

## **Report of the 22nd Annual Meeting of the Tamilnadu Canonists' Association**

The annual meet of the Tamilnadu canonists began on 22 January 2014, Wednesday at 9.35 am with a song and a prayer invoking the gifts of the Holy Spirit by the seminarians of St. Paul's Seminary, Trichy. The secretary, Fr. Norbert, welcomed the chief guest Bishop Antony Devotta and invited guest of honor Fr. S. Sebastian, the Rector of St. Paul's Seminary and also Fr. A. Rayappan, the President of All India Canonists' Association to light the Kuthuvilakku along with the President and Vice President of TNCA. The President, Fr. A. Alagu Selvan, felicitated the guests with shawls in his welcome address. In his inaugural address, Bishop Devotta asked the canonists to be pastorally sensitive to the needs of the faithful and also recollected, earlier as parish priest, his advice to the parishioners not to be carried away by consanguineous marriages for the sake of healthy children. Fr. Sebastian, the Rector, mentioned that nowadays the canonists are busy not only with the marriage cases but also with conflicts of religious as well. Fr. Solomon, the Vice President, thanked the chief guest and guest of honor and invited the participants to take active participation in the proceedings. 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 10.50 am, Fr. John Diraviam of Madurai archdiocese dealt on the theme: "Confusions in Ministerial Relationship caused between the Diocesans and the Religious regarding Temporal Goods". In his address he stressed on the notification that civil processes have to be completed before handing over the property from diocese to religious and vice versa. After a brief discussion, the second session began at 11.50 am. Fr. Antony Jesuraj of Coimbatore diocese spoke on the theme: "The Role of Consultation in the Governance of Particular Church". In his deliberations, he brought out the specific areas in which the bishop is to seek counsel and also consent on matters pertaining to extraordinary administration. After a brief interaction the members dispersed for lunch and rest.

The afternoon session began at 3.10 pm. Fr. Y. Irudayaraj of Trichy diocese presented his paper on "Participatory Structures in the 1983 Code: An Appraisal". In his deliberations he pointed out the various participatory structures in the diocesan and parochial levels. He also stressed the importance of consultative opinion in the participatory structures. After a brief discussion on the deliberations, we had an extended session on the *modus operandi* of Silver Jubilee celebrations of TNCA in 2015. Fr. Felix George of Kottar convened the session. He stated that the TNCA was started in 1989 under the patronage of the late archbishop Arockiasamy of Madurai. The members had discussions and eventually it was decided that on 7 & 8 January 2015 the Silver Jubilee celebrations will take place in St. Paul's Seminary, Trichy. The canonists' bishops namely, archbishop George of Chennai, archbishop Anandarayar of Pondicherry and bishop Thomas Aquinas of Coimbatore diocese will be officially invited to partake in the function. A souvenir will be released on that occasion and Fr. Felix will be the chief editor and Frs. Alagu Selvan, Norbert Thomas, Philomindas, Sahayaraj, Tony, Rayar, Pascal and John Diraviam will be the members of the editorial board. As regards the sessions, the one of the bishops will take over the session in the afternoon on the first day which will culminate with a special mass at the new cathedral of Trichy diocese. On the second day, the lay

representatives will be invited for afternoon session to know more about the family problems and the role of tribunal in dealing with marriage cases. Then the members dispersed for tea at 4.50 pm.

The post tea session began at 5.30 pm on the theme: 'Necessity of Experts' Opinion in Psychic Incapacity" by Fr. Amalraj of Tuticorin diocese. He stressed on the need of experts' opinion only for liceity, however, experts' opinion is to be sought to arrive at moral certainty. The session came to an end at 6.30 pm.

At 7.00 pm the canonists joined the seminarians for the holy mass which was presided over by Fr. A. Rayappan and preached by Fr. Arul Kumar SDB.

On 23 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. Felix George of Kottar presented his paper on the theme: "Arbitration and Reconciliation in the Context of Pastoral and Marriage Dispute/Conflict".

After tea, the second session started 10.50 am on the theme: "Pope Francis' Approach towards Code" by Fr. A Alagu Selvan of Salem Diocese. In his presentation he stressed on the conservative and progressive approach of Pope Francis with various opinions and also on the extraordinary synod, 'Pastoral Challenges of Family in the Context of Evangelization' which is to take place on 5 October 2015.

The final session of the canonist meet at 11.45 am with a panel consisting of Frs. Felix, Alagu Selvan, Solomon and Mathias to take up matrimonial problems being encountered in Tribunals and also administrative issues. There were lots of clarifications on issues pertaining to marriage cases and administrative issues.

At 12.30 Fr. Norbert Thomas, the secretary, read out the minutes of the previous Meet which was passed without any modification. Then there was a discussion regarding the choice of topics to be presented. It was decided to deal with themes connected with Family, in reference to the forthcoming synod. The following were the topics finalized for the next meet. Fr. Philomindas: on 'Marriage as an Institution'; Fr. Alagu Selvan: on 'The challenges of Marriage Today'; Fr. Jesuraj OFM (cap): on 'The role of Christian Parenthood in the Church and in the Society'; Fr. Jesu: on 'Importance of Marriage Preparation and Post Marital Assistance'; and Fr. Felix: on 'The Expectation of Lay People from Parish Priests'.

A minute long silence was observed in memory of the late canonist Fr. Y. Balasamy of Chennai archdiocese. Afterwards Fr. A. Alagu Selvan gave the vote of thanks. Finally the meet came to an end with the concluding prayer by Fr. Arul Kumar at 1.30 pm.

**Fr. Norbert Thomas**  
**Secretary-TNCA**  
**22-23 January 2014**