

CHURCH REPORTER

7/2022

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

28th July 2022 | Volume 7



New Archbishop of Prague inaugurated

The Cathedral of Saints Vitus, Wenceslas and Adalbert in Prague witnessed a very special celebration on 2nd July 2022. *Mons. Jan Graubner*, the new Archbishop of Prague,¹ officially assumed his office and became the 37th Archbishop of Prague, Metropolitan of Prague and Primate of the Czech Republic.

Prior to the ceremony in the cathedral, the new Archbishop of Prague formally took office in the Archbishop's Office in the Archbishop's Palace, which is in Prague's Hradčany, next to the main entrance gate to Prague Castle. He received one of the keys to the Czech Crown Jewels, which are kept in the Crown Chamber of the Cathedral of Saints Vitus, Wenceslas and Adalbert.²



The new Archbishop of Prague, Mons. Jan Graubner, receives one of the keys to the Czech Crown Jewels from the hands of Prague Archbishop Emeritus Cardinal Dominik Duka.

After the reading of the Papal Appointment Bull, Archbishop Emeritus Cardinal Dominik Duka symbolically handed over the sceptre to the new archbishop. The new Apostolic nuncio to the

¹ *New Archbishop of Prague*, in: Church Reporter 5/2022, p. 6–7, available at the address http://spcp.prf.cuni.cz/CHURCH_REPORTER_2022.05.pdf

² The holders of the other keys are the President of the Republic, the Prime Minister, the Speaker of the Chamber of Deputies of the Parliament, the President of the Senate of the Parliament, the Provost of the Metropolitan Chapter of St Vitus in Prague and the Mayor of the City of Prague.

Czech Republic, *Jude Thaddeus Okolo*, presented Jan Graubner with the pallium, the symbol of the Metropolitan Archbishop.

The ceremony in the cathedral was attended by bishops from Bohemia, Moravia and Silesia as well as bishops from Slovakia, Poland, Germany and Romania, many priests and the religious, and crowds of the faithful.

Among the guests were representatives of other churches in the Czech Republic, including representatives of the Ecumenical Council of Churches. The constitutional officials of the Czech Republic were led by the Prime Minister, *Petr Fiala*, who is a professed Catholic, and the President of the Senate of the Parliament of the Czech Republic, *Miloš Vystrčil*.

In his profound sermon, Archbishop Graubner focused on building the Church as a spiritual temple and called for joint activity to build the City of God.



The new Archbishop of Prague, Mons. Jan Graubner, during the inauguration mass.

The See of the Bishop of Prague is the oldest in the Czech lands: the Bishopric of Prague was founded in 973. The second Bishop of Prague was St Adalbert, a native of Bohemia, who fundamentally helped spread Christianity in Central Europe, particularly to Poland and Hungary, and this Czech national saint is also venerated in these countries. The Bishopric of Prague was elevated to an archdiocese in 1344. From that year onwards, the Archbishop of Prague crowned Czech kings on the basis of a privilege granted by the Pope.

*Text by the editors of the Church Reporter
Photo: members of the Man and Faith association*

An extremely successful general meeting of the Church Law Society

On Monday, 27th June 2022, the General Meeting of the Church Law Society was held at the Faculty of Law, Charles University, with a large attendance of around 40 members of the Society as well as several guests.

The General Meeting was opened by the President of the Society, *Professor Jiří Rajmund Tretera*, who welcomed all those present and presented the Society's annual report for the period from May 2018 to June 2022. He also introduced new local groups: in Stříbro for West Bohemia (2020) and in České Budějovice for South Bohemia (2021).

There then followed a commemoration of four victims of communism who were executed precisely 72 years ago, on 27th June 1950, and also remembrance of fifteen members of the Society who have died in the last four years. *Bc. František Kratochvíl* then presented the Audit Committee's report.



Professor J. R. Tretera informs participants at the general meeting about the Church Law Society's editorial activities.

In the election, the list of candidates proposed by the outgoing Working Committee was unanimously approved. The secretary and librarian, Tomáš Gundza, and the periodicals editor,

Mgr. Jakub Nagy, joined the existing Working Committee. The new bodies of the Church Law Society's bodies and staff can be found at: <http://spcp.prf.cuni.cz/en/bodies-of-society/>.



Participants at the General Meeting of the Church Law Society.

The General Meeting was followed by the 83rd *Evening of the Church Law Society*, which was devoted to the presentation of J. R. Tretera's book *The End of Visiting Time, the Doors Are Closing, or Eighteen Ballads and Romances from Hospital Wards and Anterooms*, which the Society published as the third volume of the Library of Church and Religion Law in the spring of this year.

The book was presented by *PhDr. Olga Bezděková-Rejtharová*, the daughter of World War II RAF pilot and Czechoslovak patriot, Colonel Stanislav Rejthar, and the author of his memoirs *The Good Soldiers Fell...*

In the second part of the evening, the three priests present, Jiří Rajmund Tretera, Stanislav Příbyl and Milan Kučera, approached the table with books and blessed the newly published book with an intercessory prayer according to the *Benedictional*. This was followed by a book signing by the author.

The third part of the evening, which was particularly successful, was devoted to conversation over a glass of wine and some refreshments.

Text Jakub Nagy and Záboj Horák

Photo Jakub Nagy

The half-yearly meeting of the Academic Committee of the Czech Christian Academy in the Emmaus Monastery in Prague

On Saturday, 25th June 2022, the *Academic Committee of the Czech Christian Academy* held its meeting in the beautiful premises of the Benedictine monastery in Emmaus. The Academy, which is one of the largest Czech associations, has 71 groups throughout the Czech Republic and ten specialised sections, and brings together Christians of different churches.

The meeting was chaired by *Mons. Prof. Tomáš Halík*, president of the Academy, Templeton Prize winner, student Catholic priest in Prague, professor at the Faculty of Arts, Charles University, and honorary member of the Church Law Society. It was attended by the leadership of the Church Law Society, which carries out activities for the *Academy's Legal Section*.

In his introductory remarks, Professor Halík mentioned that the Russian war of aggression in Ukraine has resulted in an increase in social tensions. All churches should strive for the recovery of the social climate and the long-term integration of Ukrainian refugees.³



Professor Halík talks about the impact of Russian aggression on Czech society.

This was followed by a presentation by representatives of local groups and specialised sections. The Znojmo (South Moravia) local group has organised a collection to help dozens of

³ There are currently around 300,000 refugees from Ukraine in the Czech Republic, mainly women and children. The population of the Czech Republic is 10.5 million.

Ukrainian mothers and children who are being accommodated in two nearby Catholic parishes. Dr. Petra Oulíková from the Art History Section talked about how teachers and students at the Catholic Theological Faculty, Charles University, have been organising successful excursions to churches in Prague for Ukrainian refugees.

The secretary of the Legal Section, Záboj Horák, presented J. R. Tretera's book *The End of Visiting Time, the Doors Are Closing*, which aims to encourage the expansion of the teaching of medical ethics and, in particular, to emphasise the necessity and indispensability of hospital chaplains, who should be present in large numbers in each hospital 24 hours a day. The book is a prelude to *Professor Tretera's Memoirs*, which should be published in book form by the end of this year. Representatives of the Legal Section also stressed the immense importance of teaching religion in schools.



Záboj Horák presents Jiří Rajmund Tretera's latest book.

Dr. Zuzana Svobodová, director of the Education Section, presented a new English scientific journal *Theology and Philosophy of Education*, published by this section.⁴ We are pleased that the first issue was published in May of this year on the website

<https://www.tape.academy/index.php/tape/issue/view/3>.

Text Jakub Nagy

Photo Czech Christian Academy archive

⁴ *New Journal on Theology and Philosophy of Education*, in: Church Reporter 2/2022, available at http://spcp.prf.cuni.cz/CHURCH_REPORTER_2022.02.pdf

Discussion amongst selected respondents on the subject of Pope Francis and Ukraine in *Universum* magazine

*The latest issue 2/2022 of the popular science quarterly, Universum, which is published in Prague by the Czech Christian Academy, features a topical discussion between seven leading Christian intellectuals concerning Pope Francis' stance on the war in Ukraine. Below is a selection published under the title **Pope Francis under the pressure of the war in Ukraine**, on pages 5–7.*

Father Petr Beneš, CSsR, Catholic priest, well-known preacher at the Church of the Most Sacred Heart of Our Lord in Prague, outstanding expert on Russian literature:

I find it hard to understand Pope Francis' position on Russia's war of aggression against Ukraine. I can say for the first time that I am experiencing something like disappointment in the Pope's position. [...]

I can imagine that the Pope's heart, suffering so severely with all these poor people, is set on negotiating peace. But I do not really understand how you can negotiate with a criminal and a criminal regime from which you cannot trust a single word. This does not just apply to the Pope and Vatican diplomacy (which, unfortunately in my opinion, considerably tones down the Pope's opinions and is just as toothless and amorphous as when the Catholic Church under Cardinal Casaroli "danced" with the communist regime), but also to those "phone-callers" Macron, Scholz and others.

[...] firstly, the injustice must be clearly named, as well as the culprit (and it is clear who that is in all the complexity of the situation: you do not enter foreign territory, you do not violate international law!). The fact that Pope Francis is very reticent in naming Putin and his regime as the culprits of the aggression is disappointing to me. And I have the most doubts about the Pope's pacifism as I do about pacifism in general (not only with the Pope but also with many representatives of the left intelligentsia, church representatives). Pacifism cannot legitimise injustice and aggression. And it is naïve to believe that stopping armaments will stop conflicts. [...]

No two wars are the same. The need to fight is an extreme necessity and exposes man, even a defender, to a great burden and temptation but as a humble but firm confrontation with evil it is necessary. [...]

To talk about NATO barking on the Russian borders, as Pope Francis put it, does not help in this situation and also it does not correspond to the truth but is more an ideological view of the world. Similarly, criticism of the West's increased arms spending might make sense in a completely different constellation [...]

Pavel Fischer, senator, chairperson of the Committee on Foreign Affairs, Defence and Security of the Senate of the Parliament of the Czech Republic, candidate for President of the Czech Republic in the 2018 and 2023 elections:

[...] In a break with tradition, Pope Francis visited the Russian Ambassador to the Holy See to avert the risk of war. Francis went to Russia's residence the day after the invasion began. This

is very unusual. It is ambassadors who go to the Vatican Secretary of State or who have audiences with the Pope not the other way round. [...]

The words spoken in public about Russia's military aggression are worthy of attention. The Pope spoke late and did not condemn Russia. He spoke about "NATO barking" at Russia's door. That is not true, NATO did not provoke Russia's aggression. For the Pope it is as if Ukraine was not the victim but, rather, had helped to trigger the war. He later clarified his words and spoke of Putin as a potentate, but all too late and inaccurately. It is as if Pope Francis does not have a sufficiently developed geopolitical compass. This can be seen even more clearly in his attitude towards communist China. [...]

Josef Pazderka, *journalist, editor-in-chief of the online daily Aktuálně.cz, previously for many years a reporter with the public Czech Television in Russia and Poland:*

[...] For me, as a journalist and eyewitness to Russian crimes in Ukraine, the Pope's position so far on the Russian invasion has been very disappointing. A person who in other respects has shown extraordinary foresight and feeling for the situation, here is suddenly failing, fumbling and spouting a lot of generalities that leave many Ukrainians ill at ease, at the very least. [...]

Pavel Svoboda, *professor of European law at the Faculty of Law, Charles University in Prague, Christian Democratic politician, former Member of the European Parliament and chairman of its Legal Committee:*

[...] I read the statement about NATO's barking as a reason for the aggression in the context of the Pope coming from South America where the United States – and therefore also NATO – is not very popular, to put it mildly. I see bigger problems with his statement criticising the provision of heavy weapons to Ukraine, which is supposedly prolonging the war and the suffering. This would seem to contradict Article 2309 of the Catechism of the Catholic Church on the legitimate use of military force in just defence against an aggressor, albeit under strict conditions. [...]

Father Tomáš Petráček, *Catholic priest, professor of theology at the Catholic Theological Faculty in Prague, head of the Department of Cultural and Religious Studies at the University of Hradec Králové, church historian:*

Pope Francis is breaking diplomatic rules and making gestures of a prophetic nature [...] His claim that there is no such thing as a just war is problematic. We cannot abandon carefully worked out concepts if we do not have anything better and what else would better fit the concept of a just war than the defence of Ukraine itself? [...]



Professor J. R. Tretera and his new book.

Photo Bc. Hana Vařeková

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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: 2nd July 2022, Prague, Cathedral of Saints Vitus, Wenceslas and Adalbert, Apostolic nuncio Jude Thaddeus Okolo presents the pallium, the symbol of the Metropolitan Archbishop, to Jan Graubner, the new Archbishop of Prague. Photo Man and Faith

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

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ISSN 2695-012X