

**Minutes of the 34th Annual Meeting of the
Tamil Nadu Canonists' Association
TNBCLC Tindivanam, 21 & 22 January 2025**

The 34th Annual Meeting of the Tamil Nadu Canonists' Association commenced on January 21, 2025, at 9.00 a.m., with the lighting of the lamp by Rev. Fr. Joseph Raj, former Deputy Secretary of TNBC; Rev. Fr. Sagayaraj (Vicar General, Dindigul); Rev. Fr. Angel (President); Rev. Fr. James Anthuvan (Vice-President); Rev. Fr. Philomindas (Treasurer); Rev. Fr. Anthony J (Secretary); and Rev. Sr. Margret Inba Seeli CIC (Superior of the CIC community, TNBCLC). This was followed by a hymn invoking the guidance of the Holy Spirit, a scripture reading by Fr. Joseph William, and a prayer led by Fr. Jose. Fr. James Anthuvan animated the opening session and graciously invited the participants to pay homage to the deceased members of the TNCA, namely Fr. Chinnappan from the Kumbakonam diocese and Mrs. Kuzhanthai Theresammal, mother of Fr. Pascal Raj.

Fr. Angel Raj, the President of TNCA, extended a warm welcome to all participants, with special acknowledgement to the distinguished chief guest of the day, Fr. Joseph Raj, who presented the inaugural address on the theme "Synodality and Way Forward." Following the presentation, he was formally honoured by the TNCA Executive Committee. The initial session was moderated by Fr. Arumainathan OFM Cap. Sr. Margret Inba Seeli CIC was honoured on her golden jubilee of religious commitment. Fr. Jacob (Salem) and Fr. George Santhanam (Trichy) were honoured on the occasion of their silver jubilee. Rev. Fr. Sagayaraj (VG, Dindigul) and Philomindas (VG, Kumbakonam) were also honoured.

Following the tea break, in the second session, Fr. John Diraviam presented a paper on the importance of the Ordinary Jubilee Year 2025. The session was moderated by Fr. Peter Thumma. The third session began at 12 noon. Fr. Anthony J spoke on the topic "Embracing the Synodal Journey: Clarifications, Opportunities, and Challenges." Fr. George Santhana Raj moderated the session. In the post-lunch session, Fr. Alagu Selvan, Fr. Jagadish, and Fr. Alex Gnanaraj presented the translated text of the amended canons and the rewording of the glossary of terminologies and canonical wordings in Tamil was discussed at length. It continued after the tea break and concluded at 5.45 p.m. The participants were actively involved, suggesting appropriate Tamil words for the canonical terminologies and concepts. The participants' interactions and suggestions were deemed

useful for planning the translation work. A core team will be formed to finalise the text and later present it to the Tamil Nadu Bishops' Council.

Following the session, the executive team convened to assess the day's proceedings. In the evening, Holy Mass was offered by Fr. James Anthuvan.

The following day, January 22, 2025, a morning prayer service and Holy Mass were held at 7.00 a.m. Fr. Vino Alphonese assisted in leading the morning prayer and hymns during the Holy Mass. Fr. George Santhanam, the silver jubilarian, presided over the Holy Mass and delivered the homily. Fr. Sagayaraj and Fr. Jose were at the altar as concelebrants.

The second-day session began at 9.00 a.m. Fr. Vincent Raj (Vellore) presented a paper on "Decision-Making in a Synodal Church: A Canonical Perspective." The session was moderated by Fr. Charles MMI.

Rev. Fr. Thomas MSFS presented the canonical updates and recent papal and curial documents. Fr. Pascalraj moderated the sessions. After the coffee break, Fr. James Anthuvan briefed on the Judicial Vicars' meeting held in November 2024. Later, the participants introduced themselves. As Fr. Michael Anand fell ill, he was unable to present the paper on "The Civil Updates." However, a soft copy of the talk on civil updates was sent to all the participants.

During the business session, the minutes of the previous meeting were presented by Fr. J. Anthony, the Secretary, and were approved by the participants after indicating a few corrections. Fr. Felix proposed it, and Fr. Benjamin seconded it. 54 members were registered, but only 42 participated in the meeting. Fr. Angel expressed gratitude to all participants, the organisers, and the TNBCLC support staff team.

As the number of participants continues to increase, it was suggested that the meeting venue be changed to provide better accommodations. Several locations were proposed, including Poondy, Trichy, Clunny Retreat Centre, and Velankanni. Ultimately, it was agreed to hold the meeting at Velankanni, with Fr. Arockia Baskar and Fr. Tony Amalraj serving as the local organisers. The meeting dates will be finalised in accordance with the TNBC half-yearly meeting schedule. The proposed dates are January 20-21, 2026, or January 27-28, 2026. The topic for the upcoming meeting may be designated as "Civil Perspective on Trust and Societies, Marriage Registration Procedures, Affidavit, Filing of FIR, and Administration of Temporal Goods." Civil lawyers, auditors, and experts could be invited as resource persons.

Father Angel, the President, extended an invitation to the participants to author additional canonical books and articles, with the publication to be supported by the Tamil Nadu Canon Law Association. It was proposed by the participants that the President of the Tamil Nadu Canon Law Association could serve as the contact person within the Legal Commission, representing the concerns of canon lawyers in Tamil Nadu. Additionally, it was suggested that the executive team of the Tamil Nadu Canon Law Association meet with the President of the Tamil Nadu Bishops' Council (TNBC) to advocate for the establishment of a regional Canon Law Commission. Participants inquired about the delay in conducting the notary training program, which was scheduled for the previous meeting. This issue was discussed during the Judicial Vicars meeting held in November 2024, where it was opined that, due to the absence of stable members of notaries, conducting workshops for them would be ineffective. It was noted that, in most tribunals, assistant parish priests serve as notaries and are transferred annually. Furthermore, there was a strong recommendation, akin to the previous year, to include a representative from the Tamil Nadu Canon Law Association in the Tamil Nadu Bishops' Council by establishing a Regional Canon Law Commission and appointing a regional secretary for the commission.

The two-day annual meeting of the Tamil Nadu Canon Law Association concluded with an expression of gratitude and a sumptuous luncheon. Following the session, the executive team convened briefly to assess the 34th annual meeting, and Fr. James Anthuvan and Fr Arockia Basker have consented to contact the resource persons for the forthcoming meeting. The executive committee is scheduled to assemble at Velankanni in June 2025 to meet the Bishop of Thanjavur and the Shrine authorities to organise the next meeting.

The minutes were approved by the participants, as proposed by Fr. George and seconded by Fr. Suresh.

Fr. Angel
President

Fr. J. Anthony
Secretar