

The Pontifical University of Saint Thomas Aquinas (Angelicum)

Reverend Michael Carragher, OP

Thursday, the 4th of May, 2017

Our meeting with Father Carragher was as warm and gracious as was the meeting we had with him in March of 2015. But this time we met in the faculty's newly renovated offices. The renovations to the Angelicum are ongoing – a project that has been in progress for several years – largely under Father Carragher's watchful eye, with scaffolding still firmly in place in the courtyard.

We retired to a local trattoria, not far from the university, to carry on discussions about our experiences with the current state of the Church, the impact of the issues faced by the Church in Father's native Ireland, the implications presented by *Mitis Iudex* and *Amoris Laetitia*, and the need for canonists, especially in Latin America, Asia and Africa.

Father Carragher told us that there are currently 89 students studying canon law, 19 of them in the JCD program, representing a rather small portion of the 1,000 currently attending the Angelicum. Of those 89, he noted a significant increase in the number from India, a welcomed development that underscores the need to offer canonical formation for the Church experiencing remarkable growth and an increasing demand for canonists.

Chief among his concerns is the securing of affordable student accommodation, an issue being addressed by the Dominican Community by the renovation of present facilities made possible by the sale of other properties. He quipped that he is becoming rather expert in both Book V of the Code, together with current Italian real estate law.

Just as we discussed the three-year cycle for the JCL and possible ways to facilitate the formation of canonists for new circumstances at the Gregorian, Father Carragher spoke warmly of the collaboration that exists between the 8 schools of canon law in Rome, most especially with the Gregorian, and of their eagerness to receive direction from the Congregation for Catholic Education to begin the process of actually developing a program. He shared the same concerns we had heard before while expressing a quiet, yet sure, optimism for the future.

One of the issues he spoke of dealt with the sharing of resources found in the many libraries here in Rome: something that is not well developed and that invites further exploration.

He was interested in knowing whether or not we would be meeting with the Pontifical Commission for the Protection of Minors, seeing that new Commission as a corps of experts faced with innumerable challenges and prospects for canonists. Had our plans for that afternoon not been quite so fluid, having him attend that meeting would certainly have added a singular dimension – especially in light of his knowledge of, and experience with, the situation in Ireland.

One could only come away from that meeting with a sense of the deep friendship we as a Society enjoy with the canon law schools in Rome, and with profound gratitude for the support we have from them.

