

Report of the 6th Annual Meeting of Tamil Nadu Canonists Association

A Report of the 6th Annual Meeting of Tamil Nadu Canonists' Association held at St. Paul's Seminary, Tiruchirappalli on the 17th & 18th February 1998.

The 6th Annual Meeting of the Tamil Nadu Canonists' Association was inaugurated by the Most Rev. Dr. Peter Fernando, the Apostolic Administrator of the Diocese of Tiruchirappalli on the 17th February at St. Paul's Seminary at 10.00 A.M.

After the opening prayer service, the first draft of the Tamil translation of the First Book of the 1983 code of canon Law was presented by Fr. Thomas Aquinas. Bishop Peter Fernando gave the first copy of the first draft to Fr. E. John Kulandai, the Rector of St. Paul's Seminary, Tiruchirappalli.

In his inaugural address the Bishop insisted that love takes precedence over law and he brought out clearly that people who are motivated by love will certainly observe the law. He did not, however, minimize the need for law in any given society. As the secretary to the TNBC, he encouraged the project of the Tamil translation of the 1983 code.

Rev. Deacon Stephen Jayaraj of the Diocese of Tiruchirappalli read out a paper on the "The Causes and consequences of the Neo-Pentecostalism in Tamilnadu". He classified the reasons for leaving the parent church and joining the Neo-Pentecostalism into two categories, namely the 'Push factors' and the 'Pull factors'. The main push factors are: Neglect of Scripture, Lack of God-experience, Lack of pastoral care, Lack of fellowship, routinized worship, Unedifying Clergy and exaggerated devotion to Mary and saints.

The pull factors are: centrality of Bible, God-experience, fellowship, meaningful worship and convincing teachings. He also proposed some concrete suggestions to face the challenges posed by the Neo-Pentecostalism.

The participants of the meeting, after a discussion on this theme, proposed a few suggestions as "A Canonical response to the Neo-Pentecostalism". They are as follows:-

(1) The diocesan bishop is to organize an intensive course for the clergy on effective Biblical Preaching.

(2) An appropriate course is to be given to the laity to help the pastors in the proclamation of the Gospel.

(3) The prescriptions of cc. 762 to 772 on "The Preaching the Word of God" and the prescriptions of cc. 528 and 529 on the obligation of parish priest to proclaim the Word of God in its entirety and to visit the families entrusted to his care are to be seriously implemented.

(4) Those Catholics who have received baptism by immersion in Pentecostal Churches. Pay tithes to their respective denominations and have stopped receiving the sacraments from the catholic church for a long time are presumed to have left the catholic church implicitly even without a "formal declaration" on their part. However, the pastor may do well to contact such people and make sure if they have left the Catholic Church once and for all.

(5) According to Can. 1364, an apostate from the faith, a heretic or a schismatic incurs an automatic excommunication. In the case of those who are supposed to have left the Catholic Church by a formal act, it would be better, if and when the common good of the faithful demands it, to declare that they are no longer “formal” Catholics than to declare them excommunicated. The pastor needs a prior consent of the diocesan bishop before he makes such a declaration.

(6) If and when such people would like to come back to the Catholic Church, they need to express their sorrow for their defection and for the scandal caused to the Catholic community by a public act, that is, in writing signed at least by two witnesses and to recite the Apostles’ Creed.

Fr. I. Kulandaisamy of the Diocese of Kottar reads out a paper on “The Person and role of the Defender of the Bond in marriage cases.”

Fr. Vianneyraj of Palayamkottai, Fr. Francis M. Vincent of Kottar and Fr. Joseph of Ooty gave a synopsis of their doctoral thesis, “Partnership of whole life in the Essence and Phenomenology of the Matrimonial Covenant,” “Matrimonial Impediments for Christians in India” and “Antisocial Personality Disorder, An Incapacity to the Interpersonal Relationship in Christian Marriage (Can. 1095, 2&3) respectively.

The ongoing Tamil translation of the 1983 code was reviewed by the Association and an Editorial Board was consisting of Fr. Y. Irudayaraj, Fr. Rayappan, Fr. A. Alagu Selvan and the Secretary of the translation committee of each book of the 1983 code.

The Statutes of the Tamilnadu Canonists’ Association were framed and approved by the Association basing on the “Statutes of the Canon Law Society of India” with necessary adaptations.

The following persons were elected as the members of the Executive Committee of the Tamilnadu Canonists’ Association for a period of 3 years:

Office-Bearers:

President	:	Fr. Y. Irudayaraj
Vice President:		Fr. M. Rajasekaran
Secretary	:	Fr. Andrew De Rose
Treasurer	:	Fr. A. R. Chinnappan

Other Members

Fr. G. Mathias
Fr. C. M. Joseph
Fr. Vianneyraj

It was decided to hold the 7th Annual Meeting of the Tamilnadu Canonists’ Association at St. Paul’s Seminary, Tiruchirappalli in the second week of February 1999. The following

topics were proposed for the next meeting. “Antisocial Personality Disorder, an Incapacity to the Interpersonal Relationship in Christian Marriages (Can 1095, 2 & 3)” (by Fr. S. Joseph, Ooty) and “The Sacrament of Reconciliation and Censure” (by Fr. Antony Michael, Sivagangai).

Fr. M. Rajasekaran proposed a vote of thanks and the meeting came to a close with a hymn to Our Lady.

09.02.1999

Fr. Y. Irudayaraj
President
Tamilnadu Canonists' Association