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

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23rd September 2025, the Vranov symposium on canon law: Dominican Damián Němec and Teplá Premonstratensian Řehoř Pavel Urban in white habits.

Photo Záboj Horák



Local group in Brno

An international symposium on canon law held in Vranov near Brno

At the end of September there was a real treat for all Czech and Slovak canonists: another huge symposium was held in Vranov on 21st – 24th September 2025. There were exactly 127 participants: judges, attorneys, notaries and other employees of ecclesiastical and civil courts and diocesan and religious curias as well as teachers of canon law from the Czech lands and Slovakia. They listened to lectures by leading international canonists from the dicasteries and judicial bodies of the Apostolic See and canonists from the Czech lands and Slovakia.

The symposium was organised by the Academy of Canon Law in Brno, headed by its president, Monsignor ICDr. Karel Orlita, judicial vicar of the Diocese of Brno. The spiritual centre is managed by the Order of Minims (Paulaner Order), which also has its own active monastery in the same building.

And now to the programme: in the early evening of Sunday, 21st September, His Excellency Monsignor Juan Igancio Arrieta Ochoa de Chinchetru, secretary of the Dicastery for Legislative Texts in Rome, took the floor. He addressed the legal aspects of the Synod on Synodality and the involvement of the laity in the service of the Church.

He was then followed by a greeting from Assoc. Prof. Zábój Horák, from the Charles University Faculty of Law and vice-president of the Church Law Society (CLS).



Assoc. Prof. Zábój Horák greets the attendees. To his left are Mons. Orlita and Mons. Ochoa de Chinchetru.

He greeted everyone on behalf of CLS president, Rev. Prof. JUDr. Jiří Rajmund Tretera OP, from the Charles University Faculty of Law and the more than 570 members of the society in the Czech Republic, Slovakia, other European countries and overseas. He mentioned that the CLS publishes four periodicals: the specialist scientific journal the *Church Law Review* in print and online, the popular scientific online monthly magazines the *Church Mirror* and *Church Reporter* and the regional printed magazine *Christian Mšeno*. The CLS supports not only research in the fields of church and religion law, legal history and related fields, but also the application of church law in society and the Church.

Mr. Horák was followed by Mons. ICDr. Tibor Hajdu, PhD., president of the Slovak Canon Law Society and judicial vicar of the Metropolitan Tribunal in Bratislava. He invited everyone to a *symposium on canon law*, which will be held on 24th August 2026 *at the bishop's seat in Spišská Kapitula* in eastern Slovakia. He also drew our attention to the latest publications by Slovak canonists.



Mons. Tibor Hajdu welcomes the participants.

On the morning of Monday, 22nd September, Mons. Paolo Bianchi, professor at the Pontifical Gregorian University in Rome and president of the Lombardy Regional Ecclesiastical Court, spoke on the topic of *the absence of sexual differentiation and unclear personal identity in the light of rotal jurisprudence*.

Prof. Cesare Maria Cornaggia, a psychiatrist at the University of Milano-Bicocca, followed by talking about the use of clinical studies.

On Monday afternoon, the participants at the symposium worked in groups which they had been divided into in advance. They discussed a specific case contained in the materials sent out a month before the start of the symposium by the Academy of Canon Law to all the participants and translated into Czech by the organisers. The participants studied the case in advance and filled in the answers to the questions contained therein. The group work was followed by a joint discussion in the plenary and an assessment of the case.

On Monday afternoon, Prof. Francesco Catozzella from the Pontifical Lateran University and attorney of the Roman Rota, spoke on the subject of noogenic (spiritual) immaturity and the inability to enter into marriage.

Other speakers included Mons. Paweł Malecha, Mons. G. Paolo Montini and R. D. Matteo Visioli, all from the Pontifical Gregorian University, and ThDr. ICDr. Remigiusz Piotr Górski, OFM, from the Faculty of Theology at Trnava University. They focused on education of ecclesiastical court advocates, reimbursement of damages in canonical proceedings, crimes against the faith, and secrecy and discretion in canon and civil law.

Mass was celebrated each day: twice in the newly renovated Church of the Nativity of the Virgin Mary in Vranov and once in the Cathedral of Saints Peter and Paul in Brno on Petrov hill. The main celebrants and preachers were Mons. Juan Ignacio Arrieta Ochoa de Chinchetru, Mons. Pavel Konzbul, Diocesan Bishop of Brno, and Mons. Jude Thaddeus Okolo, the Apostolic Nuncio to the Czech Republic.



Mons. Bianchi giving a lecture.



*More than a hundred priests concelebrate Mass
in the Church of the Nativity of the Virgin Mary.*

*Text Zábaj Horák
Photos Martina Vintrová and Zábaj Horák*



Local group in České Budějovice

Church law in České Budějovice and Dobrá Voda

On 15th September 2025, this local group of the Church Law Society had its first ceremonial meeting in southern Bohemia, which was a great success.

We set off from Prague–Vršovice Station heading for České Budějovice early on the morning of Monday, 15th September. We had a lovely and enjoyable journey on an ordinary Czech Railways express train and Father Rajmund recollected how he had travelled the same route for a whole year to lecture on canon law at the University of South Bohemia’s Faculty of Theology. In those days, the tracks were not as wonderful, and the trains were not as clean and well-equipped. What a blessing it is to have the railways! You don’t arrive at your lecture destination as shaken up as you would by bus or tired from driving or watching the road if you had driven your own car.

The chairman of the CLS local group, Rev. ICLic. Stanislav Brožka, was waiting for us in the wonderful modern station building in České Budějovice and he took us by car straight to the bishopric, where we were staying. There we took a look at the beautiful lecture hall in the attic and considered whether to use its lighting as inspiration for lectures in our Beseda hall in Mšeno.



Rev. ICLic. Stanislav Brožka and Professor Jiří Rajmund Tretera in the lecture hall in the attic.

We spent the afternoon in the parish garden in Dobrá Voda. We already knew that Father Brožka, who is a judge at the Prague Metropolitan Court and parish priest in the picturesque village of Dobrá Voda near České Budějovice, is a keen beekeeper. And this has been the practice and tradition among Catholic priests since the time of the National Revival. And today we are living in a time when another national revival is needed, now in the Christian and Catholic faith.

Since arriving in Mšeno, Father Rajmund has been reminiscing about his younger years when for six years in a row he worked as an assistant to a beekeeper, who was a friend of his family and who invited them all to stay in his orchard each year for the whole of July and August. It is no wonder that Father Rajmund has noticed that few bees fly into our garden. And this may be the reason for the poor harvest on some of our early-flowering trees. That is why we have decided to get a few beehives and do some beekeeping of our own on a small scale.

Father Stanislav Brožka granted our heartfelt wish to show us his bees and teach us how to handle them. We had a good look at the beehives. He gave us beekeeping hats to wear but he remained without this protection. The Carniolan honey bees that he keeps are really gentle.



By the beehives.

A lecture on new developments in church law was held in the parish hall, attracting a lot of interest among parishioners from Dobrá Voda and Suché Vrbné and CLS members from all over southern Bohemia. We were especially happy to again meet Václav Steinocher from Netolice, a founding member of the Church Law Society, who came with his young daughter.



Holy Mass in the Church of Our Lady of Sorrows in Dobrá Voda.



In the parish hall.

jrt/zh



Local group in Olomouc

Polish canonists met in Licheń

From 3rd to 5th September 2025, the annual conference and general meeting of the Association of Polish Canonists (Stowarzyszenie Kanonistów Polskich/SKP) was held in the well-known Polish pilgrimage site of Licheń Stary, this year on the theme of *current issues in relations between the Church and the state in Poland*.

The conference was held under the patronage of Krzysztof Wętkowski, Bishop of the Diocese of Włocławek. Accommodation for participants, lectures and the accompanying programme all took place in the Arka pilgrimage house. The theme was chosen in view of the current situation in Poland (restrictions on the teaching of religion and ethics in schools, etc.), which was also reflected in the focus of the papers presented in Polish.

Around 110 participants gathered at the conference (mostly SKP members) as well as doctoral students, teachers of canon law and religion law and members of ecclesiastical courts from Poland, Ukraine, the Czech Republic and Slovakia. From the Czech Republic, as well as the author of these lines, Prof. Damián Němec, dr OP, the head of the Department of Church Law in the Sts Cyril and Methodius Faculty of Theology at Palacký University, also attended the conference.

The opening remarks were given by Prof. Józef Krukowski, the long-time SKP president, and Bishop Dr Ryszard Kasyna, chairman of the Legal Council of the Polish Bishops' Conference. The proceedings took place in five sessions over two days. The contributions focused on the following topics:

- the basic principles of Church and state relations, human rights, guarantees of religious freedom (*Prof. Przemysław Czarnek; Prof. Mirosław Sitarz; Prof. Stanisław L. Stadniczeńko; Prof. Józef Krukowski; Prof. Wojciech Góralski and Dr Agnieszka Romanko, all from the Catholic University of Lublin*),
- cooperation between the Church and the state in the education and teaching of children and young people, the teaching of religion and ethics, competences of the Ministry of Education, the rights and obligations of parents in the field of education (*Prof. Marek Jędraszewski, Metropolitan of Krakow; Assoc. Prof. Wojciech Osial, chairman of the Polish Bishops' Conference Commission for Education; Prof. Paweł Sobczyk from the University of Opole; Prof. Małgorzata Czuryk from the University of Warmia and Mazury in Olsztyn*).



From the left: Krukowski, Stadniczenko, Kasyna, Sitarz during the lectures in one of the sessions.

This was followed by the SKP general meeting, which approved the financial results, the activity report, the SKP activity plan and an increase in the membership fee for the following period. The SKP has almost 900 regular and honorary members mainly in Poland, but also in the Czech Republic, Slovakia, Ukraine, Belarus, Germany, Spain, Great Britain and the USA.

After the end of the meeting a solemn Mass was celebrated in the Basilica of Our Lady of Sorrows, Queen of Poland, presided over by the local bishop and concelebrated by all the bishops and priests present.

On the second day, the programme continued with a morning session. Lectures on the property and financial status of clergy, as well as of ecclesiastical legal entities, ecclesiastical funds and ecclesiastical foundations were given by:

- *Prof. Paweł Kaleta* from the Catholic University of Lublin,
- *Dr Paweł Lewandowski* from the Catholic University of Lublin,
- *Dr Michał Poniatowski* from Cardinal Stefan Wyszyński University in Warsaw.

The complete programme can be found on the Association of Polish Canonists website: https://www.stowarzyszeniekanonistow.pl/wp-content/uploads/2025/07/Lichen_program-konferencji_ost.pdf

After a discussion and lunch, the participants headed home. We can also announce to our readers that there is a new website where the Polish association now publishes its specialist yearbook *Biuletyn Stowarzyszenia kanonistów polskich*, including archive issues: <https://ojs.academicon.pl/bskp>

Text and photo Monika Menke



Local group Mšeno Skalička



September 2025: Father ICLic. Ing. Pavel Morávek, dean in Nový Bor, on a visit to Mšeno.

Photo Zábaj Horák

From new literature

SELTENREICH, Radim, *Kolik blbosti snese demokracie?! (How Much Stupidity Can Democracy Take?!)* A book of essays, Leges, Prague, 2025, pp. 254, ISBN 978-80-7502-802-0.

Journals

Communicationes, Rivista semestrale edita dal Dicastero per i Testi Legislativi, Roma, Vol. LVII N. 1/2025.

Folia theologica et canonica, XIII (35/27), 2024, Szent István Társulat, Budapest,

from the contents:

ERDŐ, Péter, *Il ruolo delle università ecclesiastiche nell'esercizio del Munus Docendi*, pp. 81–94,

MARTÍN, Julio García, *Las prelaturas personales (Parte II)*, pp. 123–168,

HECKEL, Noach, *Alienation of stable patrimony in the law for religious: changes in Universal Canon Law in the pontificate of Pope Francis*, pp. 169–206,

SZUROMI, Szabolcs Anzelm, *Pre-Gratian canon law codices and fragments in Central Europe (Austria, Poland, Czechia, Slovakia, Hungary)*, pp. 225–238,

VIEJO-XIMÉNEZ, José Miguel, *Ius y Ottifitium*, Algunas consideraciones sobre la estructura de la Prima Pars de la Concordia Discordantium Canonum, pp. 239–268.

Studia canonica, Revue canadienne de droit canonique – A Canadian Canon Law Review, Peeters, Faculty of Canon Law of Saint Paul University in Ottawa, ISSN: 2295-3019,

from the contents:

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CARON, Marc B., *Deacons and the Triple Munera*, pp. 393–412,

LESSARD, John G., *The Use of the Pre-Conciliar Liturgical Books in the Current Law*, pp. 413–446,

RASAIAN, Lawrence, *Financial Malfeasance of Pastors: Penalties and Remedies (c. 1376)*, pp. 515–550.

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WOOD, Susan K., *Christifideles within a Baptismal Ecclesiology: Reframing the Question of Participation in Leadership and Mission*, pp. 79–102,

NOCETI, Serena, *Instituted Ministers and Ordained Ministers: Reflections on Ministry and Potestas in the Horizon of Pluri-Ministeriality*, pp. 247–276,

KAPTIJN, Astrid, *Christian Faithful – Clergy – Laypeople: A Complex Terminology in the Eastern and the Latin Churches*, pp. 373–390.



2nd October 2025: hydrangeas in the front garden of the Skalička residence in Mšeno.

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