

Indian Conference of Secular Institutes

Lucknow, India: 21st Biennial meeting of the Indian Conference of Secular Institutes (ICSI) was held on October 10-12th, 2016 at Ruby Cottage, Narhi, Lucknow.

Forty five members from twelve secular institutes participated in the meeting. The theme of the meeting was “New evangelization and Formation”. At the inaugural Eucharistic celebration Most Rev. Dr. Gerald Mathias, Bishop of Lucknow, comparing the secular Institutes to a mustard seed said, though small, yet they are powerful. Members consecrate themselves to the Lord by living the Evangelical Counsels of poverty, chastity and obedience in a form adapted to their way of life which is fully involved in the world, without living together but with a real sense of community. They live in all parts of society and may do any kind of work. Nothing distinguishes them from other committed Christians, except their consecration, he said.

Addressing the gathering Ms. Alice Lukose, President of ICSI said, “It is a great joy for us to be together. Though we take different paths, we have the same destination. It is a time to share how each Institute is living the Mission entrusted to them. We are witnesses of a God who walks our roadways. In the words of St. Paul “we are letters of Christ, written not with ink, but with the spirit of the living God, not on tablets of stone but on tablets of flesh in the heart.”

Some eminent persons spoke on the occasion on various relevant topics were: Ms. Smitha, from Secular Institute of Ancillae, Bangalore, Mary Paul from the Institute of the Maids of the Poor (IMP), Ethiopia, Mr. Robin F D’Souza, Christ the King, Goa, Ms. Adelaide, S.I. M.D.S., Goa and Fr. Subhash Anand, Udaipur. Their talks were very inspiring, radical and thought provoking.

Panel sharing on the experiences of initial and ongoing formation was very beneficial. Sharing the experiences and insights on World Conference of Secular institutes (CMIS) and Asian Conference on Secular institutes (ACSI) by Ms. Adelaide were truly enriching. The newly elected Executive Council Member of the World Conference of Secular Institutes (CMIS), Ms. Lilly Fernandes urged individual Institutes to build a cordial relationship and trust with the ecclesiastical Authorities both on national and international level.

At the concluding Eucharist Most Rev. Dr. Ignatius D’Souza of Bareilly Diocese described the true character of love, “agape” is the love of choice and commitment- choosing to love another person. God’s self sacrificing love for man is displayed in the sending of his Son, Jesus Christ. God’s love is forgiving love and we are called to imitate this love and God measures our entire life by it. To be like God, we must learn to love like God, he concluded.

Besides, these, the cultural night with creative programs by each Institute gave a break from the hectic schedule. It gave enjoyment and socialization too.

The Lucknow Darshan on the previous day of the meeting gave the participants enough enjoyment and knowledge about the city of Nawabs as Lucknow is sometimes known as.

At the end of the meeting the following persons were elected to the new Executive Council of the ICSI. Mr. Robin F. D'Souza, Secular Institute of Christ the King, Goa, as the President, Ms. Ayres, Secular Institute of Caritas Christi, Goa, as Secretary cum Treasurer and Ms. Smita, Ancillae Secular Institute, Bangalore as the Councilor. The 22nd national meeting will be held in Goa in 2018.

Sent by: Lilly Fernandes, Institute of the Maids of the Poor, Lucknow