics finalized for the next meet: Fr. Amalraj of Tuticorin: Necessity of Experts' Opinion in Psychic Incapacity; Fr. Antony Jesuraj of Coimbatore: The role of Consultation in the Governance of particular Church; Fr. John Diraviam: Confusions in Ministerial Relationship caused between the Diocesans and the Religious regarding Temporal Goods; Fr. Felix on Arbitration and Reconciliation in the Context of Pastoral and Marriage Dispute/Conflict; Fr. Y. Irudayaraj Participatory Structures in the 1983 Code: An Appraisal and Fr. Alagu Selvan on Pope Francis' Approach towards Code

Fr. Alagu Selvan gave the vote of thanks. A minute long silence was observed in memory of the late canonist Fr. Kulandaisamy of Kottar diocese. Finally the meet came to an end with the concluding prayer by Fr. Aamlaraj at 1.00 pm.

Rev. Fr. Norbert Thomas
TNCA – Secretary
09 & 10-01-2013