

# CHURCH REPORTER

## 3/2023

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

25<sup>th</sup> March 2023 | Volume 8  
English version



13<sup>th</sup> March 2023: Die Wolfsburg Catholic Academy in Mülheim an der Ruhr (Germany). Bishop of Essen Dr Franz-Josef Overbeck opens the 58<sup>th</sup> three-day scientific conference Essener Gespräche zum Thema Staat und Kirche.

Photo Záboj Horák



## Local group in Prague

### The Law Faculty of Charles University stands with Ukraine



*24<sup>th</sup> February 2023, a year after the Russian invasion of Ukraine: the Ukrainian flag again flew on the main flagpole above Charles University's Faculty of Law.*

*Photo Zábaj Horák*

### Tribute to Czech science

RODRÍGUEZ BLANCO, Miguel (ed.), *Taxation, Religions and Philosophical and Non-Confessional Organisations in Europe/Fiscalités, religions et organisations philosophiques ou non confessionnelles en Europe*, Editorial Comares, Albolote (Granada), 2023, 256 p., ISBN 978-84-1369-508-2. On the first page we read:

**This volume is dedicated to Jiří Rajmund Tretera, distinguished scholar and priest, who was elected to the European Consortium for Church and State Research in 2007 and has been an emeritus member since 2017.**



# The joyful inauguration of the new President of the Czech Republic

On page two of the last issue of this periodical we brought you a report on the important and, for us, joyful event of **28<sup>th</sup> January 2023** under the heading *General Petr Pavel elected President of the Czech Republic*. He was elected by a convincing majority in the second round of voting with an extraordinary turnout of voters, who are all the citizens of the Czech Republic who have reached the age of eighteen. The election of the president passed from parliament to the people in 2012 by a change in the constitutional law.

The inauguration day and the start of the new president's term of office was on **9<sup>th</sup> March 2023**.

Newly elected President Pavel arrived at Prague Castle at 11.50 a.m. and at 12 o'clock he had lunch with the outgoing president, Miloš Zeman.



*Petr Pavel and Miloš Zeman with their wives at lunch in Prague Castle.*

*Photo Prague Castle Administration*

At 2 o'clock, President Petr Pavel entered the late Gothic hall, built during the reign of the Czech king Vladislav II (1471–1516), which from the founding of Czechoslovakia in 1918 was the venue for the election of the Czechoslovak president. Until 1938, it was the only hall that could accommodate all 450 members of the then National Assembly (300 deputies and 150 senators) who elected the president. Vladislav Hall has permanently remained the place where

presidents of Czechoslovakia and, from 1993, of the Czech Republic take the constitutional oath of office with their right hand placed on the Constitution of the Republic and at that moment they assume the office of President of the Republic. This is again what happened this time.

After taking the oath of office, President Pavel gave his first speech as head of state, during which over the course of fifteen minutes he outlined the principles that he intends to follow during the five-year term for which he has been elected under the Constitution.

The ceremony was attended by representatives of both houses of the Parliament of the Czech Republic (200 deputies and 81 senators), the Supreme Court of the Czech Republic, the Constitutional Court, the Supreme Administrative Court and the Government of the Czech Republic, headed by Prime Minister Petr Fiala.

Also present at the ceremony were both living predecessors of Petr Pavel in the office of President of the Republic, Václav Klaus (2003–2013) and Miloš Zeman (2013–2023), as well as Dagmar Havlová, the widow of Václav Havel, the last President of Czechoslovakia (1989–1992) and the first President of the Czech Republic (1993–2003). There were also hundreds of honourable guests present.

At 2.50 p.m., President Petr Pavel went out on to the balcony of the presidential residence in the 3<sup>rd</sup> courtyard of Prague Castle and greeted the assembled people.



*President Petr Pavel and his wife Eva on the balcony of the presidential residence greeting the assembled people.*

*Photo Prague Castle Administration*

At 3.10 p.m., President Pavel laid flowers at the statue of the Liberator President, Tomáš Garrigue Masaryk (1918–1935), on Hradčany Square.

At half past three, President Pavel met his guests for a glass of wine in Prague Castle's Spanish Hall.

In a surprise, the President brought the presidential flag that had been stolen in the past and had it flown over Prague Castle.



*The presidential standard bears the greater coat of arms symbolising the three Czech Lands: Bohemia, Moravia and Silesia. On the red ribbon is a white inscription with the national motto, which since 1920 has been Truth Prevails (Veritas vincit). The golden linden sprigs represent the Czech national tree, which is the linden tree.*

This was followed by President Pavel's attendance at a church celebration, as requested by him, which was no longer part of the inauguration. The first phase was held at 6 p.m. in Saint Wenceslas Chapel. For centuries, Wenceslas has been called the heir to the Czech Lands and is thus the patron saint of all Czech princes, kings and presidents. This is the largest chapel in the Archbishop's cathedral in Prague Castle, which is dedicated to Saint Vitus, Saint Wenceslas and Saint Adalbert. In the middle of the chapel is a coffin containing the body and head of Saint Wenceslas. From the chapel there is an entrance to the cathedral's large tower, in which the crown jewels are kept, i.e. the crown of Saint Wenceslas which the Czech king and Roman Emperor Charles IV (1346–1378) had made, the orb and sceptre, the ceremonial sword and the royal robe.



President Petr Pavel entered the cathedral at 6 o'clock with his wife Eva and his sons Jan and Petr. They were greeted at the entrance to the cathedral by Jan Graubner, the Archbishop of Prague and Primate of Bohemia. An ecumenical service was held in Saint Wenceslas Chapel attended by Cardinal Dominik Duka, Archbishop Emeritus of Prague, other representatives of the bishops' college and the Chapter of St. Vitus, as well as representatives of the Ecumenical Council of Churches in the Republic, whose president began the Lord's Prayer. Also present was the Chief Rabbi, who ended the ceremony with a solemn blessing. Afterwards, everyone moved to the main nave of the cathedral where the Czech Philharmonic played a festive concert of *Te Deum* by the greatest Czech composer Antonín Dvořák (1841–1904).



*A view of the nave before the start of the *Te Deum* concert.*

*Photo Dominika Hromková*

Petr Pavel ended the first day of his presidency at 8.10 p.m. with an interview for Czech Television.

Positive reactions to the dignified, solemn and yet tasteful inauguration ceremony came from all corners of the Czech Republic. The words of the new President calling for civic cooperation come across so well. He explicitly rejects the idea that Czech society is sharply divided. Everyone hopes for a happy future. The President is there for everybody and will exercise his influence with feeling and tact.

In addition to the President's beautiful speeches, the discreet manner of the First Lady is also highly appreciated. Women even liked the way she was dressed and how she changed her elegant dresses during the day as appropriate.

*Text Jiří Rajmund Tretera and Záboj Horák*



## Local group in České Budějovice

### The capital of South Bohemia honoured its spiritual founder

On Friday, 10<sup>th</sup> March 2023, the statutory city of České Budějovice (Budweis), the capital of South Bohemia, experienced a great event: in the Gothic, originally Dominican, Church of the Sacrifice of the Virgin Mary (in the picture below) the relics of the first local prior, Henry Librarius OP, were laid to rest. He was the confessor and advisor to the fifth Czech king, Ottokar II of Bohemia (1253–1278). The solemn Mass that preceded the laying to rest of the relics was presided over by Cardinal Dominik Duka OP, Archbishop Emeritus of Prague.

According to tradition, Henry Librarius is associated with the initiative to found not only a Dominican monastery in České Budějovice, but also the town itself. In a surviving copy of

the monastery's founding document its date of issue is given:

10<sup>th</sup> March 1265. On that date Burgrave Hirzo, who was the administrator of the royal castle of Zvíkov (Klingenberg) to the north, developer of the town of České Budějovice, granted the Czech Dominican province land for the construction of the monastery. This date is considered the date on which the town was founded. Rev. Henry Librarius OP was the prior of the monastery during the early construction of the town and as such had a decisive influence on it. He died



in 1281 and since his death he has been venerated as blessed. The zealous veneration shown to him lasted for the entire existence of the Dominican convent in České Budějovice, until its dissolution during the reign of Emperor Joseph II, i.e. for a period of 500 years. However, at that time the Bishopric of České Budějovice was founded (1785) and České Budějovice has been the seat of a Catholic bishop since then.

After the monastery was taken over by the Piarists and later the Redemptorists, the veneration of Henry Librarian continued but did not reach its original intensity. During the period of communist totalitarianism after 1948 it almost disappeared.

On the initiative of Cardinal Dominik Duka OP, investigation work was begun in 2019 to discover the probable resting place of Librarian's remains. The results of this investigation were announced to the public at a scientific conference on 28<sup>th</sup> January 2020. However, apart from the discovery of the burial recess, identified later as the Chapel of St. Lawrence, the investigation work did not uncover the relics. They were only found during the second phase of the investigation, in September 2020, under the surviving altar-stone of the chapel. The identification of the remains was confirmed by, among other things, their dating using the C14 radiocarbon method.

The ceremonial laying of the remains of Rev. Henry Librarian OP, the initiator of the founding of the town and the first prior of České Budějovice's Dominican monastery, on the day of the 758<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the founding of the town is a reminder of the rich history of the royal and now statutory city of České Budějovice. As a mark of respect from today's inhabitants for their predecessors, part of the former Zátka Embankment from Hroznová Street to Solná branka near the confluence of the Malše and Vltava rivers has been renamed the Henry Librarian Embankment.



*Associate Professor ThDr. Rudolf Svoboda, Th.D., Dean of the Faculty of Theology at the University of South Bohemia in České Budějovice, permanent deacon, carries the reliquary containing the relics of Henry Librarian.*



“In the person of the first prior of the local Dominican monastery and confessor of King Ottokar II, our city is the only one in the Czech Republic to have a documented main initiator and witness not only of its foundation, but also of the beginnings of its existence,” said Associate Professor Dagmar Škodová Parmová, Mayor of the statutory city of České Budějovice.

*Text and photo Jan Kotous*

## The first woman to be Mayor of the Statutory City of České Budějovice

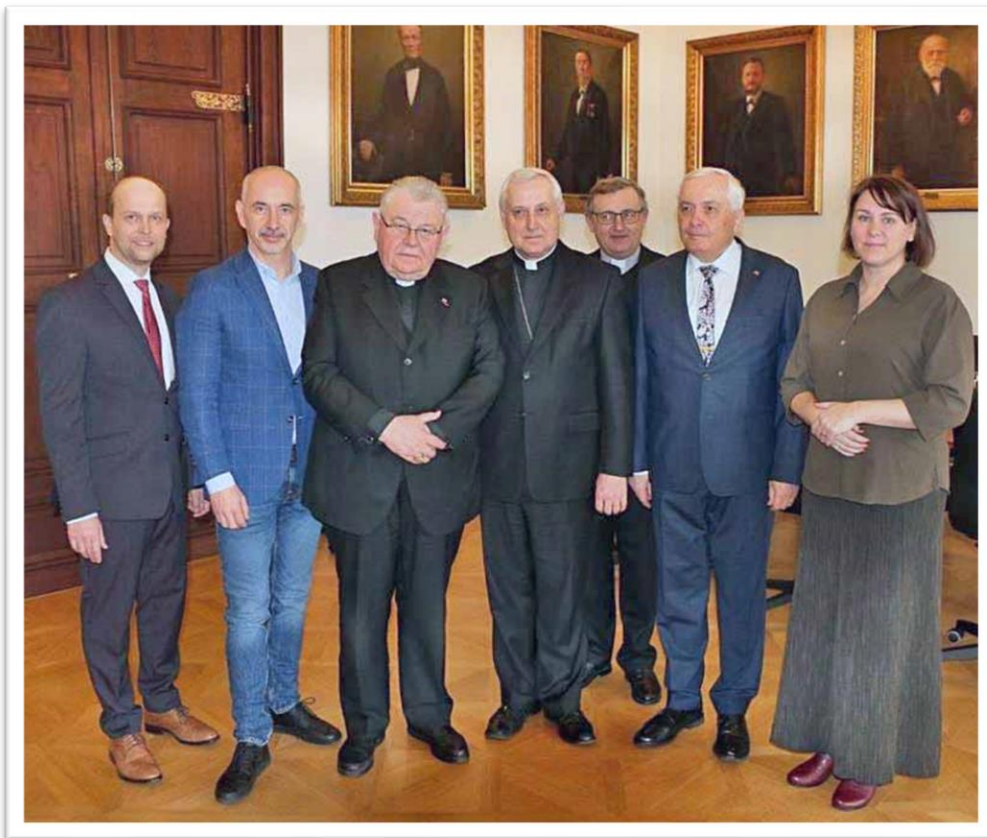


Associate Professor Dagmar Škodová Parmová, Mayor of the Statutory City of České Budějovice (pictured), took an active role during the celebrations of the Blessed Henry Librarian OP.

She was born in České Budějovice (1977). She excels both in the field of science, especially sociology, and in the political sphere. She has been Dean of the Faculty of Economics at the University of South Bohemia since 2019 and is a member of the Civic Democratic Party.

*Photo Statutory City of České Budějovice*

## Reception at České Budějovice Town Hall



*From the left: JUDr. Ing. Tomáš Bouzek, Deputy Mayor, MUDr. Martin Kuba, Governor of the South Bohemian Region, Cardinal Dominik Duka OP, Mons. Vlastimil Kročil, Bishop of České Budějovice, Rev. Dr. Zdeněk Mareš, Th.D., Dean of St. Nicholas Cathedral Chapter, JUDr. Jan Kotous, Zuzana Kudláčková, Deputy Mayor.*



## New Publications

PAPALE, Claudio (ed.), *Le nuove norme sui delitti riservati*. Aspetti sostanziali e procedurali, Urbaniana University Press, Roma, 2023, 136 p., ISBN 978-88-401-9063-1.

TRETERA, Jiří Rajmund, HORÁK, Záboj, *Tax Law, Religion, Philosophical and Non-Confessional Organisations in the Czech Republic*, in: RODRÍGUEZ BLANCO, Miguel (ed.), *Taxation, Religions and Philosophical and Non-Confessional Organisations in Europe*, European Consortium for Church and State Research, Editorial Comares, Albolote (Granada), 2023, pp. 37–42, ISBN 978-84-1369-508-2.

# The 58<sup>th</sup> International Religion Law Conference was held in Mülheim an der Ruhr

Participants at the 58<sup>th</sup> annual conference entitled *Essener Gespräche zum Thema Staat und Kirche*, which was held as it is every March in Mülheim an der Ruhr in North Rhine-Westphalia, experienced three days full of lectures and plenary and group discussions. This year the conference took place on 12<sup>th</sup> – 14<sup>th</sup> March and was held, as always, in *Die Wolfsburg* Catholic Academy, the cultural and educational centre of the Bishopric of Essen. The topic was **The Possibilities and Limits of State Policy Towards Religion**.

The academy is located in one of the most industrial areas of Europe, but stands on the edge of large forests where wolves could still be found in the early 19<sup>th</sup> century. That is why the academy is called Wolfsburg. I remembered this with a smile when I realised that in recent years the Director of the Academy has been *Dr Judith Wolf*. She led most of this year's proceedings.

The conference was opened by *Mons. Franz-Josef Overbeck*, the Diocesan Bishop of Essen, who participated as a discussant throughout the conference (see front page).

The first lecture was given by *Professor Hans Ulrich Anke* from Hannover, President of the Church Office of the Evangelical Church in Germany (EKD), in which he gave an analysis of state policy towards religion. Its main task should be to *ensure individual, collective and cooperative religious freedom*.



*Professor Hans Ulrich Anke speaking, with Dr Judith Wolf seated.*

*Photo Záboj Horák*



He then looked at various areas of religion law which are on the agenda in the current “traffic light” government coalition of the Federal Republic of Germany (the “fair” removal of state contributions to churches, improving the legal status of Muslims, adapting the employment law of churches to civil law, etc.).

However, an important role play individual states, or *Länder*, creating in accordance with the Federal Constitution largest part of religion law. *Contract law* (Vertragsrecht) plays an essential role in it. This creates concordats between the individual states (including all the states of the former East Germany) and public law contracts between the states and the Evangelical churches and also with the Jewish communities.

Among the other speakers were Professor Heinrich de Wall from the University of Erlangen-Nuremberg, the Head of the Military Rabbinate Dr Angelika Günzel from Berlin, Professor Hinnerk Wißmann from the University of Münster, Minister and Director of the State Chancellery of the Federal State of North Rhine-Westphalia Nathanael Liminski from Düsseldorf, Dr Dagmar Mensink from the Department of Religious Affairs of the State Chancellery of the Federal State of Rhineland-Palatinate in Mainz and Professor Janbernd Oebbecke from the University of Münster.



*State Minister Nathanael Liminski speaks to a packed auditorium.*

*Photo Oliver Müller, Bishopric of Essen and Záboj Horák*

*Text Záboj Horák*



*Interior of the Church of the Assumption of the Virgin Mary in Grunta near Kutná Hora  
(Central Bohemia).*

*Foto Jakub Nagy*

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Photo on the front page: 13<sup>th</sup> March 2023, Die Wolfsburg Catholic Academy in Mülheim an der Ruhr. The Bishop of Essen, Dr Franz-Josef Overbeck, opens the 58<sup>th</sup> three-day scientific conference Essener Gespräche zum Thema Staat und Kirche.

Photo Záboj Horák

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