

CHURCH REPORTER

1/2022

Newsletter for the English speaking members and friends of the Church Law Society
Prague – Brno – Olomouc – Stříbro – České Budějovice

20th January 2022 | Volume 7



1st January 2022 at 00.00: Night Mass in honour of the Mother of God, Basilica of the Virgin Mary, Stará Boleslav, Central Bohemia. The Palladium of the Czech Land is located on the altar. The main celebrant Cardinal Dominik Duka OP.
Photo by Jakub Šerých

Advent and Christmas in Central Bohemia and in Parish of Štěchovice in Particular

As last year, this Christmas in the Czech Republic was affected by measures against the spread of coronavirus. Already at the beginning of the Advent period, it was decided that in our parish of Štěchovice, in Central Bohemia, about 20 km southwest of Prague, we would drop this year's exhibition of nativity scenes in the church.

In every Czech church, a miniature of the nativity scene is located at the entrance at Christmas time, with a crib in which Christ the Lord lies, shepherds and the Three Wise Men who worship him. Believers (and often non-believers) walk around churches throughout the region and admire nativity scenes. It is a long tradition in our parish to exhibit a group of nativity scenes.¹ Many believers and non-believers from Štěchovice and surrounding villages have always participated in the preparation of the exhibition. Groups of children from kindergartens and primary schools, believers before and after a Mass and random passers-by visited the exhibition. Each nativity scene was assigned a number and the participants of the exhibition could vote for the most beautiful nativity scene. The winner was traditionally announced at the end of the fourth Sunday of Advent during the evening Mass and was given a small gift as an award. We hope that we will be able to restore this beautiful habit at the end of 2022, if the hygienic situation allows it.



Nativity scene in the church of St. Peter and Paul in the town of Slapy, which is part of the Roman Catholic parish of Štěchovice. Photo by Paweł Adam Dębek, pastor in Štěchovice

¹ A similar tradition of exhibiting not only their own nativity scene, but the entire collection of nativity scenes has been maintained for twenty years in the Dean's Church in Stříbro in Western Bohemia, where the local group of the Church Law Society is located. The largest world-famous mechanical nativity scene, in which about a hundred figures move, is located in the church in the town of Třeběchovice pod Orebem in the diocese of Hradec Králové in eastern Bohemia. Nativity scenes are a typical part of "shy Czech piety". Editor's note.

In this Advent as well as in the previous one, distribution of the St. Nicolas presents to the youngest children of the parish was cancelled. The event always took place on Saturday following 6th December when the church commemorates the feast of St. Nicholas of Myra in Lycia. The event was very popular. It took place before or after Holy Mass.

The one who plays the figure of St. Nicholas, the bishop and miracle worker, with a long white beard, in a typical red and white dress, with a cloak, a bishop's crosier and a mitre on his head, is accompanied by several boys and girls in white robes of angels ringing bells. He summons one child after another and asks him if he or she behaved well all year and if he or she would tell him a short poem or sing a carol. Then each child is presented a gift from St. Nicolas' huge basket in the form of sweets, nuts, and fruit. In the background, some boys disguised as horned devils in black costumes and furs pretend they are ready to take naughty children to hell. They rattle the chains, gossiping eerily and opening the sacks. But they will not take anyone away, because all the children behaved well indeed. This classic Baroque custom persisted in Bohemia and Moravia despite the forty years of communist totalitarianism. People did not let themselves be deprived of this ritual.²

The services were celebrated during Advent and Christmas, taking all necessary measures. These are, in particular, the obligation to wear a respirator throughout the service, to keep distance from others and to disinfect hands regularly. A large number of Catholic parishes and Protestant churches still broadcast worship services or other ceremonies, prayers and spiritual accompaniments online, on their websites or social networks.

Despite all the limitations, we spent the Advent and Christmas times with joy and gratitude, with slight optimism in our hearts. We hope and believe that perhaps the epidemic will subside during the new year and eventually disappear. If the good Lord God gives. And maybe a real cure against this terrible viral disease will finally be invented.

Jakub Nagy

New Year's Pilgrimage Led by Cardinal Duka

On 31st December 2021, on the feast of pope St. Sylvester, a pilgrimage took place from Prague, 26 kilometres long, from the newly built column of the Virgin Mary on the Old Town Square to the town of Stará Boleslav, where the Czech monarch, Duke St. Wenceslas, was assassinated in 935. The pilgrimage route consists of 44 stops for prayer. It's called Via Sancta Mariana. This pilgrimage, established as early as the end of the 10th century as a national affair, has been revived in the last ten years.

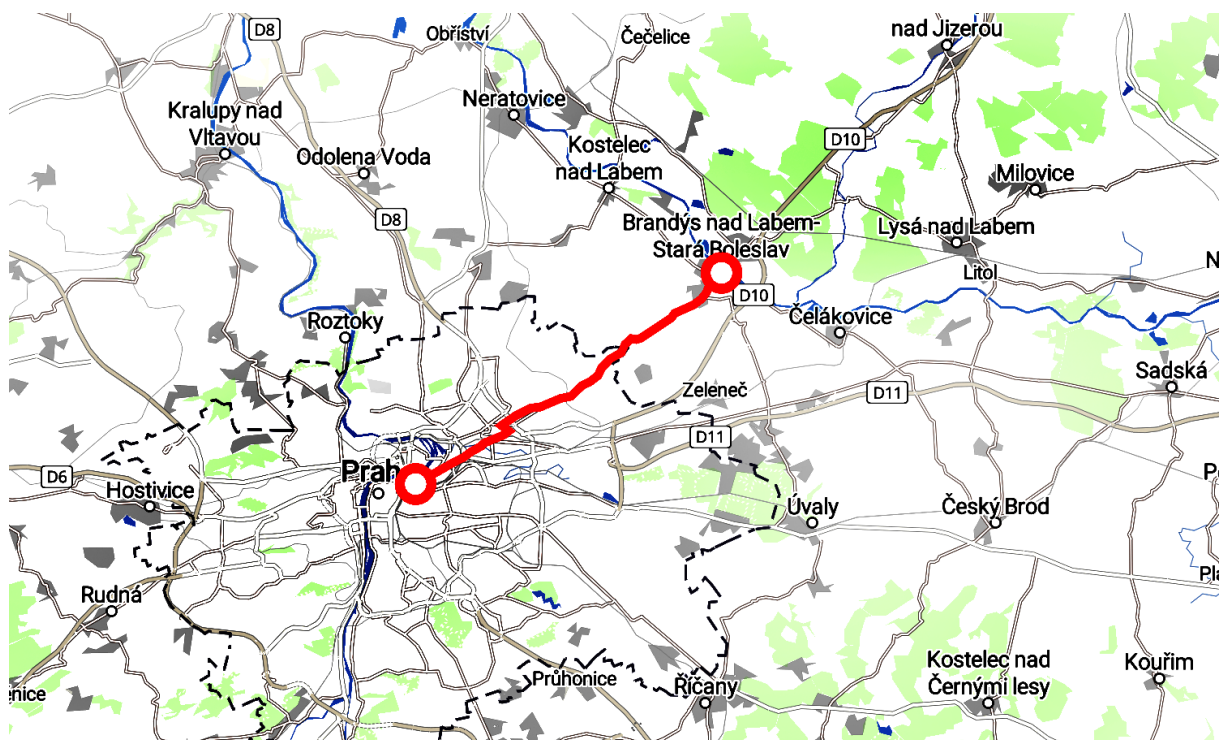
There are two churches in Stará Boleslav, one of the most important places of pilgrimage in Bohemia. The smaller is the Romanesque basilica of St. Wenceslas, built over the original

² The feast of St. Nicholas survived all the disasters also due to the fact that it was and still is a private family celebration. It has been celebrated and is still celebrated by non-Catholics, especially Protestants, who do not mind that the main character is a bishop with all the insignia. Interestingly, the tradition never lost its moderate religious background, even in families that do not profess the faith very much. It is only in recent years that in some places this ritual is to some extent transferred to the environment of Catholic parishes. However, it is mostly celebrated in families, resp. sometimes two or three families come together to celebrate. Editor's note.

small church of Sts. Cosmas and Damian, at the entrance of which St. Wenceslas was assassinated as he sought asylum and was just touching a doorknocker to open a church door. On the anniversary of the martyrdom of St. Wenceslas on 28th September 2009, which at that time, by decision of the Parliament of the Czech Republic, became the newly national holiday of the Czech Republic as the Day of Czech Statehood, Pope Benedict XVI visited the said basilica.

The second, larger church is located next to the church of St. Wenceslas. It is a Baroque basilica of the Virgin Mary, on the altar of which is a rare jewel of Czech Christianity, the Palladium of the Czech Land. It is a golden Marian sculpture, which according to legend was donated to Bohemian princess St. Ludmila by the Greek missionary St. Methodius, co-patron of Europe, in Moravia. St. Wenceslas, the grandson of St. Ludmila, carried the sculpture on his body even at the time of his assassination. His servant hid this precious treasure by burying it in the ground. After several centuries, it was excavated and placed on the altar in the church.

After the arrival of a crowd of pilgrims from Prague, Cardinal Dominik Duka celebrated a New Year's Mass in Stará Boleslav in the Basilica of the Virgin Mary at the Palladium of the Czech Land. Holy Mass from the feast of the Virgin Mary began exactly at midnight on the new year 2022. There is a photo from the Holy Mass on the front page.



The tradition of making a pilgrimage on the oldest pilgrimage route in the Czech Republic – *Via Sancta Mariana* – from Prague to Stará Boleslav has recently been revived by the Via Sancta Mariana Association. The pilgrimage was founded by the Czech Duke Boleslav II. sometimes between 967–999. This monarch, the son of St. Wenceslas' brother, carried it out for the first time with a desire to atone for the sin of his father, Duke Boleslav I, who murdered St. Wenceslas. However, we must add that Duke Boleslav I repented himself later. Three years after the murder, he transferred the body of St. Wenceslas from Stará Boleslav to the Church of

St. Vitus at the Prague Castle, and it was especially difficult to transfer the body across the ford on the Vltava River (bridges did not exist yet).

In the 17th century, chapels were built at individual stops along the pilgrimage route. Two thirds of them were destroyed during the 20th century. One third is still in place. However, they are considerably depleted, and the said association has in its program to work for their repair. The newly renewed tradition is part of the current deepening of the faith of the Catholic part of the Czech nation.

The pilgrimage began on 31st December 2021 at 12:00 at the Marian Column on the Old Town Square in Prague and continued along the entire 26-kilometer route with 44 stops to pray. Accompanying vehicles were prepared for backpacks and refreshments at the destination. The Mass in front of Palladium of the Czech Land, which began at exactly midnight, was the culmination of the pilgrimage.



Cardinal Dominik Duka, archbishop of Prague and Primate of Bohemia, celebrates the New Year Mass in the basilica of the Assumption of Mary in Stará Boleslav.

*Photo by Jakub Šerých
Text Jiří Rajmund Tretera, Záboj Horák, Jakub Nagy*

Professor Karel Malý, Rector Emeritus of Charles University, Awarded the Pontifical Order of St. Gregory the Great

On 5th January 2022, Prof. JUDr. Karel Malý, DrSc., Dr.h.c., legal historian, rector emeritus of Charles University and honorary member of the Church Law Society, was awarded the Order of St. Gregory the Great. The award, given by Pope Francis, was presented to the laureate by Cardinal Duka, Archbishop of Prague and Primate of Bohemia, at a ceremony in the Throne Hall of the Archbishop's Palace in Prague.

In his speech, Cardinal Duka recalled the great scientific and pedagogical merits of Professor Malý and his fundamental contribution to the renewal of the study of theology in the Czech lands after 1989, especially to the incorporation of three theological faculties into the Charles University in 1990. Professor Malý advocated the renewal of theological studies as chairman of the Council of Higher Education Institutions, vice-rector and rector of the Charles University.

Prof. RNDr. Petr Malý, DrSc., the son of the decorated Professor, who is professor at the Faculty of Mathematics and Physics, Charles University, and his grandson Pavel Malý attended the ceremony. Charles University was represented by its rector Prof. MUDr. Tomáš Zima, DrSc., and vice-rectors Prof. JUDr. Aleš Gerloch, CSc., from the Faculty of Law, and Prof. PhDr. Ing. Jan Royt, Ph.D., DSc., teacher of the history of Christian art at the Catholic Theological Faculty.

Other participants were JUDr. Martin Foukal, vice-chairman of the Union of Czech Lawyers and chairman of its Prague Association, and JUDr. Jan Kotous, chancellor emeritus of the Royal Collegiate Chapter in Vyšehrad, representing the disciples of Prof. Malý. Both are members of the Church Law Society.



Dominik Cardinal Duka and Professor Karel Malý in the Throne Hall of the Archbishop's Palace in Prague. Photo by Vladimír Šigut

Professor Malý was born on 26th October 1930 in Mnichovo Hradiště in north-eastern Bohemia. After graduating from the Faculty of Law, Charles University, in 1954, he began working there first as senior lecturer and later as reader for the field of Czech legal history. His specialization was the history of Czech criminal law from the Middle Ages to the present. After the Velvet Revolution, he was appointed Professor of Legal History at Charles University in 1990.

Since 1990 he headed the Institute of Legal History of the Faculty of Law, Charles University, and since 1998 the Department of Legal History of the same faculty. Under his leadership, the teaching of canon law flourished at the Faculty of Law. He is a member of the Church Law Society since 1996, since 10th April 2021 he is an honorary member.



Photo by Vladimír Šigut

From New Publications

Journals

Biuletyn Stowarzyszenia Kanonistów Polskich, rok XXXI (2021), Nr 34, Lublin, 218 p., ISSN 1731-1438.

Ecclesiastical Law Journal, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, ISSN 0956-618X, Vol. 23, No. 3, September 2021.

Folia Theologica et Canonica, Faculty of Theology of the Pázmány Péter Catholic University, Budapest, ISSN 2063-9635, ročník IX, číslo 31/23, 2020.

Studia theologica, Univerzita Palackého v Olomouci – Cyrilometodějská teologická fakulta, Olomouc, 2021, ISSN 1212-8570,

ročník XXIII, číslo 1,

z obsahu:

MACEK, Petr, *Čeští tomisté píší o marxismu (1945–1948)* [*Czech Tomists Write About Marxism (1945–1948)*], s. 51–70,

VLADÁR, Vojtech, *Doplňující přísaha v středověkém kánonickém práve* [*Complementary Oath in Medieval Canon Law*], s. 71–92.

The Jurist, Studies in Church Law and Ministry, The Catholic University of America, The School of Canon Law, Washington, D. C., ISSN 0022-6858, eISSN 2326-6236, 77 (2021: 1).

Church Reporter – Newsletter for the English speaking members and friends of the Church Law Society, Prague – Brno – Olomouc – Stříbro – České Budějovice, published by Church Law Society, Sudoměřská 25, 130 00 Praha 3, Czech Republic.

Photo on the front page: 1st January 2022 at 00.00: Night Mass in honour of the Mother of God, Basilica of the Virgin Mary, Stará Boleslav, Central Bohemia. The Palladium of the Czech Land is located on the altar. The main celebrant Cardinal Dominik Duka OP. Photo by Jakub Šerých

Editor-in-Chief:	P. Jiří Rajmund Tretera OP
Deputy Editor-in-Chief:	Záboj Horák
Executive Editor:	Jakub Nagy
Editorial Board	Tomáš Grundza, Marek Novák

Available online at: spcp.prf.cuni.cz/newsletter. Issues appear monthly.

E-mail: spcp@prf.cuni.cz

ISSN 2695-012X