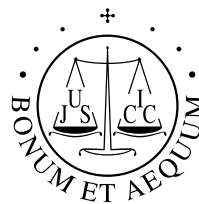


Church Law Society



CHURCH REPORTER 11/2025

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

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15th November 2025: The liturgical procession at the funeral of Cardinal Dominik Duka OP in the Cathedral of Saints Vitus, Wenceslas and Adalbert.

Photo Man and Faith



Local group in Prague

The funeral of Cardinal Dominik Duka in the Cathedral of Saints Vitus, Wenceslas and Adalbert

On Saturday, 15th November 2025, the crowded Cathedral of Saints Vitus, Wenceslas and Adalbert was the venue for the final farewell to Cardinal Dominik Duka, Archbishop Emeritus of Prague, who died on 4th November at the age of eighty-two. The liturgical procession consisted of over 250 bishops, priests and ministrants.

The principal celebrant and preacher was Mons. Jan Graubner, Archbishop of Prague. The funeral rites were led by Mons. Jude Thaddeus Okolo, the Apostolic Nuncio to the Czech Republic.

Dozens of bishops from the Czech lands and abroad took part in the Holy Mass, among them Péter Erdő, Archbishop of Esztergom-Budapest and Primate of Hungary, Cardinal Stanisław Dziwisz, Archbishop Emeritus of Krakow and personal secretary to Pope John Paul II, Mons. Bernard Bober, Archbishop of Košice and Metropolitan of the Eastern Slovak Province and President of the Bishops' Conference of Slovakia, and Mons. Stanislav Zvolenský, Archbishop of Bratislava and a founding member of the Church Law Society.



Mons. Jan Graubner celebrates the funeral Mass.

The Czech state was represented by the current president, Petr Pavel. The funeral was also attended by two former presidents of the Czech Republic, Miloš Zeman and Václav Klaus, who were personal friends of Cardinal Duka, as well as other constitutional dignitaries. The family friends and close colleagues of the deceased cardinal were involved in the liturgy.

Among the hundreds of priests were many representatives of the Church Law Society. At the head of a large group of Cardinal Duka's fellow Dominicans was MUDr. Lukáš Fošum OP, provincial of the Czech Province of the Order of Preachers.

After the funeral, Cardinal Duka's body was laid to rest in the archbishops' tomb in the cathedral.



Condolences from His Holiness Pope Leo XIV

The Most Reverend Jan Graubner, Archbishop of Prague

Having learned of the death of Cardinal Dominik Duka OP, Archbishop Emeritus of Prague, I wish to express my closeness to the ecclesial community, his confreres in the Order of Preachers, the priests, the religious and the faithful who found in him a pastor forged in the faith and an intrepid proclaimer of the Gospel.

I give thanks to God for his intense pastoral work, recalling with admiration his courage in the period of persecution, when, deprived of his freedom, his following of Christ never faltered. With a father's heart he led the People of God, promoting reconciliation, religious freedom and

dialogue between faith and society. His episcopal ministry, based on the Dominican charism of truth and charity, as we are reminded by his motto, *In spiritu veritatis*, remains an example of faithful devotion to the mission.

As I entrust the soul of this good and generous servant to divine mercy, praying that the Lord receive him in the joy of His Kingdom, I impart my heartfelt Apostolic Blessing to those who mourn his passing and participate in the funeral.

Leo PP. XIV
The Vatican, 5th November 2025



Presidents of the Czech Republic Petr Pavel and Václav Klaus.

Photos Man and Faith

Condolences from Cardinal Péter Erdő

It is with deep sadness that I received the news of the passing of His Eminence, Cardinal Dominik Jaroslav Duka OP. On behalf of the Church in Hungary and on my own behalf, I express my sincere condolences to the archdiocese of Prague and to the entire Czech nation.

Cardinal Duka was a true witness to the Gospel, a pastor of firm faith and with a big heart. In difficult times, he remained steadfast in his loyalty to Christ and the Church. His love did not only belong to his own people, but also to neighbours and friends in Eastern Europe. He always had a special affection and respect for the Hungarian faithful, and there was always a brotherly and trusting bond between us in the service of the Lord.

We thank God for the abundant work of this brave servant of Christ. May the merciful God grant him eternal peace and welcome him to the joy of heaven.

In brotherly fellowship and with sincere condolences,

Cardinal Péter Erdő
Archbishop of Esztergom-Budapest,
Primate of Hungary



A few words about church law at the Prague Faculty of Law this year

We are delighted that law students' interest in the Church Law specialisation module remains undiminished. The programme for the 2025/2026 academic year is as follows:

Winter semester

On Mondays, there is a lecture on the **Fundamentals of Church Law**, in which, after a brief introduction to the constitutional law of the Reformed and Orthodox Churches, we focus on legal theory and then move on to the general norms in canon law and the constitutional law of the Catholic Church. This is followed by the law of religious institutes and magisterial law – the teaching authority of the Church. We conclude with an introduction to sanctification law, which we will continue to explore in the summer semester. This year, 133 students have enrolled in the Fundamentals of Church Law course.

On Thursdays, there is a lecture on **Matrimonial and Criminal Canon Law**. We focus on the matrimonial law of the Latin Catholic Church, taking into account the matrimonial law of the Greek Catholic Church. We spend an equal amount of time on substantive criminal canon law, both its general aspects and the factual elements of individual crimes. Nothing is left out. The entire 2021 amendment is lectured on. Then, two hours are spent on ordination law as we

believe that the regulation of the status of members of the clergy is a good counterpoint to matrimonial law. Finally, we focus on contentious and criminal proceedings. This year, 70 students have enrolled in the Matrimonial and Criminal Canon Law course.

At the beginning of both lectures we hand out question slips. We collect them 15 minutes before the end and answer them on the spot. The students are always given the presentation in advance. We work directly with the Code of Canon Law, including in the middle of the lecture. The teaching is lively, with plenty of interaction. Half an hour before each lecture, a small display of literature related to the subject of the lecture is opened and a larger display is set up in glass cabinets by the entrance to the faculty library.

On Tuesdays, two scientific seminars alternate every two weeks as part of the Church Law module. Each semester there is different content, so students who have already completed these seminars once can enrol again in subsequent semesters.

In the **Law and the Bible** scientific seminar, this semester we are discussing the first eleven chapters of the Book of Genesis and the Gospel according to Matthew. Students have analysed the topics and are preparing their interpretations, using materials that are partly assigned to them and partly chosen by the students themselves. They give lectures and show their own presentations. This is followed by a discussion, in which first of all the students speak and then the teachers. For efficiency reasons, the number of students that can enrol in each of the seminars is limited to 15 places. But interest in the Law and the Bible seminar is so great that this year we could not refuse the requests of some students to be enrolled in addition. So, 19 of them are attending the seminar.

This year, in the scientific seminar on **Church and Religion Law**, selected topics for practising the canon law currently being taught are discussed. Students have the opportunity to choose their own topics in advance. The seminar is conducted in a similar way to the previous one and 14 students are enrolled in it.

For a whole week at the beginning of December, our faculty's guest professor, Wolfgang Wieshaider from Vienna taught the compulsory optional course **Comparative Law of Religion**, in English. He will also test the students on the subject.

Summer semester

In the summer semester, three compulsory optional courses are taught in the Church Law specialisation module. And again, two scientific seminars.

Firstly, the **Fundamentals of Canon Law**. This is the second part. The first part has been covered in the winter semester. We focus on sanctification law and administrative law of the Catholic Church. We discuss all sacraments, except for marriage, and other acts of worship. The emphasis is on the norms of liturgical law. Lawyers are taught about the content and meaning of Catholic worship. Several lectures are devoted to the administration of church property, and the course concludes with an explanation of the administrative process. The course follows on from an earlier course on *Administrative and Property Law of the Church*, but we have expanded its scope and emphasis on realia and practice.

The Legal History of Churches is also taught. This covers in equal part the history of canon law and the organisation of churches, from the founding of the church by Jesus Christ to the present day. It is preceded by a short introduction on the history of law in ancient Israel.



8th December 2025: Jiří Rajmund Tretera lecturing on the Fundamentals of Church Law.

And finally, the last subject is **Religion Law**, in which students learn about the protection of individual and collective freedom of belief in the Czech legal system and the legal protection of the participation of churches in caring for persons in public institutions (hospitals, the army, prisons, etc.). Part of the lectures is spent on comparing Czech religion law with the law of other countries in the Euro-Atlantic civilisation.

In the summer semester, we are equally delighted to offer scientific seminars on **Law and the Bible** and **Church and Religion Law**, each with entirely new content.

Our participation in the legal history specialisation module

Every Friday during the winter semester, we teach the optional course **Legal Systems in Countries of the Middle East and Africa**. A lot of attention is given to the history of Jewish and Islamic law. This year, 93 students have enrolled in the course.

In the summer semester, we teach the optional course **Legal Systems in Countries of Latin America, South Asia and Oceania**. Students also learn about the history of the Catholic Church in Latin America and the Philippines, as well as the history of Hinduism and Buddhism in South Asia.

For almost 30 years, we have been contributing to lectures on the compulsory subject of general legal history, today under the title **The Development of Large Legal Systems**. One lecture is on the history of canon law and the other on the history of the law of the nations of Eastern Europe.

Jiří Rajmund Tretera and Záboj Horák

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