

CHURCH REPORTER

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

Ash Wednesday, 22nd February 2023 | Volume 8



Participants of the European Synodal Assembly, which was held in Prague on 6th – 9th February 2023.

General Petr Pavel elected President of the Czech Republic

The feast day of St. Thomas Aquinas, Saturday **28th January 2023**, was a double holiday for us this year. In the second round of the 2023 presidential elections that day, General Petr Pavel, the candidate of the democratic forces, won with a convincing majority of 58.32% of the votes, with a record turnout of 70.25% of eligible voters. As the electoral map shows us, he won with a majority in more than 4/5 districts. *We have a new President of the Czech Republic!*

Congratulations are pouring in from all over the world. A well-informed foreigner knows what the big deal is here. Slovak President Mrs. Zuzana Čaputová arrived in Prague even before the election results were announced and with great joy congratulated our new president personally on the spot. It was obvious that she was extremely pleased with the result of our elections.

According to the opening speeches of the newly elected president, we can expect a peaceful period in the modern history of the Czech state. We believe that the tension, backbiting and fear-mongering in society, party-switching and atomization of society is over.

The new president is clearly oriented towards the West. He received the French War Cross during his mission in the former Yugoslavia for rescuing soldiers. He represented the Czech Republic in the highest structures of NATO for many years. It is the end of some of our politicians eyeing Moscow and Beijing. The populist parties, which, with the help of powerful capital, drew voters to their side, are pushed into the background.

The successful presidential election was preceded by elections to the Chamber of Deputies of the Parliament in autumn 2021, in which the democratic and pro-Western trend in Czech politics won. Petr Fiala, a Professor at the Masaryk University in Brno, became the Prime Minister. Czech government is composed of representatives of five democratic parties.

The inauguration of the new President will take place on 9th March 2023 at Prague Castle.

Jiří Rajmund Tretera, Záboj Horák



President of the Czech Republic Petr Pavel and his wife Eva Pavlová.

Professor Tomáš Halík elected President of the Czech Christian Academy

On the same day as the election of the new President of the Czech Republic, the election of representatives of the Czech Christian Academy took place in Prague, just a few hours earlier. The general meeting elected as President of the Czech Christian Academy Mons. Tomáš Halík, Professor of the Faculty of Philosophy of the Charles University, parish priest of the academic parish in Prague, winner of the Templeton Prize and honorary doctor of Oxford University.

Tomáš Halík, a Catholic priest secretly ordained in 1978 in Erfurt, was one of the leaders of the underground church and one of the three secret advisers of the Prague Archbishop Cardinal František Tomášek in the period before the Velvet Revolution in 1989.

Professor Pavel Hošek from the Evangelical Theological Faculty of Charles University was elected first vice-president and Jan Kotas, rector of the Archbishop's Seminary in Prague, was elected second vice-president.

To Tomáš Halík, who is an honorary member of the Church Law Society, and to the two vice-presidents, who are our close friends, we congratulate on behalf of ourselves and the entire Church Law Society, which is a collective member of the Czech Christian Academy.

The Czech Christian Academy has 1,137 members, 5 collective members, 65 local groups throughout the Czech Republic and on Nelson Island in Antarctica.



28th January 2023: view of the chairman's desk during the General Assembly meeting.

Photo Czech Christian Academy



Local group in Prague

The European Synodal Assembly in Prague

The European phase of the synodal process was held in Prague from 6th to 9th February 2023. The first day of the meeting began with a joint Holy Mass, which was celebrated by Cardinal Jean-Claude Hollerich, the Archbishop of Luxembourg. Then, delegates from 39 episcopal conferences heard the first presentations. The opening address was given by Mons. Tomáš Halík, winner of the Templeton Prize and honorary member of the Church Law Society (see below: spiritual address by Mons. Tomáš Halík).



Mons. Tomáš Halík during his opening speech at the start of the European Synodal Assembly in Prague.

Photo Anicka Guthrie

Then it was time for contributions from the delegates from the individual bishops' conferences. The first third, a total of thirteen presentations, were heard on the first day of the meeting. Two people from each bishops' conference were allowed to speak and they were given six minutes to reflect on whatever themes raised by the synod are relevant to their country.

Afterwards, discussion groups were set up to continue the discussion in the afternoon. The day ended with an evening prayer with songs from the Taizé Community.



The first day of the Synodal Assembly ended with prayers from Taizé.

Photo Jakub Šerých

The second day of the Assembly again began with Holy Mass. Its main celebrant was Cardinal Marc Ouellet, at that time the Prefect of the Dicastery for Bishops. The morning continued with presentations by a further third of the representatives of the bishops' conferences. The six-minute presentations were interspersed with pauses for prayer. Before lunch, the participants again divided into discussion groups, whose work sessions were held in the afternoon. Towards evening, representatives from the final third of the delegations spoke, including among them the Czech delegation. The day ended with a joint prayer led by representatives of the Ukrainian Greek Catholic Church.



Debates in small groups.

Photo Jana Podhorská

The participants began the third day of the Synodal Continental Assembly with a prayer led by representatives of the Conference of European Churches and the Ecumenical Council of Churches, which was followed by group work. The Assembly ended with a solemn Holy Mass in the Cathedral of Saints Vitus, Wenceslas and Adalbert, concelebrated by delegates from the European Synodal Assembly. The main celebrant was Cardinal Mario Grech, Secretary General of the Synod. Three other cardinals, 45 bishops and 80 priests concelebrated with him and around 500 of the faithful took part.



The solemn service in the Cathedral of Saints Vitus, Wenceslas and Adalbert in Prague.

Photo Lucie Horníková

The final day of the Synodal Assembly again began with a Holy Mass, presided over by Archbishop Jude Thaddeus Okolo, the Apostolic Nuncio to the Czech Republic. This was the last day that all the delegates of the Synodal Assembly attended.

The result of the Prague Synodal Assembly is a joint document, the draft of which was submitted by the editorial committee of the Assembly. The document was not prepared in advance, but was produced gradually during the Assembly. It is a provisional document which is still subject to several changes. Then it will be sent to all the participants for possible further revision and after that it will be presented to the Secretary General of the Synod.

Among the conclusions of the document is the need to deepen the theology of synodality and the theology of formation in synodality. One of the proposals is also that a similar meeting at which bishops and lay people would meet should be held regularly, at least once every ten years.

Greetings to the participants of the Synodal Assembly from the Prime Minister of the Czech Republic

Dear Delegates of the Bishops' Conferences, Ladies and Gentlemen, Dear Guests,

My work commitments unfortunately prevent me from attending your final session of the Synodal European Continental Assembly in person, so please allow me to greet you all at least remotely. I trust that you are having a successful assembly and that you have all enjoyed your stay in Prague.

Christianity was of fundamental importance in the formation of Europe, including the basic values on which European civilization is built today, such as human freedom, respect for man and solidarity. It is important that the Christian view of the world and of man remains a strong voice in the public sphere, that Christians continue to be the „light of the world” and the „salt of the Earth”. Synodal themes remind us of this very clearly.

At the same time, the discussion of various suggestions and proposals „from below”, from different countries and regions, is a great testimony to the world: we have to mend paths, bury chasms, tear down walls and, at the same time, we must not stop naming good and evil.

The word can do all this. Open and direct dialogue, an integral part of which is the willingness to listen to the other person. Thank you for taking on this difficult task.

I wish you lots of success and God's blessing in your work.

Professor Petr Fiala, Prime Minister of the Czech Republic

Tomáš Halík's Spiritual Introduction to the Assembly

At the beginning of their history, when Christians were asked what was new about their practice, whether it was a new religion or a new philosophy, they answered: it is the way. It is the way of following the one who said: I am the Way. Christians have constantly returned to this vision throughout history, especially in times of crisis.

The task of the World Synod of Bishops is anamnesis. It is to be reminded, to revive and deepen the dynamic character of Christianity. Christianity was the way in the beginning, and it is to be the way now and forever. The Church as a communion of pilgrims is a living organism, which means always to be open, transforming and evolving. Synodality, a common journey (*syn hodos*), means a constant openness to the Spirit of God, through whom the risen, living Christ lives and works in the Church. The synod is an opportunity to listen together to what the Spirit is saying to the churches today.

In the coming days we are to reflect together on the first fruits of the journey to revive the synodal character of the Church on our continent. It is a short portion of a long journey. This small but important fragment of the historical experience of European Christianity must be placed in a wider context, in the colourful mosaic of the global Christianity of the future. We have to say clearly and comprehensibly what European Christianity today wants and can do to respond to the joys and hopes, the grief and anguish of our whole planet – this planet which is interconnected today in many ways and at the same time is divided and globally threatened in many ways.

We are meeting in a country with a dramatic religious history. This includes the beginnings of the Reformation in the 14th century, the religious wars in the 15th and 17th centuries and the severe persecution of the Church in the 20th century. In the jails and concentration camps of Hitlerism and Stalinism, Christians learned practical ecumenism and dialogue with nonbelievers, solidarity, sharing, poverty, the „science of the cross“. This country has undergone three waves of secularization as a result of socio-cultural changes: a „soft secularization“ in the rapid transition from an agrarian to an industrial society; a hard violent secularization under the communist regime; and another „soft secularization“ in the transition from a totalitarian society to a fragile pluralistic democracy in the post-modern era. It is precisely the transformations, crises and trials that challenge us to find new paths and opportunities for a deeper understanding of what is essential.

Pope Benedict, on a visit to this country, first expressed the idea that the Church should, like the Temple of Jerusalem, form a „courtyard of the Gentiles“. While sects accept only those who are fully observant and committed, the Church must keep a space open for spiritual seekers, for those who, while not fully identifying with its teachings and practices, nevertheless feel some closeness to Christianity. Jesus declared „He who is not against us is with us“ (Mk 9, 40); he warned his disciples against the zealotry of revolutionaries and inquisitors, against their attempts to play the angels of the Last Judgment and to separate the wheat from the chaff too early. Even St. Augustine argued that many of those who think they are outside are in fact inside, and many who think they are inside are in fact outside.

The Church is a mystery; we know where the Church is, but we do not know where she is not.

We believe and confess that the Church is a mystery, a sacrament, a sign (*signum*) – a sign of the unity of all humanity in Christ. The Church is a dynamic sacrament, it is a way to that goal.

Total unification is an eschatological goal that can only be fully realized at the end of history. Only then will the Church be completely and perfectly one, holy, catholic and apostolic. Only then will we see and mirror God fully, just as He is.

The task of the Church is to keep the desire for this goal ever present in human hearts, and at the same time to resist the temptation to regard any form of the Church, any state of society, and any state of religious, philosophical or scientific knowledge, as final and perfect.

We must always distinguish the concrete form of the Church in history from its eschatological form; that is, we must distinguish the Church on the way, the Church struggling (*ecclesia militans*), from the victorious Church in heaven (*ecclesia triumphans*).

To regard the Church in the midst of history as the perfect *ecclesia triumphans* leads to triumphalism, a dangerous form of idolatry. Moreover, the „*ecclesia militans*“, if it does not resist the temptation of triumphalism, can become a sinful militant institution.

We confess with humility that this has happened repeatedly in the history of Christianity. These tragic experiences lead us now to the firm conviction that the mission of the Church is to be a source of spiritual inspiration and transformation, fully respecting the freedom of conscience of every human person and rejecting any use of force, any form of manipulation.

Like political power, moral influence and spiritual authority can also be misused, as the scandals of sexual, psychological, economic and spiritual abuse in the Church have shown us, especially the abuse and exploitation of the weakest and most vulnerable.

The permanent task of the Church is mission. Mission in today's world cannot be „*reconquista*“, an expression of nostalgia for a lost past, or proselytism, manipulation, an attempt to push seekers into the existing mental and institutional boundaries of the Church. Rather, these boundaries must be expanded and enriched precisely by the experiences of seekers.

If we take seriously the principle of synodality, then mission cannot be understood as a one-sided process, but rather as accompaniment in a spirit of dialogue, a quest for mutual understanding. Synodality is a process of learning in which we not only teach but also learn.

The call to open the „courtyard of the Gentiles“ within the temple of the Church, to integrate the seekers, was a positive step on the path of synodality in the spirit of the Second Vatican Council. Today, however, we need to go further. Something has happened to the whole temple form of the Church and we must not ignore it. Before his election to the See of Peter, Cardinal Bergoglio recalled the words of Scripture: Jesus stands at the door and knocks. But today, he added, Jesus knocks *from within*. He wants to go out and we must follow him. We need to go beyond our current mental and institutional boundaries, to go especially to the poor, the marginalized, the suffering. The Church is to be a field hospital – this idea of Pope Francis needs to be developed further. A field hospital must have the backing of a church that is able to offer competent diagnosis (reading the signs of the times); prevention (strengthening the system of immunity against infectious ideologies such as populism, nationalism and fundamentalism); and therapy and long-term recovery (including the process of reconciliation and healing of wounds after times of violence and injustice).

For this very serious task, the Church urgently needs allies – its journey must be shared, a common journey (*syn hodos*). We must not approach others with the pride and arrogance of the owners of truth. Truth is a book that none of us has yet read to the end. We are not *owners* of truth, but *lovers* of truth and lovers of the only One who is allowed to say: I am the Truth.

Jesus did not answer Pilate's question with a theory, an ideology, or a definition of truth. But he *testified to the truth* that transcends all doctrines and ideologies; he revealed the truth that is happening, that is alive and personal. Only Jesus can say: *I am the Truth*. And at the same time, he says: I am the way and the life.

A truth that was not living and not a way would be more like an ideology, a mere theory. Orthodoxy must be combined with *orthopraxy* – right action.

And we must not forget the third, deeper dimension of living in truth. This is *orthopathy*, right passion, desire, inner experience – spirituality. Above all, it is through spirituality – the spiritual experience of individual believers and of the whole Church – that the Spirit gradually introduces us to the wholeness of the truth. These three need each other. Although orthodoxy

(right ideas) can be intellectually attractive, without orthopraxy (right action) it is ineffective, and without orthopathy (right feeling) it is cold, callow and shallow.

The new evangelization and the synodal transformation of the Church and the world constitute a process in which we must learn to worship God in a new and deeper way – in Spirit and in truth.

We must not be afraid that some forms of the Church are dying: „Unless a grain of wheat falls into the ground and dies, it remains a single grain. But if it dies, it bears much fruit.” (John 12:24).

We must not look for the Living among the dead. In every period of the Church’s history, we must exercise the art of spiritual discernment, distinguishing on the tree of the Church the branches that are alive and those that are dry and dead.

Triumphalism, the worship of a dead God, must be replaced by a humble kenotic ecclesiology. The life of the Church consists in participating in the paradox of Easter: the moment of self-giving and self-transcendence, the transformation of death into resurrection and new life.

Through the eyes of faith, we can see not only the ongoing process of creation (*creatio continua*). In history – and especially in the history of the Church – we can also see the ongoing processes of incarnation (*incarnatio continua*), suffering (*passio continua*) and resurrection (*resurrectio continua*).

The Easter experience of the nascent Church includes the surprise that the Resurrection is not a resuscitation of the past but a radical transformation. Consider that the eyes of even those nearest and dearest to him failed to recognize the Risen Jesus. Mary Magdalene knew him by his voice, Thomas by his wounds, the pilgrims to Emmaus at the breaking of the bread.

Even today, an important part of Christian existence is the adventure of seeking the Living Christ, who comes to us in many surprising – sometimes anonymous – forms. He comes through the closed door of fear; we miss him when we lock ourselves into fear. He comes to us as a voice that speaks to our hearts; we miss it if we allow ourselves to be deafened by the noise of ideologies and commercial advertising. He shows himself to us in the wounds of our world; if we ignore these wounds, we have no right to say with the apostle Thomas: My Lord and my God! He shows himself to us like the unknown stranger on the road to Emmaus; we will miss him if we are unwilling to break our bread with others, even with strangers.

As a „*signum*”, a sacramental sign, the Church is a symbol of that „universal brotherhood” which is the eschatological goal of the history of the Church, the history of humanity and the whole process of creation. We believe and confess that it is a *signum efficiens* – an effective instrument of this process of unification. And to accomplish this, contemplation and action must be combined. It requires an „eschatological patience” with the holy restlessness of the heart (*inquietas cordis*), which can only end in the arms of God at the end of the ages. Prayer, adoration, the celebration of the Eucharist and „political love” are mutually compatible elements of the process of divinization, the christification of the world.

Political *diakonia* creates a culture of closeness and solidarity, of empathy and hospitality, of mutual respect. It builds bridges between people of different nations, cultures and religions. At the same time, political *diakonia* is also a service of worship, part of that metanoia in which human and interpersonal reality is transformed, given a divine quality and depth.

The Church participates in the transformation of the world above all through evangelization, which is her main mission. The fruitfulness of evangelization lies in the inculturation, the incarnation of faith in a living culture, in the way people think and live. The seed of the word must be planted deep enough in good soil. Evangelization without inculturation is mere superficial indoctrination.

European Christianity was considered a paradigmatic example of inculturation: Christianity became the dominant force in European civilization. Gradually, however, the drawbacks and shadows of this type of evangelization became apparent. Since the Enlightenment, we have witnessed in Europe a certain „ex-culturation” of Christianity, a secularization of culture and society. The process of secularization has not caused the disappearance of Christianity, as some expected, but its transformation. Certain elements of the Gospel message that had been neglected by the Church during its association with political power were incorporated into secular humanism. The Second Vatican Council attempted to put an end to the „culture wars” between Catholicism and secular modernity and to integrate precisely these values (e.g., the emphasis on freedom of conscience) into the Church’s official teaching through dialogue. (Hans Urs von Balthasar spoke of „robbing the Egyptians”.)

The first sentence of the Constitution *Gaudium et Spes* sounds like a marriage vow: the Church has promised modern man love, respect and fidelity, solidarity and receptivity to his joys and hopes, his griefs and anguish.

However, this courtesy was not met with much reciprocity. To „modern man” the Church seemed too old and unattractive a bride. Moreover, the Church’s benevolence toward modern culture came at a time when modernity was just coming to an end. The Cultural Revolution around 1968 was perhaps both the climax and the end of the epoch of modernity. The year 1969, when man stepped on the moon and the invention of the microprocessor ushered in the age of the Internet, can be seen as the symbolic beginning of a new postmodern age. This era has been characterized in particular by the paradox of globalization – on the one hand, near-universal interconnection, on the other, radical plurality.

The darker side of globalization is showing itself today. Consider the global spread of violence, from the terrorist attacks on the United States in 2001 to the state terrorism of Russian imperialism and the current Russian genocide in Ukraine; pandemics of infectious diseases; destruction of the natural environment; and destruction of the moral climate through populism, fake news, nationalism, political radicalism and religious fundamentalism.

Teilhard de Chardin was one of the first prophets of globalization, which he called „planetarisation”, reflecting its place in the context of the overall development of the cosmos. Teilhard argued that the culminating phase of the process of globalization would not arise from some automatism of development and progress, but from a conscious and free turn of humankind towards „a single force that unites without destroying”. He saw this power in love as understood in the Gospel. Love is self-realization through self-transcendence.

I do believe that this decisive moment is happening right now and that the turn of Christianity towards synodality, the transformation of the Church into a dynamic community of pilgrims can have an impact on the destiny of the whole human family. Synodal renewal can and should be an invitation, encouragement and inspiration to all to walk together, to grow, and to mature together.

Does European Christianity today have the courage and spiritual energy to avert the threat of a „clash of civilizations” by converting the process of globalization into a process of communication, sharing and mutual enrichment, into a „*civitas ecumenica*”, a school of love and „universal brotherhood”?

When the coronavirus pandemic emptied and closed churches, I wondered whether this „lock-down” was not a prophetic warning. This is what Europe may soon look like if our Christianity is not revitalized, if we do not understand what „the Spirit is saying to the churches” today.

If the Church is to contribute to the transformation of the world, it must itself be permanently transformed: it must be „*ecclesia semper reformanda*”. If reform, a change of form, for example of certain institutional structures, is to bear good fruit, it must be preceded and accompanied by a revitalization of the „circulatory system” of the body of the Church – and that is spirituality. It is not possible to focus only on the individual organs and neglect to take care of what unites them and what infuses them with the Spirit and life.

Many „fishers of men” today have similar feelings to the Galilean fishermen on the shores of Lake Gennesaret when they first encountered Jesus: „We have empty hands and empty nets, we have worked all night and caught nothing.” In many countries of Europe, churches, monasteries and seminaries are empty or half-empty.

Jesus tells us the same thing he told the exhausted fishermen: Try again, go to the deep. To try again is not to repeat old mistakes. It takes perseverance and courage to leave the shallows and go to the deep.

„Why are you afraid – don't you have faith?” Jesus says in all storms and crises.

Faith is a courageous journey to the deep, a journey of transformation (*metanoia*) of the Church and the world, a common journey (*syn-hodos*) of synodality.

It is a journey from paralyzing fear (*paranoia*) to *metanoia* and *pronoia*, to foresight, prudence, discernment, openness to the future, and receptivity to God's challenges in the signs of the times.

May our meeting in Prague be a courageous and blessed step on this long and demanding journey.

Mons. Tomáš Halík, professor of Charles University

Czech Memoirs on the pages of Charles University's Faculty of Law Newsletter

It was a great pleasure to read the latest internet Newsletter of Charles University's Faculty of Law no. I/23, which was put together by the Department of Communication and External Relations of the Faculty of Law. We have printed two reports that particularly pleased us.

Address by the Dean of the Faculty of Law



Dear Colleagues, Dear Students, Dear Readers,

Allow me to wish you all the very best in the first newsletter of this year. But first I would like to look back to the past.

In the last three years our society has experienced several major crises. During the corona-virus pandemic we managed to respond promptly and adapt to distance learning for three whole terms. For that, I would like to thank the entire academic community.

We had hardly got over the pandemic when, on 24th February 2022, war came to the European continent. Once again, the Faculty did not just stand by. It clearly condemned the Russian aggression on the territory of Ukraine and defined it as a clear violation of international law.

However, we have also experienced many positive events and successes. Last year, two new centres were created, the Centre for Migration and Refugee Law and the Centre for Constitutionalism and Human Rights, which confirmed the Faculty's value orientation. The Ukrainian flag flew over the Faculty... Representatives of the Faculty assert the principles of democracy, humanism and human rights in the media. For me, as the Dean of the Faculty, this is proof that we are moving in the right direction.

In conclusion, I would like to add a few wishes for the New Year. Let us take pleasure even from small successes, appreciate those who try to move things forward, support civic society, be friendly towards others, help them and give them a smile. With this attitude from all of us, I believe that the Faculty will be a place where everyone enjoys being and meeting each other.

I wish that we continue to live in 2023 in a democratic society that has respect for human rights.

Professor Radim Boháč, Dean of the Faculty of Law, Charles University

Blessing of the book Czech Memoirs



Prezentace knihy pamětí prof. J. R. Tretera

*On 14th December 2022, the presentation and blessing of the latest book by **J. R. Tretera**, *Czech Memoirs: The Adventurous Life of a Lawyer, Law Professor and Priest and His Parents in the Last 120 Years*, was held.*

Following the presentation of the book, thanks to everyone involved in creating it and the reading of a first extract, the priests and deacons present, led by Cardinal Dominik Duka, proceeded to bless the book. This was followed by a series of readings by the author, for

which Associate Professor Záboj Horák provided musical accompaniment with singing and playing the ukulele.

To conclude, Mgr. Jan Hájek, deacon and sailor, gave a ceremonial toast. The informal part of the evening continued with a book signing and friendly conversation. The evening was attended by almost seventy members and supporters of the Church Law Society.

Petr Fiala has accepted the patronage of the translation of the commentary on the EU founding treaties into Ukrainian



On 20th December 2022, Professor Petr Fiala, Prime Minister of the Czech Republic, received representatives of the team of authors of the *Commentary on the EU Founding Treaties*, which comprises teachers from all four law faculties of public universities in the Czech Republic. The Commentary was published to mark the Czech Presidency of the EU Council. The head of the authors' team, **Professor Michal Tomášek, Vice Dean of the Faculty of Law of Charles University and honorary member of the Church Law Society**, presented the Prime Minister with a copy of the work and, at the same time, presented the project to translate the Commentary into Ukrainian. It will be provided by the Department of European Law of Charles University's Faculty of Law under the direction of Professor Michal Tomášek. The Ukrainian version will be given free of charge to Ukrainian lawyers in order for them to prepare for Ukraine's acces-

sion to the EU. Professor Fiala thanked the team of authors and accepted personal patronage of the project, which was confirmed on 18th January 2023 with an official document.

Professor Michal Tomášek celebrated his 60th birthday on 20th February 2023. On behalf of the Church Law Society and the editors of the Church Reporter, we congratulate him and we wish him many scientific and personal successes, health and God's blessings in the years to come.



Professor Michal Tomášek presents Prime Minister Petr Fiala with the Czech version of the Commentary on the Founding Treaties of the European Union.

Photo Office of the Government of the Czech Republic

Prague Legal History Conference of Doctoral Students

On Monday, 13th February 2023, a conference with the name *XI. Legal History Meeting of Doctoral Students and Postdoctoral Fellows* was held in the Faculty of Law of Charles University, organized by the Faculty's Department of Legal History and the Centre for Legal History Studies at the Institute of History of the Czech Academy of Sciences and the Faculty of Law of Charles University.

At the conference, doctoral students from departments of law history at Czech and Slovak law faculties presented the results of their research.

The opening speech was given by Professor Jan Kuklík, head of the Department of Legal History at Prague's Faculty of Law and Vice-Rector of Charles University.

This was followed by three blocks of presentations which were moderated by Associate Professor Jiří Šouša from Prague's Faculty of Law, Associate Professor Pavel Salák from the Faculty of Law of Masaryk University and Professor Tomáš Gábriš from the Faculty of Law of Trnava University in Trnava (Slovakia).

Other participants from among the teachers of law history and Roman law were Professor Vladimír Kindl, Dean of Prague's Faculty of Law from 2000 to 2006, and Dr Radek Černoch, a Romanist from Brno.

There were eleven contributions from doctoral students and postdoctoral fellows from Prague's Faculty of Law, Masaryk University in Brno, Trnava University in Trnava (Slovakia) and Matej Bel University in Banská Bystrica (Slovakia).

In the first conference session, Mgr. Jakub Nagy, a full-time doctoral student at the Department of Legal History at Prague's Faculty of Law, specialising in church law, gave a presentation on the history and current legal regulation of fines (monetary penalties) in canon law of the Latin Catholic Church.



Jakub Nagy speaking on fines in canon law.

Each paper was followed by a discussion and recommendations for possible further research or refinement of dissertation projects. Friendly conversations about the papers also continued during the refreshments.



Joint photograph of the participants at the legal history meeting immediately after the conference.

Photo Jan Beránek and Viola Frková

Text Jakub Nagy

Invitation to a march 75 years later

This year marks 75 years since the Students' March for Freedom and Democracy. On 25th February 1948, they were the only ones to publicly express their opposition to the emerging communist dictatorship and, by marching to Prague Castle, they tried to support President Edvard Beneš to not give in to communist pressure.

On the 75th anniversary of the students' march to Prague Castle, the Prague Academic Club 48 invites you to a guided procession along the same route as the students walked in February 1948. It will meet at 8 a.m. on Saturday, 25th February 2023, in front of the Czech Technical University building on Charles' Square.

The route of the march: Karlovo náměstí – Resslova ulice – Jiráskovo náměstí – Masarykovo nábřeží – most Legií – Vítězná – Újezd – Karmelitská – Malostranské náměstí – Nerudova – ending at the memorial plaque commemorating the suppression of the students' march at the intersection of Nerudova – Úvoz – Ke Hradu. A commemorative gathering will be held here under the patronage of the President of the Senate of the Czech Republic, Mr Miloš Vystrčil.



Inscriptions on the poster: In 1948 it was not only communists who marched. Prague Academic Club 48, Students for Freedom. Do you want to know more and to walk in the students' footsteps 75 years later? Come at 8 a.m. on 25th February in front of the Czech Technical University building on Charles' Square. We will walk to the Castle where there will be a commemoration at the memorial plaque.

From the Church Law Society's mail

Dear Professors Tretera and Horak et al.,

Many thanks for keeping us regularly updated and informed with this newsletter in English. It is much appreciated.

Sincerely yours,

Vincent A. De Gaetano

Chief Justice Emeritus, Malta;

Former Judge & Section President, European Court of Human Rights, Strasbourg;

Commissioner for Education, Ombudsman's Office.

Traffic to the Church Law Society website

According to statistics sent by Google, 327 users visited the Church Law Society's website in January 2023. On average, each visitor spent 2 minutes and 12 seconds on the CLS website, with half of the visitors only opening one window (one web page) and not browsing the website further.

More than a third of visitors to our website search for it themselves on the Internet. Almost 40 % of users come to the website by clicking on a link that redirects them to the CLS website. The remaining visitors access the CLS website by other means.

Jakub Nagy

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Photo on the front page: Participants of the European Synodal Assembly, which was held in Prague on 6th – 9th February 2023.

Photo Jana Podhorská

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