

## **The 100th Anniversary Meeting on September 15th in Prague: A 100 year commemoration of the Czechoslovak Hussite Church's approval by the state.**

The 100th anniversary celebration of the Czechoslovak Hussite Church took place at the Hus church of the Czechoslovak Hussite Church in Prague 6 – Dejvice. The event followed a service held in the church of the St. Nicholas on the Old Town Square in Prague on January 11th 2020. This service occurred on the day of the proclamation of the new Christian church in 1920, following the legacy of Mister Jan Hus and the Czech reformation. Subsequently, the festive gathering of the 100th Anniversary of the Czechoslovak Hussite Church occurred on Whit Monday, June 1st, 2020, in the National House in Smíchov, where 100 years ago Dr. Karel Farský led a coalition of priests to reform the church via facti – the way of act. Due to the coronavirus pandemic, the celebration was held at the Hus church in Dejvice. This location is significant and represents the headquarters of the church: it serves as a meeting place for church assemblies, synods of clergy, meetings of the episcopal and central council and all other assemblies. Due to the Pandemic the celebration was moved to the 15th of September, however this is still a significant date for the Church. A 100 years ago on that day, the Czechoslovak Hussite Church achieved official recognition by the state.

In his introductory speech, the Patriarch of the Church ThDr. Tomáš Butta pointed out the gravity and scope of the state's recognition of the church. "The state is a political unit, but it has its spiritual roots from which it grows." He continued, "The State recognition of the church means that it is becoming a valuable part of society and has the rights and opportunities to operate in public. Within the principle of religious freedom, it is thus guaranteed that it can carry out its mission, but also it is recognized as a respected partner and collaborator of the state. The church is a good way to support the state and its efforts are for the common good." Subsequently, he mentioned that the Czechoslovak Hussite Church was founded at a time when the state stood for democratic values and humanitarian ideals, and so naturally, the church became its supporter. He contrasted this period with the following years of totalitarianism, when the state restricted the freedom and rights of all, including those of the churches. He appreciated the current development of various collaborative projects between the Senate and chamber of deputies of the Parliament of the Czech Republic, Ministry of Culture, Prague City Hall and leadership of regions, cities and municipalities, both in our country and abroad. He also acknowledged our partnership with Charles University, especially with the Hussite Theological Institute, where the clergy and future workers of the church are educated. He also positively evaluated the cooperation with the Czech Technical University in Prague, particularly their publication of an exhibit about the architecture of our churches of the interwar period. These pieces were displayed during the celebration and were available to view or purchase at the event. He also mentioned the service of military, prison, and hospital chaplains and educational workers, for which the church published the educational textbook "Roots of Faith". He also reminded us of the importance of diaconal and social work, which was an important tenet of the Czechoslovak Hussite Church during the interwar period. The motto: "One hundred years of serving God, one hundred years of helping man," does not only invite us to look back to the past, it also challenges us to work in the present and look to the future." Pointing to the peculiarity of the time, that of isolation and disrupted life, he concluded his

remarks with: "That's why in these days we need much more to feel mutual human proximity and support, to develop assistance and cooperation across churches, nations and states."

During the festive evening there was a featured exhibition: Churches of the Czechoslovak Hussite Church – An Architectural Heritage of Our Regions", which shows the results of the joint scientific and research activities of the Department of Architecture of the Czech Technical University in Prague and the Czechoslovak Hussite Church at the field of an architecture of interwar Czechoslovakia and also the new publication: Biographical Dictionary of the Personalities of the Czechoslovak Hussite Church, which introduces over 100 years of life of the church, the clergy and laity, women and men, often already forgotten, in whose life stories, often marked by many difficulties, there is reflected their hope and love, which is springing from the faith experienced in the community of the Czechoslovak Hussite Church.

During the festive evening the patriarch acknowledged the representatives of institutions and organizations, which he mentioned in his introductory speech by handing over the medal, inter alia to the President of the Senate during the years 1998 – 2000, Libuše Benešová, the director of the Museum of Czech Literature Zdeněk Freisleben, mayor and deputy mayor of Prague 6 Ondřej Kolář and Jan Lacina, who greeted the participants on behalf of Prague 6, the district in which the central council of the Czechoslovak Hussite Church is located. The patriarch also awarded the commemorative medal to the head of the prison spiritual service, the workers of the Czech Academy of Sciences, Faculty of Arts of the Charles University and other personalities. He followed up the awarding of personalities, among others from abroad at the Brožík Hall of the Old Town Hall during the social gathering which occurred after the solemn service to the 100th Anniversary of the Czechoslovak Hussite Church.

Due to the coronavirus epidemic the foreign guests were unable to attend the festive meeting, some of them apologized shortly before the celebration and some sent their greetings in writing. The moderator of the gala evening, Hana Tonzarová, read a greeting for all the absent guests from the Secretary General of the Conference of European Churches Jorgen Skov Sorensen, who highlighted the ecumenical engagement of the church, which is actively involved in the work not only of the Conference of European Churches, but also the World Council of Churches and the Community of Evangelical Churches in Europe.

Daniel Ženatý, the chairman of the Ecumenical Council of Churches and the Synod Senior of the Evangelical Church of Czech Brethren, greeted the guests with a speech. In his remarks, he drew from the biblical motto of the Unity of Brethren for the given day about the coming out of Abraham (Gn 12, 4). "Even today God calls us to the action – to come out – perhaps from comfort or from stereotypes, from our own ideas or proven opinions so far. And he wished difficult, but beneficial and life-giving decisions – how important and serious is the past – how to draw from it – and how important and binding is the presence, how we can be touched by the words of Christ - and whoever does not take up the cross and follow me is not worthy of me. 39 Those who find their life will lose it, and those who lose their life for my sake will find it."(Mt 10: 38, 9)"

At the end of the ceremonial meeting at the Hus's Church, Musica Bohemica, led by Jaroslav Krček with the soloist Karel Jakubů, performed several pieces. Among other things, they

introduced us to a part from the Credo of Mister Jan (2015), cantata, which Jaroslav Krček composed for the 600th Anniversary of the burning of Mister Jan Hus and which had its premiere in Smetana Hall of Municipal House in Prague as part of the Hus festival, which was co-organized by the Czechoslovak Hussite Church.

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