

Examination of the Importance of Patron Saints and Prayer Books in Relation to Pastoral Care in the Police

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This study undertakes to analyse, in the context of previous research carried out in the subject of the pastoral care service in the police force, the regulatory framework within which the veneration of saints is manifested in the Hungarian Police. The teaching of the Catholic Church is becoming more and more important since police work is influenced by ethical issues such as migration, immigration, the situation of minorities.

Keywords: police, Catholic Church, migration, cemetery, patron saints, prayer books

Patron Saints of Law Enforcement Agencies and Veneration of Saints

In the Catholic Church, the veneration of Saints is placed in the focus of cultic activity. Some Saints and Patron Saints are associated with particular occupations, other Saints with people of the same vocation. The armed bodies, including the police, have always had role models among the Saints. Some were venerated as Patron Saints, others as role models.² Since 1992, St. George (in Hungarian: Szent György) has been the Patron Saint of the Hungarian Police and a role model embodying order and legality. St. George's heroism, legend, sacrifices and commitment to God caused people to love and venerate him. St. George was made to suffer and became a martyr for the love of the Christian faith.³ Since police work essentially follows the ideals of defeating evil and protecting the innocent, the police regard Saint George as a role model. The cult of Saint George appears in various ways in the life of the Hungarian National

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2 TAKÁCS Imre: *Védőszent*. Szent István Társulat, Budapest, 2009, 909.

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This book can help you gain insight into ethnographic and cultural history aspects of the St. George's tradition in the Carpathian Basin. The cult of St. George has gradually become widespread among the armed forces, as the police was able to identify itself in the fight with the dragon, the symbol of evil, because the life of police officers is also the fight against evil and crime.

Police: celebrating holidays; sanctifying flags, objects and other items; and also in the form of awards.

Since 1992, the day of the Hungarian National Police is held on the 24th April. One of the awards a Hungarian police officer might receive is a silvered *St. George medal* bearing a design of the Saint killing a dragon and the coat of arms of the Hungarian Police. The commemorative medal is awarded in recognition of the police officer's outstanding performance and is awarded by the county or national police chief in a gift box, with a personalised letter of recognition.

Another recognition named after St. George, which is given by the Minister of Interior, is the *St. George Badge of Honour*. It can be awarded to any member of the professional staff of the police who perform their work in an outstanding manner during a long period of time as professional cadres, as public officials or as public servants, thus becoming role models for the community. The awards are distributed every year on the Police Day. The Badge of Honour can be awarded to 30 people.⁴ An ecumenical service is held on St. George's Day in the chapel inaugurated in the Police Headquarters at Teve Street (Budapest).⁵ These initiatives are especially important and beneficial, since an ordained clergy celebrating the holy mass, in addition to a festive sermon, can also mention the importance of police work and can draw the attention to the religious and spiritual aspects of police work, referring to the methods it uses to resolve the current policing problems. The police holiday is also important from the viewpoint of the faithful. At a Holy Mass, believers can get insight into the religious life of those police officers who are present.⁶ If a pastoral care service were to be established in the police force, St. George's Day would be a day when priests of the service could not only offer Holy Mass, but discuss religious, moral and social issues.

At law enforcement agencies St. Florian is also venerated. However, the veneration of St. Florian differs from the cult of St. George.⁷ In some areas of Central Europe – including Hungary – he is mainly venerated as the Patron Saint against fire and of firefighters. Elsewhere in Europe, he is seen as the Patron Saint of water, who offers protection against floods. Believers like to erect statues of the Saint.⁸ In Hungary, he is primarily known as the Patron Saint of firefighters. The fire brigade as a professional disaster management body reports to the National Directorate General for Disaster

4 Order of the Ministry of Interior No. 37/ 2012. (VIII. 2.) BM. (2012) 17566.

5 *Civilek is használhatják a rendőrségi imaszobát*, 2008.

Source: www.delmagyar.hu/belfold_hirek/civilek_is_hasznalhatjak_a_rendorsegi_imaszobat/2054523/ (18.01.2015)

6 Annex 9 to the Order of the Ministry of Interior No. 37/ 2012. (VIII. 2.) BM: Description and Wearing Policy of the St. George's Badge of Honour.

7 Diós István: *Szent Flórián*, 1985, Source: www.katolikus.hu/szentekek/szent61.html (25.06.2015). During the reign of Diocletian emperor, in 303 the persecution of the Christian church burst out again. When Florian learned that in Lauriacum on the Enns forty Christians had been prisoned, he hit the road to be of help to the prisoners as only he can. Before he reached the city, he voluntarily disclosed his Christian being. He was arrested and brought to the governor, Aquilinus, who ordered to flagellate him and sentenced him to be thrown into the river Enns with a millstone around his neck. The sentence was carried out on 4th May 304: Florian was pushed from a pier into the river Enns. His dead body was recovered and buried by a widow named Valeria. Later a church was built over the grave, of which Benedictines and then Lateran Canons took care of. The Shrine famous today was built around it.

8 St. Florian, Catholic Online, 2010, Source: www.catholic.org/saints/saint.php?saint_id=149 (25.06.2015)

Management of the Ministry of Interior. In accordance with the law on the service status of professional staff of agencies performing law enforcement tasks, both the police and the firefighting service are determined as law enforcement agencies.⁹ The organizational structure of the two law enforcement agencies is largely the same. The difference is in the implementation of tasks formulated by the legislator. The Day of St. Florian, the Patron Saint of firefighters, has been celebrated country-wide by members of volunteer fire-fighter associations and professional fire brigades since their establishment in the 1890s. Larger events, inauguration of stations and equipment, consecration of the colours, festivities, balls are scheduled for this day. Firefighters named their equipment after St. Florian, and the Saint was often depicted on firefighter flags.¹⁰ On the other side of the flag an acclamation could often be seen: “St. Florian, pray for us”, or short prayers were written on the flag. “Please, Lord, for St. Florian’s merits and to his intercession protect us from all mental and physical peril, especially the ravages of fire and flames of our evil desires burning out our souls! Through Christ our Lord! Amen!”¹¹ These short prayers were used on other occasions as well.

Each year the Minister of the Interior can award the *St. Florian’s Badge of Honour* to 10 people in total, who are members of the professional staff of the disaster management bodies and whose performance has been outstanding for a long period of time to be role models for the community.¹²

It has been common practice in the Hungarian Army’s life, similarly to other national armies, that the handover of the team’s flag is accompanied by some liturgical action. This means the blessing of the team flag or a shorter prayer and pastoral speech. It has been laid down in law that the handover of team flag should preferably be organised as a public ceremony in the context of state, national or corps celebrations, or historical church feasts.

The team’s flag, which is handed over by the Minister of the Interior, is blessed by the representative of the Catholic Church. It is a historical tradition. The team’s flag should be placed in the given body’s building, at a visible place. The Catholic cult is also expressed by the blessing of the equipment used by the police, before they are put in place in the system. The team’s flag may depict religious motives as well, such as the silhouette of St. George. We can find many historical examples showing this. The team’s flag is a symbol that expresses the commitment and respect for the traditions of Hungarian history, devotion and dedication to the security of the country, the strength of the community.

9 Act XLII of 2015. (2015) 5220.

10 VÁRY Lászlóné, MINÁROVICS János: *Szent Flórián a tűzoltók patrónusa*, Belügyminisztérium, Budapest, 1988, 3.

11 SZABÓ Károly: *Flórián a védőszent*, Szövetkezeti Szervezési Iroda, Budapest, 1991, 61. (translated by the author)

12 Order of the Ministry of Interior No. 37/ 2012. (VIII. 2.) BM. (2012) 17566.

Annex 10 to the Order of the Ministry of Interior No. 37/ 2012. (VIII. 2.) BM: Description and Wearing Policy of the St. Florian’s Badge of Honour.

Historical Presentation of Prayer Books Issued to Professional Staff of Police Forces

Under the general rules of the canon, the believers in Christ have the right to draw on the power of the Word of God and the sacraments and other spiritual sources. This is what prayer books and hymnals serve. It is not uncommon for the Catholic Church to issue a prayer book for people living under special circumstances, e.g. for soldiers. The Holy See issued a catechism for soldiers in the Italian language in 2014. This catechism is unique in the sense that the Catholic Church's teachings are explained in accordance with the living conditions of soldiers. Many ethical issues are touched upon, such as the protection of human life, a just war, which have a stronger effect on the life of soldiers than on the life of civilians. Such issues are also present in the life of police officers. The refugee crisis the European Union is facing with, places extra burden on the professional staff of the Hungarian police.¹³ When collecting, transporting and guarding refugees entering Hungary through the southern section of the border, police officers experience a form of human persecution and despair previously unknown. These are moral, ethical and psychological issues that the Hungarian police officers have not encountered with such intensity and on such a scale so far. To cope with heightened media attention, hysterical social mood, as well as to address unfounded criticism, police officers need help; however, the professional self-image of police officers does not allow them to seek help from psychologists performing service at the border section.¹⁴ The shortcomings in crisis management clearly show that pastoral care could be helpful to police officers finding themselves in a stressful situation. Nevertheless, we can say that the resulting refugee situation is not only a problem in a particular European country, because we can see that law enforcement agencies of the states of southern Europe struggle with similar problems.

Similarly to a prayer book issued for soldiers, a prayer book for police officers could also be issued. In addition, this would not be without precedents in the history of the Hungarian police.

The publication named *Maradj velünk, uram! – A magyar rendőr imádságos könyve* (*Stay with us, Lord! – Hungarian Police Officer's Prayer Book*) was first published in 1935 and then re-published in 1941.¹⁵ The book contains advice and guidance how to pursue a religious and effective police career. The book editors, being practical, opted for a paperback format, which greatly facilitated the portability and usability. The work of police officers and the priests is presented in a conceptual context: both vocations are based on the common mission of helping the needy and by doing so fulfilling the will of God. The book discusses the security of the soul, the importance of conscience and the significance of morality. The author discusses police life, service pitfalls and provides

13 *Több mint ezren próbáltak meg átjutni a zöldhatáron*, 2015.

Source: http://mandiner.hu/cikk/20150208_tobb_mint_ezren_probaltak_atjutni_a_zoldhataron (11.07.2015).

14 KOLOZSI Ádám: *Besokallnak a rendőrök, ha nem kapnak segítséget*, 2015. Source: http://index.hu/belfold/2015/09/09/besokallnak_a_rendorok_ha_nem_kapnak_segitseget/?token=2a2740341b268b2276aae8ffa3cfc530, (04.10.2015).

15 BRISITS Frigyes (ed.): *Maradj velünk, uram! – A magyar rendőr imádságos könyve*, Révai, Budapest, 1941, 3–35.

appropriate spiritual guidance how to fulfil the police vocation. Questions formulated at the end of each chapter encourage people engaged in the profession of police officer for further thinking and contemplation.

The book gradually presents information on the purity of the soul, guidelines relating to the importance of moral life, so developing the police officer's self-knowledge. The author highlights the importance of family providing a supportive and protective environment after an exhausting day of service. It describes the responsibilities and tasks of a police officer's spouse. The author shows the importance of a supportive spouse as a basic pillar for providing a calm and focused service. It explains that it is equally important to love and adhere to both God and homeland. In one entire chapter the prayer book presents prayers that are used during the liturgies of the Catholic Church. The book describes in detail the guidelines for confession, Holy Communion, Holy Mass, prayers and gospels. The author collected some of the most common songs sung during the Holy Mass. With regard to the police officer profession the author emphasizes the importance of supporting the Catholic Church using the following formulation:

"It means great power for police officers to know that in this vocation they help the Catholic Mother Church. Like a good mother keeping vigil and standing close. A lot of prayers, a lot of Holy Masses presented by the Church beg for much inexhaustible mercy for the police officer as well, who is also the member and her child. But especially rich resource for the police officer are the sacraments, which saturate him [...] with grace to enhance and increase the abilities of his soul. With the help of these sacraments the police officer is capable of coping with the special task awaiting him by himself. A man could stand in a swamp, but carry on his forehead the pines and palaces like in the Venetian lagoons."¹⁶

The wording of the prayer book clearly bears the hallmarks of the last century style, but also formulates such eternal truths, which are independent of age and time. These elements could also be considered when publishing a new prayer book for police officers, which of course should be supplemented by reflections on the needs and challenges of the time.

Summary

Special pastoral care for various social groups has always been a top priority featured in the pastoral activities of the Catholic Church. This has become an even more pronounced element in the utterances of the pope and the Holy See following the Second Vatican Council. The Church tried to organise the conditions for pastoral care taking simultaneously into account the specific life situation, the pastoral purpose of the Church and state interests. Currently the pastoral activities do not have a unified form in the police in Hungary.

The study has presented some areas organically connected to the model of pastoral care in the police.

¹⁶ BRISITS: *op. cit.*, 55–56. (translated by the author)

It has been described in which organisational form the veneration of the Patron Saints is present in the police of today. It is well perceptible that this special form of the Catholic cult is of outstanding significance for the police festivals, commemorations, as well as for the consecration of flags and assets.

Currently specific individual problems arising from the police officer vocation cannot be prevented and at organisational level no answer can be provided to moral, ethical and psychological issues arising. Such initiative would also be useful in respect of police staff. It seems necessary that the Vatican, to clarify ethical and moral issues remaining hidden in case of police staff, should prepare a catechism containing the teaching of the Catholic Church, which is specifically formulated based on the system of these criteria. Local level initiatives with specific approach would also be required from the Catholic Church in order to solve the ethical and moral issues experienced by police officers. The police officers of today are facing problems which they have never experienced so far, and therefore no unified structure exists to handle them. It is important that the police officer does not feel left alone in dealing with problems. It is therefore an increasingly urgent task to implement the institutionalized police pastoral care in the organisational system of the Hungarian police.

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ABSZTRAKT

A védőszentek és imakönyvek jelentőségének vizsgálata a rendőrségi lelkipásztor vonatkozásában

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A tanulmány a rendőrségi lelkipásztori modell témakörében végzett korábbi kutatásokhoz kapcsolódóan vizsgálja, hogy milyen szabályzó keretek között nyilvánul meg a szentek tisztelete a Magyar Rendőrségen belül. A katolikus egyház tanítása a jelenlegi időszakban azért válik fontos-sá, mert a rendőri szolgálat sajátosságából adódóan olyan etikai kérdések kerülnek megfogalmazásra – migráció, bevándorlás, kisebbségek helyzete –, amelyek a rendőrök szolgálatellátását erőteljesebben érintik és befolyásolják.

Kulcsszavak: rendőrség, katolikus egyház, migráció, temetők, védőszentek, imakönyv