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## **(Not) Developing a Reference of the Second Vatican Council in Slovakia (The History and Operation of Movements and Lay Associations)**

### Introduction

The creation of new movements and communities in the Catholic Church belongs among the most important pastoral and theological phenomena of the Catholic Church of the 20<sup>th</sup> and 21<sup>st</sup> centuries. The vast majority of religious movements have a close association with the Second Vatican Council, and many of them are a direct result of this Council and the force of the Holy Spirit. At present we are experiencing an increase in the number of members, pastoral activity and the impact on the life and activities of the Catholic Church.

In this article we will highlight some of the aspects of how the message of the Second Vatican Council was brought to the life of the Catholic Church in Slovakia, with a special regard to the Greek Catholic Church, which was completely suppressed for 18 years (1950-1968) by the Communist regime. The Greek Catholic Church of Eastern Christianity rite presents the Eastern model, which is a part of the Catholic Church. It represents a direct message of the Holy brothers Cyril and Methodius, co-patrons of Europe. From the Roman Catholic Church it differs only in ceremony. The Greek Catholic Church represents 'a model of religious life, which combines the richness of Eastern traditions in the areas of liturgy, theology and spirituality with the principle of the one Holy, Catholic and Apostolic Church in

communion with the Bishop of Rome<sup>1</sup>. This unity of the Eastern rite with the Holy See was particularly a thorn in the side of the Communist regime, which considered the Greek rite the most revolutionary aspect of the Catholic Church in Czechoslovakia. The Greek Catholic Church has therefore become a visible example of the struggle for inserting the outcomes of the Second Vatican Council in the practical life of the Church.

### Movements and layman communities as one of many fruits of the Council

The current emergence and flowering of new movements and communities in the Catholic Church in many ways recalls the history of the Church, when various spiritual movements were created. After the Second Vatican Council, the movements successively settled down and became a part of the official structures of the Church. Their members and supporters have a great impact on the change in the internal life of the Church, but also on many of the attitudes of the Church towards the pressing and urgent topics and challenges which today's Church is facing.

In the early middle ages the monastery way of life was born, and the 18<sup>th</sup> and the 19<sup>th</sup> centuries are marked by the emergence of a number of monastic congregations. All of these spiritual movements significantly influenced not only theology, but also standpoints of the Catholic Church in those times.

Several of them have ceased to exist, or after completing their 'prophetic' mission were lost, but others have borne quite a few fruits and were institutionalised, withstanding to the present with the characteristics of monastic orders, congregations and so on. Identical optics can be used to look at the foundation of contemporary religious communities and movements.

In the movements which arose in the period before the Second Vatican Council, it is possible to trace the impact of theological thinking which culminated at the Council, in particular through the emphasis on evangelism and mission of the laity in the apostolate, in the area of the Church, and in modern society<sup>2</sup>.

1 J. Coranič, *Z dejín Gréckokatolíckej cirkvi na Slovensku* [From the History of the Greek Catholic Church in Slovakia], České Budějovice 2014, pp. 10–11.

2 Cf. P. Mucha, *Fenomén nových komunit v katolícké cirkvi a príklady z Francie* [The Phenomenon of New Community Activists in Catholic Church and of French Examples], in: [https://www.studiatheologica.eu/artkey/sth-201604-0009\\_Fenomen\\_novych\\_komunit\\_v\\_katolicke\\_cirkvi\\_a\\_priklady\\_z\\_Francie.php](https://www.studiatheologica.eu/artkey/sth-201604-0009_Fenomen_novych_komunit_v_katolicke_cirkvi_a_priklady_z_Francie.php), pp. 151–154, (25.08.2018).

Other decades of the history of the Church are marked by the phenomenon of mutual associating of laypeople in various movements of very different and lively characters. Around traditional forms of life of the Church active movements and communities were founded, which have a distinctive profile and definition. The Church accepts and recognises the right of laypeople to be organized in communities, although in violation of the necessary link with the Church's authority and its full respect.

Signs of the times which are typical for secularized post-modern society and trigger a crisis of identity in man, paradoxically, became *an impulse and a stimulus* for the birth of new movements, which show the splendour of living with the Gospel in their lives and activities. Traditionalist and conservative methods of transmitting the faith, (in)flexibility of the ecclesiastical structures and systems, have evoked awakening of laypeople and new ways, methods and forms, which point to the Gospel and its uncomplicated, simple and practical insertion into life. Movements and communities that grew up after the Second Vatican Council are a sign of how to learn to respond to the demands, needs and sensitivities of modern humankind. They contain and include new forms of communication with the current person and respond to the need for a powerful and personal experience with God<sup>3</sup>.

The birth of the movements and the secular communities is a constant response of Jesus Christ, which he gives in times of social, cultural, political or religious crisis. Movements are the gift of Jesus Christ to his bride, the Church.

### Sacred Scripture, the role and mission of the laity as the fruits of the Second Vatican Council

The Second Vatican Council, aside from many areas of life of the Catholic Church, brought to the forefront the following two aspects: the Holy Scripture and the apostolate, and the mission of the laity in the Church and in the world.

The period of the life of the Catholic Church in the decades before the Second Vatican Council was the phase of 'the development of people's worship of the Sacred Heart of Jesus Eucharistic presence of the Lord Jesus and Mary, the Lord's mother. In this closed Catholic world anything resembling

3 Cf. V. Beregi: *Aktuálne výzvy a evanjelizačný model Komunity Ján Krstiteľ* [Current Challenges and Evangelizing Community Model of John the Baptist], Gregorovce 2015, p. 91.

Protestantism was highly suspicious, so neither laity activities nor reading the Bible were supported. But in the early 19<sup>th</sup> century initial signs of a Catholic desire to return to the shepherd-like and theological life based in Scripture and the teachings of church fathers were shown. At the same times, the Roman priest Vincent from Palotti (1795–1850) came to a serious effort to strengthen and mobilise Catholic laymen, and founded the Society of the Catholic Apostolate<sup>4</sup>. The most significant person of the 19<sup>th</sup> century to have a great impact on the rise of lay Catholic movements and restoration of the 20<sup>th</sup> century was John Henry Newman (1801–1890). He was a great supporter of Catholic Church policy and an advocate of practical holiness based on the Bible and the fathers of the Church. He introduced a number of biblical and patristic ways into the Catholic education system and insisted on the importance of active and erudite laypeople. These transformations became the starting elements of the renewable streams of the 20th century. Even though Newman's tendencies were not met with the acceptance and support of Rome, Pope Leo XIII, who appointed Newman a cardinal, fully opened the door to Catholic restoration. Through his papal encyclical *Providentissimus Deus* on study of the Holy Scriptures (1893) Leo XIII supported the purchase and reading of approved translations of the Bible<sup>5</sup>. The birth of 'Catholic Action' (in 1866) was an important event of that period, which can also be seen as the fruit of grouping of Catholics in the parishes as local centres of Eucharistic devotion, teaching the catechism, upbringing of youth, and missionary work<sup>6</sup>. The Second Vatican Council returned the Holy Scripture to the centre of the life of Catholics. This opening up of the Bible awoke hunger in the believers for the Holy Scripture. "The Word of God should be accessible at all times"<sup>7</sup>. "The sacred synod also earnestly and especially urges all the Christian faithful, especially Religious, to learn by frequent reading of the divine Scriptures the excellent knowledge of Jesus Christ. For ignorance of the Scriptures is ignorance of Christ"<sup>8</sup>. The Council gave great importan-

4 P. Hocken, *Stratégie Ducha? [The Strategy of the Spirit?]*, Kostelní Vydří 1998, p. 103.

5 P. Hocken, *Stratégie Ducha?*, op. cit., pp. 106–108.

6 Cf. B. Secondin: *Nová hnutí v Církvi [The New Movements in the Church]*, Kostelní Vydří 1999, p. 21.

7 Dokumenty Druhého Vatikánskeho Koncilu [*Documents of the Second Vatican Council*], *Dei Verbum, dogmatická konštitúcia o Božom zjavení*, article 22, Trnava 2008, p. 155.

8 Dokumenty Druhého..., op. cit., p. 157.

ce to laypeople and their apostolic activity, in saying that vocation in the Church stems directly from their Christian identity, and must never be missing. Therefore, these are very important documents, by which the activity of the movements and associations is followed: *The Decree of Apostolicam Actuositatem* (Apostolate of the Laity), and the dogmatic *Constitution on the Church – Lumen Gentium*. The Decree on the apostolate of lay persons says in the thirteenth article that the laity should fulfil this mission of the Church in the world especially by 'conforming their lives to their faith so that they become the light of the world as well as by practicing honesty in all their dealings so that they attract all to the love of the true and the good and finally to the Church and to Christ. They fulfill their mission also by fraternal charity which presses them to share in the living conditions, labors, sorrows, and aspirations of their brethren with the result that the hearts of all about them are quietly prepared for the workings of saving grace'<sup>9</sup>. And the Decree stresses the importance of public services in the fact that many people in the society can get to know Jesus through laypeople.

A great authority on theological streams of the contemporary Church, Hans Urs von Balthasar, says these words regarding the movements founded after the Second Vatican Council: 'It was necessary to wait till our century so that we can observe in the Church's heyday and the diversity of independent lay movements. Some of them are still finding their way to the great charisms of the past, the majority of them, however, came from new independent impulses of the Holy Spirit'<sup>10</sup>. And the Holy Pope John Paul II sees the formation of new social movements as a continuous line in the history of the Church. 'In recent days the phenomenon of lay people associating among themselves has taken on a character of particular variety and vitality. In some ways lay associations have always been present throughout the Church's history as various confraternities, third orders and sodalities testify even today. However, in modern times such lay groups have received a special stimulus, resulting in the birth and spread of a multiplicity of group forms: associations, groups, communities, movements. We can speak of a new era of group endeavours 'of the lay faithful. In fact, alongside the

9 *Dokumenty Druhého...*, op. cit., p. 445.

10 P. J. Cordes, *Znamená nádeje – Hnutia, laické združenia a nové skutočnosti v živote Cirkvi na prahu Jubilea* [*Signs of Hope – Movements, Lay Associations and New Realities in the Life of the Church on the Threshold of the Jubilee*], Bratislava 1998, p. 129.

traditional forming of associations, and at times coming from their very roots, movements and new sodalities have sprouted, with a specific feature and purpose, so great is the richness and the versatility of resources that the Holy Spirit nourishes in the ecclesial community, and so great is the capacity of initiative and the generosity of our lay people<sup>11</sup>.

### The situation of the Greek Catholic Church in Slovakia in the period after the Second Vatican Council

The Catholic Church in Eastern Europe during the era of the iron curtain was unable to insert the fruit of the Second Vatican Council in its structures, ministry and missionary activities in any geographical area freely and without hindrance. The second half of the twentieth century is marked by oppression and persecution of the Communist regime, which openly impeded activities and development of the Catholic Church.

The Greek Catholic Church in Slovakia at this time was in a very difficult situation. The emergence of communist power in February 1948 caused that the Greek Catholic Church in Czechoslovakia became unlawful and banned for a period of 18 years.

Professor Peter Šturák defines the totalitarian state as that which denies the basic rights of people and claims to shape their public life in all areas. It assumes a monopoly on the means of communication, education and teaching, and the management of public life. A person in a totalitarian regime becomes a component of a society without a set of rights or personal dignity. These were the reasons why there was an evident dispute between church and state in Czechoslovakia. The totalitarian regime began the eradication of Christianity, the Church and the faithful. The structure of the Church was disrupted and undermined, religious-cultural habits were set aside, the Church was excluded from social life, and anti-Christian ideology was promoted<sup>12</sup>.

The intent of the Communist regime against the Catholic Church in Czechoslovakia had three stages. The first step was to persuade the faithful

11 Ján Pavol II, *Christifideles laici. Apoštolská exhortácia o povolani a poslaní laikov v Cirkvi a vo svete* [Post-Synodal Apostolic Exhortation on the Vocation and the Mission of the Lay Faithful in the Church and in the World], article 29. In: <https://www.kbs.sk/obsah/sekcia/h/dokumenty-a-vyhlasenia/p/dokumenty-papezov/c/jan-pavol-ii> (18.10.2018).

12 Cf. P. Šturák, *Dejiny Gréckokatolíckej Cirkvi v Československu v rokoch 1945–1989*, Prešov 1999, p. 105.

to take a positive stance toward the Communist regime, as the Church hierarchy was accused of cooperation with the imperialistic western states and the introduction of laws providing control to the Church. The second stage included the insulation of the Church hierarchy and the creation of a new religious hierarchy that would be willing to cooperate with the state power. The final step was the creation of a 'state church' cut off from the Vatican<sup>13</sup>.

This fight of the totalitarian regime against the Greek Catholic Church peaked in April 1950, when the Communist government arbitrarily annulled the Greek Catholic Church in Slovakia. The Orthodox Church, supported by the communist government, converted 300,000 Greek Catholic believers to the Orthodox Church and incorporated them under the jurisdiction of the Patriarch of Moscow. The priests who remained loyal to the Pope and the Catholic Church were driven from parish houses and remote regions, and violently dragged to Czechoslovakian border towns, where they were forced into hard manual labour. They were inserted into a foreign environment which did not sympathize with them.

The assets of the Greek Catholic Church were transferred to the Orthodox Church. Even the institutions that had been shaping the candidates to the priesthood, a seminary and a theological faculty, were closed. The atheist regime interned both the Greek Catholic bishops, Peter Pavol Gojdič, OSMB and Vasil' Hopko ThD, and in a show trial both 'traitor' bishops were condemned to long-term imprisonment. As a result of harsh treatment and torture the Bishop Peter Pavol Gojdič died in prison as a martyr to the faith in 1960.

Vasil' Hopko was released from prison in 1963 in ruined health. On the basis of this open attack by the state power, the Greek Catholic Church was converted into a 'catacomb' — the Underground Church.

The Communist State also stood up to the lay faithful, who were in various ways persecuted and intimidated for their allegiance to Rome. The whole atheist period in Slovakia is marked by interference of the state in the field of education, where parents were hampered in registering their

13 Cf. J. Coranič, *Vzťah štátu a katolíckej cirkvi v Československu v rokoch 1949–1953* [*The Relationship of the State and the Catholic Church in Czechoslovakia in the Years 1949–1953*], in: *Cirkev v dejinách kresťanstva na Slovensku* [*The Church in the History of Christianity in Slovakia*], ed. J. Coranič, Prešov 2014, p. 219.

children in religious education lessons and priests were not allowed to work with the youth<sup>14</sup>.

In 1968, a breakthrough in political, social, and religious life came about in Czechoslovakia. The first Secretary of the ÚV KSČ (Central Committee of the Communist Party of Czechoslovakia) Alexander Dubček started to promote so-called 'socialism with a human face' under the influence of the many iniquities of the Communist regime. The society was experiencing a 'new spring', which extended into religious life as well. The re-establishment of the Greek Catholic Church was an excellent result of that release.

Restored legalization of the Greek Catholic Church (in 1968) was among the most important results of the 'The Prague Spring' revivalist socio-political process<sup>15</sup>. This activity had not been restored in its entirety. The state was constantly interfering in the life of the Church, there were continuous conflicts with the Orthodox Church, and pastoral activity of priests was very limited. This situation stalled the release of totalitarian pressure during the so-called 'normalization era' for the next twenty years, after the Warsaw Pact Armies had entered the territory of Czechoslovakia. In the normalization era, the government in power constantly worked to obstruct the filling of bishops' vacancies, making it difficult for theologians to study in the only seminary in Bratislava, and a secular spirit was penetrating the ecclesiastical institutions. The priests were able to carry out their pastoral activity only with 'national consent' – the official permission of communist institutions. The period was characterised by a growing deterioration of relations between state offices and the Greek Catholic Church. 'The Greek Catholic Church was permitted, but the full recovery of its assets was not achieved and the constant all-round control by state authorities made it virtually impossible for the Church to gain its further self-development'<sup>16</sup>.

In the late 1970s and early 1980s, however, the Catholic Church in Slovakia began to pick up a new vibrancy. Confession of faith was gaining new forms and ways. New communities that came to the Slovak Greek Catholic

14 Cf. P. Šturák, *Dejiny Gréckokatolíckej...*, op. cit., pp. 106–112.

15 J. Coranič, *Z dejín Gréckokatolíckej...*, op. cit., p. 359.

16 J. Cuhra, *Církevní politika KSČ a státu v letech 1969–1972 [The Policy of the Communist Party and the State in 1969–1972]*, Prague 2007, Ústav soudobých dějin AV, p. 22.



Church for the spiritual assistance of the secret priests and many laypeople – activists – slowly began to grow and develop. Their existence and activities were carried out in secret, but they were a valuable treasure for the flowering of faith.

From 1969 the structures of the underground church were beginning to take shape, with groups of lay apostolate. They were formed by young activists, especially among college students, who were founding small prayer communities. Robert Letz states that in 1975 a network of communities was created in Slovakia, where around 15,000 mostly young faithful secretly met<sup>17</sup>.

A great asset for the life of the faithful was the issuing of periodical secret journals (*samizdats*), which, at least to a small degree filled up the spiritual emptiness created by the totalitarian regime<sup>18</sup>. 'A special phenomenon at the time of totality, which relates to the expressions of the faith, became religious pilgrimages of the faithful to pilgrimage sites, especially with Virgin Mary cult (*Lutina*, Klokočov, Čirč), and became the places of manifestation of faith of the Greek Catholics'<sup>19</sup>. However, the regime tried to disrupt even these activities by 'counteractions', thus making life unpleasant for believers.

In this period a ban on organizing spiritual retreats of laymen or any initiative to become engaged in religious ceremonies was also issued. It was permissible to publish only basic spiritual literature, and a ban was imposed on maintaining links with foreign charitable centres. In the stage of normalization pressure an important role was played by the hidden underground Church. A clandestine group of priests and lay people carried out religious activities in secret, dealt with the education of priests and developed activities not permitted for the Greek Catholic Church by the government. Secretly ordained bishops granted ordinations of secret priests and educated and trained lay people, involving them in church life<sup>20</sup>. The activities of the underground Church were a response to public authorities and their constant control and an reduction in the number of applicants accepted for

17 Cf. R. Letz, *Prenasledovanie Katolíckej cirkvi na Slovensku v rokoch 1948–1989* [*The Persecution of the Catholic Church in Slovakia in the Years 1948–1989*], in: *Vďační za dar viery a vzkriesenie Cirkvi* [*Thankful for the Gift of Faith and the Resurrection of the Church*], ed. M. Hospodár, Michalovce 2018, p. 49.

18 Cf. P. Šturák, *Dejiny Gréckokatolíckej...*, op. cit., pp. 164–168.

19 P. Šturák, *Dejiny Gréckokatolíckej...*, op. cit., p. 259.

20 Cf. P. Šturák, *Dejiny Gréckokatolíckej...*, op. cit., pp. 260–266.

theological study. 'The average annual increment of new graduates in theology (new priests) was 3.5 priests per a year at this time, while during that period from 12 to 13 priests on average died annually'<sup>21</sup>.

The era of an external attack on the Catholic Church in Slovakia ended with 'The Gentle Revolution' in November 1989, after the fall of the communist regime. A new stage in the life of the Church was opened under the new conditions. The Greek Catholic Church could develop freely and with a fresh breath of air it could rise from the ashes of repression. The property settlement of the crimes and conditions with the Orthodox Church and the restoration of the parishes marked by the 40 years of oppression cost the Greek Catholic Church enormously.

### The new conditions and the growth of religious movements and lay associations

The common typical feature of the countries of the Soviet bloc was their isolation in comparison to the rest of the world. Although it was not the same in all of the countries, Czechoslovakia was one of the most isolated and closed countries. The life of the Church could only take place within the frames of public religious services led strictly by priests only. All other spiritual, pastoral and missionary activities had to be held in secret<sup>22</sup>. The situation that brought the fall of the communist regime was marked by an enormous hunger for spiritual life, which meant a unique opportunity for the growth and formation of communities and movements.

The Greek Catholic Church has been operating in the same territory as the Roman Catholic Church. Eastern Slovakia, where the majority of Greek Catholics live, is often called the most religious part of Slovakia. Thus, this statement does not express a lively transcendental faith, but rather a traditional Christianity. In the life of believers, much formalism can be seen, also the inability to pass on the experience of the faith to the next generation, and low ability to evangelize the surrounding area. The heroic expressions of faith of the bishops, the martyrs of the Church, the current pastoral efforts of contemporary church authorities, the reconstruction

21 J. Coranič, *Z dejín Gréckokatolíckej...*, op. cit., 2014, p. 390.

22 Cf. A. Opatrný, *Čo priniesla charizmatická obnova katolíckej cirkvi?* [What Did the Charismatic Revival of the Catholic Church Bring?] in: *Pentekostalizmus v súčasnom a spoločenskom kontexte* [Pentecostalism in the Contemporary and Social Context], eds L. Ondraššek, I. Mod'oroši, Ružomberok 2013, p. 51.

of pilgrimage sites, and building of new pastoral centres are all truly providing strong support for the growth of the local Church<sup>23</sup>. In particular, church movements and communities play a role in supporting the growth of the Church in their current post-modern conditions with their charisms, hard work and evangelism.

The first beginnings of religious movements in Slovakia date back to the end of the 1980s, when movements penetrated into Slovakia, mainly from Poland, and into Bohemia from the German Democratic Republic (especially the Focolare Movement, the Oaza-Svetlo Život, the Charismatic Renewal and the Neocatechumenal Way).

#### The Oasis-Svetlo Život

The Oasis-Svetlo Život movement arrived in Slovakia at the turn of 1960s and 70s. Slovaks would take part in oasis-spiritual retreats in Poland. In 1978 Father Blachnický conferred responsibility for the movement in Slovakia on layman Peter Václavík. Since then many events and formation meetings have been held annually at many events and professional meetings. Over the years, thousands of people in Slovakia have gone through the formation of the movement, even in the period of totalitarianism. In 2008, two priests were set aside to serve in the Slovak movement and the Calvary in the town of Prešov as the Centre of the movement was opened. The Bishops' Conference of Slovakia approved The Statute of the Deacons of The Light-Life Movement (Hnutie Svetlo – Život) in 2009<sup>24</sup>.

The Light-Life Movement combines 'traditional spirituality with the new requirements of the life of today's society'<sup>25</sup>. Charism (a spiritual gift) of the movement aims at the shaping of a mature Christian man as a new man in Christ. The Holy Scripture, the teachings of the Council, the person of Christ as a servant, and devotion to Virgin Mary are the heart of the movement. The environment in which every member of the movement lives is the same as for the other people of the society. However, their ambition and

23 L. Petrik, *Cirkevné hnutia a nové spoločenstvá v Gréckokatolíckej cirkvi na Slovensku* [Church Movements and New Communities in the Greek Church in Slovakia], "SLOVO – časopis gréckokatolíckej cirkvi" („The WORD – the Greek Catholic Church Magazine"), vol. 44, no. 23 (2012), p. 2.

24 Cf. P. Komanický, M. Poláčková, *The Light-Life Movement*, in: <http://casopisslovo.sk/wp-content/uploads/archiv/1226.pdf>, p. 2 (11.10.2018).

25 B. Secondin, *Nová hnutí v Církvi*, op. cit., p. 130.

mission is to live differently, according to the Holy Gospel. Such a Christian cannot live his Christian vocation alone, and therefore he creates new communities, which spread a new culture by their evangelical way of life and consequently transform the world.

#### The Neocatechumenal Way

The Neocatechumenal Movement came to Slovakia in 1978 from Poland and today there are approximately 50 communities with a total of about 1,000 brothers and sisters. In 2009, a teaching office approved its statute. Charism of the Neocatechumenate is to experience a way of conversion, during which one can discover the richness of the Christian faith in post-baptismal catechumenate. The movement develops pastoralism of evangelization for adults in parishes by bringing to faith those who live their Christianity superficially. The Holy Pope John Paul II described the spirituality of the movement in his papal statement: 'The Neocatechumenal Way through the kerygmatic announcements invites to the faith by post-baptismal formation, forms the living cells, restores vitality to the Church of the parish through adult Christians, capable of presenting the testimony of the truth by radically experienced faith'<sup>26</sup>. The Neocatechumenate bases its activities based on three pillars: Sacred Scripture, liturgy and community. These pillars have a sequence — the Word of God has the power to transform a life of a man marked by sin and its consequences. The celebration of the liturgy is a response to inflammation and the adopted Holy Word and the Holy Spirit creates the community.

#### Charismatic Renewal

Charismatic Renewal entered Slovakia in the mid-1980s from Hungary and Western Europe through the Czech lands of Czechoslovakia. The main coordinator of the renewal was the Catholic priest Vaclav Kocián, who after the fall of the Communist regime established the JAS Association (in cooperation with the then Bishop of Banská Bystrica Diocese Mons. Rudolf Baláž). The association plays an important role in unifying Catholics, organizing groups of spiritual retreat in the name of The Holy Spirit in the Banská Bystrica Diocese and all over Slovakia. The JAS Association is also

26 P. Kossey, P. Murdza, *Apoštolské hnutia laikov Katolíckej cirkvi na Slovensku* [*The Apostolic Movements of the Catholic Church in Slovakia*], Zvolen 1995, p. 52.

involved in organizing top events of "KCHO" (Catholic Charismatic Renewal) – annual charismatic conferences – and publishing various charismatic books. Catholic Charismatic Renewal currently covers about 180 communities in Slovakia, to which they claim their allegiance. The Catholic Charismatic Renewal, also known as The Restoration in the Holy Spirit is 'a return to the first Christian openness for the chief Animator of the Church - the Holy Spirit and his donations, for which Pope John XXIII had prayed: "The Holy Spirit, renew Your wonders in this our day, as by a new Pentecost..."<sup>27</sup>.

The spirituality of the Catholic Charismatic Renewal seeks to 'contribute to conversion, salvation and consecration of all people and to their integration in the community of God's people. It depends on how each piece of work in the Church was based on recognizing God's intentions and plans. Emphasis is on: the knowledge of God as a loving father, to establish a personal relationship with Jesus as a forgiving father, the need to strengthen the presence of the Holy Spirit in them, the importance of the Holy Scripture, sacraments, worship, prayer, prayers, praises the importance of charisms or gifts of the Holy Ghost for the church service, the need to build community, the Mission of proclaiming the Gospel and to bear witness<sup>28</sup>. Charismatic Renewal is characterized by a rediscovering the charisms, about which the Apostle Paul writes in his Epistles (cf. RIM 12 and 1 Cor. 10). He focuses on the basic essential of Christian values and social life – personal and communal life in Christ and in the Holy Spirit for the glory of God the Father. A special role is taken by common prayer worship and adoration. The basic cell of Charismatic Renewal is a community of prayer, which is mostly set in a parish. It meets regularly under the direction of an animator, who is usually a layperson. He runs the community through Bible reading, singing and lectures.

## Conclusion

A typical feature of each church movement is its dedication to a specific area of church life while leading and shaping its members as well. Another form of the functioning of a movement is the preference for a certain style of piety or the charisma of its founder. These features of movements are

27 P. Kossey, P. Murdza, *Apoštolské hnutia...*, op. cit., p. 67.

28 *Charizmatická obnova [Charismatic Renewal]*, in: <http://www.kcho.sk/obnova.php> (17.10.2018).

known from the entire history of the Church, in particular of the ecclesiastical history of religious orders<sup>29</sup>. Each of the movements bears its fruits for the good life of the entire Church, and in particular, it is the function of the movements and communities at the moment: the answer to every conflict, rising at the level of *the movement-the Church* or at the level of *the movement-the movement*. Another excellent option for each movement and laypersons' association is their flexible response to the grudging situation of contemporary society, and they are a clear response of the Catholic Church to a secular society. And so, it is possible to show the utmost wealth of results which are achieved by the present Greek Church in Slovakia. This church 'stood up from the ashes' and was constantly trying, within the limits of the time, to gradually insert the fruits of the Second Vatican Council into its life. At a time of persecution, through the publication of the *samizdat* journals, translation of the liturgy into the Slovak language, secret cell communities, activities of the underground Church, and many other pilgrimage sites, the message of the Second Vatican Council was able to rise within the local Church. At present, the whole community of the faithful Greek Church in Slovakia symbolizes 'the new spring'. The advancement of the Greek Catholic Church at metropoliusuiuris in 2008, development of the places of pilgrimage in Litmanová and Lutina (Slovakia), activities of centres for youth and family, new priest vocations, and the three blessed martyrs of the Communist regime are unmistakable features of the development of this Church and the new possibilities of how to develop the message of the Second Vatican Council.

In conclusion, we want to emphasize the seven assumptions, referred to by Professor Joseph Vrabec for every religious movement and lay association. These conditions cause every community to steadily become a place for the evangelistic zeal and service of the Church as the mysterious Body of Christ:

- draw your dish from the word of God
- always stand on the side of the Church
- be firmly integrated into the local Church and be committed to the universal Church

29 A. Opatrný, *Nová hnutí v Církví* [*The New Movements in the Church*], "Dingir – a Magazine about the Contemporary Religious Scene", vol. VIII, no. 2 (2005), p. 51.

- constantly watch over their links with the pastors of the Church and the Teaching Office of the Church
- protect elitism
- increase daily in missionary zeal and the study of religion
- be open to all people<sup>30</sup>

The Holy Pope John Paul II called us up to give effect to these terms and assumptions. In a speech to members of the religious movements and lay communities on the great feast of Pentecost on May, 1998 he encouraged us by saying: 'There is so much need today for mature Christian personalities, conscious of their baptismal identity, of their vocation and mission in the Church and in the world! There is great need for living Christian communities! And here are the movements and the new ecclesial communities: they are the response, given by the Holy Spirit, to this critical challenge at the end of the millennium. You are this providential response'<sup>31</sup>.

30 Cf.: J.-J. Vrabelec, J. Jarab, L. Stanček, *Chod'te aj vy do mojej vinice* [You Go into My Vineyard], Trnava 1997, pp. 149–150.

31 John Paul II, Speech of the Holy Father Pope John Paul II at meeting with ecclesiastical movements and new communities 30.5.1998, in: *Papal letters and Vatican documents*, vol. XIV, Trnava 1998, p. 56.

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# Abstract

Damian Saraka

*(Not) Developing a Reference of the Second Vatican Council in Slovakia (The History and Operation of Movements and Lay Associations)*

**Keywords:**

The Second  
Vatican Council,  
Greek Catholic  
Church, Church  
Movements and  
Communities, new  
evangelisation,  
layman  
associations

Church movements and lay associations are one of the admirable fruits of the Second Vatican Council. However, it was not simple to inject the recommendations and regulations of the council into the life of the Catholic Church. In Eastern Europe and especially in former Czechoslovakia the Catholic Church had to confront a massive external conflict against totalitarian communist regimes which openly restrained implementing the fruits of the council into practical life. The Greek Catholic Church, which was prohibited by the totalitarian regime in Czechoslovakia for 18 years, became caught in the centre of that conflict. Despite the period of darkness and many conflicts, there came a period of freedom and blossoming of new movements and communities, which involve new forms of communication with modern people and answer their need for strong and personal experiences with God. However, also in the middle of the free society and continuous activity and blossoming of movements there are internal conflicts, which are the consequence of adolescence, development of structures and applying of charismas of particular movements and communities in the Catholic Church environment. It is the period of adolcescing to 'Church maturity' which cannot be without conflicts. Despite the conflicts, church movements and lay associations are the answer to dramatic calls of the present-day period induced by The Holy Spirit.

# Abstrakt

Damian Saraka

*(Nie) wprowadzanie zaleceń Drugiego Soboru Watykańskiego na Słowacji  
(historia i działanie świeckich ruchów i stowarzyszeń)*

Jednym z owoców Drugiego Soboru Watykańskiego są ruchy kościelne i organizacje świeckie. Jednak wprowadzenie zaleceń i przepisów soboru w życie Kościoła katolickiego nie było łatwe. W Europie Wschodniej, a szczególnie w byłej Czechosłowacji, Kościół katolicki musiał zmierzyć się z niezwykle poważnym konfliktem zewnętrznym z reżimami komunistycznymi, które otwarcie utrudniały wprowadzanie decyzji soboru w życie codzienne. Kościół greckokatolicki, przynależność do którego przez osiemnaście lat była zakazywana przez czechosłowacki reżim totalitarny, znalazł się w centrum tego zatargu. Pomimo tego mrocznego okresu i licznych konfliktów, ostatecznie nadszedł czas wolności i rozkwitu nowych ruchów i wspólnot, które zasadzają się na współczesnych formach komunikacji z człowiekiem i odpowiadają na jego potrzebę silnego i osobistego doświadczania Boga. Jednak nawet w wolnym społeczeństwie, pomimo ciągłej działalności i rozkwitu tych ruchów, istnieją konflikty wewnętrzne, które są konsekwencją dojrzewania, rozwijania struktur i odwoływania się do charyzmy poszczególnych ruchów i społeczności w środowisku Kościoła katolickiego. Mamy obecnie okres dorastania do „kościelnej dojrzałości”, które nie może odbyć się bezproblemowo. Pomimo tego jednak, ruchy kościelne i organizacje świeckie stanowią odpowiedź na dramatyczne wołanie, spowodowane przez Ducha Świętego, jakie słyszymy ze strony współczesnego świata.

**Słowa kluczowe:**  
Drugi Sobór  
Watykański,  
Kościół  
greckokatolicki,  
ruchy i wspólnoty  
kościelne, nowa  
ewangelizacja,  
organizacje  
świeckie