

28th January 2019
16/2019

INAUGURATION OF THE JUDICIAL YEAR OF THE MALTESE ECCLESIASTICAL TRIBUNALS

The Ecclesiastical Tribunals of Malta and Gozo celebrated the inauguration of the Judicial Year. This inauguration which was at the Archbishop's Palace in Valletta, was motivated by the desire of Pope Francis that the Church's tribunals be always more accountable, and ever closer to the faith community they serve.

This year, the special guest was His Excellency Monsignor Maurice Monier, the Pro-Dean of the Apostolic Tribunal of the Roman Rota who was actively involved in the commission that in recent years reformed canonical procedures for matrimonial nullity through the papal document *Mitis Iudex Dominus Iesus*. Mgr Monier delivered the evening's *Lectio Magistralis* about "The evaluation of the confessions and declarations of the parties and witnesses in marriage nullity cases; current Rotal doctrine and praxis".

In his opening address, Archbishop Charles J. Scicluna said that the foundation of justice is truth and that justice is not only a mark of civilisation but also warned that societies that lacked justice are less civilised.

The three Judicial Vicars of the Maltese province also gave an overview concerning the work of their respective tribunals during the past year while giving projections for the current year. The Judicial Vicars of the Maltese Tribunals, Rev. Can. Brendan Gatt of the Metropolitan First Instance Tribunal and Mgr Joseph Bajada of the Regional Tribunal of Second Instance spoke about the cases and the diminishing backlog that is the direct result of the reform and a better organisation of the tribunals. Mgr Edward Xuereb, the Judicial Vicar of the Gozo Ecclesiastical Tribunal also gave his report.

As part of the events surrounding the inauguration which was held on Wednesday, 23rd January 2019, Mgr Monier also delivered a lecture to the tribunals' personnel as part of their in-service training.