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THEOLOGICAL FORMATION IN THE HISTORY OF KOŠICE

UNIVERSITAS CASSOVIENSIS – THE SECOND OLDEST UNIVERSITY IN SLOVAKIA

Lack of good and educated priests was the main problem of the Church in Slovakia in the 16th and 17th centuries. When establishing the Trnava University, Peter Pázmány, a Cardinal of Esztergom, strongly emphasized that Košice needed a university as well. We learn from the "Bulla Aurea" that P. Pázmány entrusted Bishop of Eger, Kisdý Benedict and his successors with the establishment of the University in Košice. Everyone involved thought about the formation of priests, that this task was supposed to be carried out by the Society of Jesus and that it should have been in Košice. P. Gosvitiú Nickel (his secretary was John P. Nádaši), the Superior General of the Order, was also informed about the issue. As soon as the University had been funded, he agreed with its establishment. It happened at the latest in 1656, at the centenary anniversary of the death of St. Ignatius. Then on behalf of the Society, he accepted the university from the Bishop of Eger Benedict Kisdý who issued its establishing Memorandum in Jasov on February 26, 1657 (Krapka, Mikula, 1990; Ďurica, 1996, s. 56)¹.

¹ Considering many changes having been influenced by historical circumstances, this university operated until 1921 when the Czechoslovak government closed it down according to the law no. 276/1921.

Emperor Leopold I. accepted a newly founded university by the Bulla aurea, which was signed on August 7, 1660 in Graz. The university became equal among the European Universities in Vienna, Prague, Cologne, and in Mohacs and other (Janovský, 1990, s. 28). Bulla was signed by Archbishop Juraj Selepčeni-Pohronec. However, Bishop Kisdy did not experience that event. He had died in Jasov a few days before, on June 22, 1660 (Chalupecký, 2000, s. 27–29; Halász, 1996, s. 14). The university comprised of faculties such as Faculty of Arts, Theological Faculty and later of unfinished Faculty of Law.

ESTABLISHMENT OF A CATHOLIC SEMINARY OF ST. LADISLAV IN KOŠICE (1665)

Bishop Benedict Kisdy remembered about the future seminar in Košice in his testament dating as early as in 1649, he dedicated the amount of 30,000 Rhenish gold, his assets in Gyňov and a house in Košice. Nevertheless, his plans were spoilt by his death (Bozsik, 1910, s. 40).

Kisdy's testament was carried out by Thomas Pálffy (1660–1669), Bishop of Eger (Sugár, 1984, s. 332). He was a member of an important aristocratic family. He got completely theological education in the Roman Collegium Germanico-Hungaricum. The king accepted him among his advisers and he was given the Bratislava and Esztergom Priory. On August 16, 1660, Leopold I. appointed him as Bishop of Eger and he became the superior of the Jasov Priory. Shortly after returning to his diocese, he began to work on the position of seminary. In order to achieve that goal, he provided a significant part of forints however; meanwhile the monarch borrowed the money. Neither the Košice house Mošdošiánum was emptied to be used as a seminar. It was necessary to wait due to lacking financial resources.

The founding charter of St. Ladislav's Seminar or any other name Kišdiánum was issued by Bishop Pálffy on June 4, 1664 in Košice (*ibidem*, s. 334). The institution took over the rules of Vienna Pazmaneum. There were future priests formed for the dioceses of Eger, Varadin, Csanada and many others. It was led by Jesuit. Seminarians attended lectures at the university. There used to be forty of them living there. Theology was also studied by other theologians, not belonging to this seminar. However, it was attended by a respectable number of the clerics of various religious orders. In the first place, there were scholastics from the Society of Jesus (there used to be sometimes 24 of them, scholastically philosophers about 10), then Franciscans, Premonstrates and also Basilians studied there (Krapka, Mikula, 1990, s. 101). Kišdiánum was located in the building in (at present) Alžbetina street no. 2 (Mošdosiánum in Veľká street). The building had served for the education of

clerics in the Eger Diocese until 1760, although there was a newly built seminary in Eger (since 1709) (Eliás, 2006, s. 125).

On April 12, 1760, theologians (27) from the Košice seminar went from Košice to Eger. But the University of Košice existed until 1777, when on August 27, Maria Theresa issued a decree “Ratio Educationis”. Then there existed the only university in Budín (Hišem, Eliáš, Fedorkova, 2007, s. 252).

THE ESTABLISHMENT OF THE BISHOPRIC AND THE DIOCESAN SEMINARY

The era without the possibility of educating future priests in both formative and intellectual ways did not last long. Having established the Košice diocese by Emperor Francis I on March 23, 1804 and its papal announcement by Pius VII. on August 9, 1804, the cathedral canonry and priests’ seminary and Episcopal lyceum were founded („...ac praeterea ad rationem novae hujus Dioecesis Numeru[m] Cleri junioris in Seminario et Lyceo proprio educandi a proportione Sacerdotum gremialium Dioecesis hujus in Cura Animarum...“; za: Zubko, 2006, s. 117–131).

The Court decree no. 5158 dated on June 13, 1806 on the basis of the preliminary project and budget for the reconstruction of the Franciscan monastery, which had been cancelled by Joseph II, the ruler issued guidelines for the preparation works despite having started the renewal in 1805 (*Schematismus venerabilis, 1839*, s. 58). The reconstruction and its rebuilding into a seminary were completed in 1824. (Szokolszky, 1904, s. 201–203). The first-year students of theology had appeared in Košice 1809, although the building was not completed due to “space problems” in Eger (?). At the beginning of the school year 1811/12, the seminary building was blessed. In order to show respect to the first rector Karol Rajner, St. Charles Borromeo was chosen the patron.

Four professors of theology were appointed. Lectures were given in latin, later some subjects were taught in hungarian, after establishing the Czechoslovak republic, in Slovak language (Hišem, 2000, s. 215).

In 1804, forty students from the Košice diocese attended theology in the seminary of Eger. There were five of them in year four, one of whom was already ordained a priest, three deacons and one sub-deacon. In year three, there were eight students, six in year two and ten in year one. Eight people studied philosophy in year two and three in year one.²

Until necessary rooms were constructed, seminarians had been formed and

2 AACass, Seminár, *Catalogus Cleri Junioris Dioecesis Cassoviensis 1804*, p. 1.

educated in the Seminary in Eger. The first audition was announced by Bishop Andrej Szabó on July 14, 1804. According to the Royal decree of August 19, 1803, each diocese should educate as many deacons that for every 100 really working priests there were five newly ordained priests. Whereas, it was found that the number of active priests, including canons and professors of theology is 258 in the Diocese of Košice, the Seminary in Košice had to release twelve new priests a year. Corresponding to that number, 72 students of the two-year philosophy and 4-year theology had to be enrolled.

The Commission, which was in charge of distribution, allocated only 46 clerics to Košice. Bishop Andrej Szabó took on four more in the first audition. As follows: for Year four six, seven for the 3rd year, seven for the 2nd year and ten for year one, and 21 for a two-year of philosophy. Altogether 50 undergraduates. There were not enough seminarians to fill the shortage. The first bishop of Košice repeatedly asked the monarch to allow increasing the number of seminarians (Szokolszky, 1904, s.204). His requirements were successful in the fact that under the Royal decree of 1815, it was possible to raise about 6 more seminarians.

The part of students of philosophy was educated in Košice from the beginning. They went to the local academy. Bishop Szabó kept them at home, principally to assist in St. Elizabeth's Cathedral in worship. Even the information on the priests' seminary in Košice in the second semester of the school year 1808/09, the prefect of the seminary Karol Rajner (dated on August 29, 1809) stated that in Košice, there are 15 undergraduates studying philosophy in two years. In the first, there were eight of them and in the second, there were seven of them. In the notes he stated that from April 8, 1809, there is an empty vacancy for the post of vice-prefect.³

From the year 1807, they sent two students to Pešť (Budapest), also two students two Vienna from 1814. The first students from Košice at the Budapest seminary were: Imrich Gabányi and Matej Benyo, then both later professors of theology.

THE STUDY

From the beginning, theology was studied for four years. Four years are divided into two two-year periods: higher and lower biénium. Higher degree (biénium) are undergraduates from years three and four, lower (biénium) from years one and two. Two and two year's class therefore, learn together, they have the same subjects.

3 AACass, Seminár, *Informatio de Alumnis Seminarii Cleri junioris Cassoviensis pro II. Semestri 1808/9.*

The study remained basically original. Only because of the novelty some changes were introduced. So, in the school year 1811/12, the higher biénium taught the following subjects: canon law and dogmatism. In the school year 1812/13: morality and dogmatism. For lower biénium in one year there were the following subjects: Church history, Hebrew, Biblical studies (Introduction to the Old Testament exegesis and archaeology). In the second year, the lectures involved: Greek language and Biblical Studies (Introduction to the New Testament, exegesis and hermeneutics), patrologia. In the second year of philosophy there were subjects like physics, metaphysics, general history, in the first year: algebra, logic, pragmatic history.⁴

Time brought changes. Greek language ceased to be the subject to lower biénium, because this language began to be taught at secondary grammar schools.

In 1869, Bishop Ján Perger issued a resolution so that theologians received education in other needed disciplines in order to be able to hold the posts of school directors. Since then, there were the following subjects in the higher biénium: in the first year: pedagogy and methodology of teaching mathematics. And in the second year: methodology of teaching religion and language teaching methodology at popular schools (Szokolszky, 1904, s. 206).

Bishop Constantine Schuster ordered in 1882 in accordance with the encyclical of Pope Leo XIII “Aeterni Patris” so that the students in Years 1 and 2 studied scholastic philosophy. A little later they included Biblicism in curricula, along with introductions and study history and pragmatic-apologetic hearing of the history of the Old Testament.

In 1898, there were changes again. Bishop Žigmund Bubits ordered theologians to gain education in economic disciplines. Seminarians, on the basis of this decision began to attend the Košice Business Academy (founded in 1875). Undergraduates in year 4 studied animal husbandry, 3rd-year students learned agriculture – crop production and poultry farming (animals). In the second year they studied horticulture so that in the future in addition to pastoral work, they were could professionally help their parishioners when they worked in the villages where agriculture was the main source of income (Bokes, 1964, s. 242).

Since 1811 religious disciplines were constantly lectured by four professors. Between 1809 and 1811, the seminary had only two teachers, because at that time only lower biénium was opened. Jan König, who taught moral, pastoral and Church law, ThDr. Imrich Gabányi – dogmatics, polemics; František Andristyik – the Old and New Testaments and languages, PhDr. Matej Beny – Church history, patrology

4 More at AACass, Seminár, *Informatio de Alumnis Seminarii Cleri junioris Cassoviensis pro I. Semestri 1811/12 a 1812/13*, Košice 1812, 1813.

and theological literature were among the first who taught there (*Catalogus venerabilis*, 1815, s. 9–10).

In order to be able to give lectures, teachers were required to take examinations in the subject they lectured. It was requested by the city council as well as the bishop. The reports concerning their quality, dedication and wisdom were sent afterwards.⁵

CLOSING DOWN IN THE YEAR 1950

There were the following authorities and professors in the school year 1949/50: rector Msgr. Ján Onderuv; vice-Rector Mons. Michal Adám; prefect ThDr. Ján Švec; spiritual ThDr. Jozef Leščák; professors: ThDr. Anton Harčar – dogmatics, ThDr. Ján Švec – Church law, Church history, ThDr. Jozef Pavlovic – biblical studies; ThDr. Emil Stach – Christian philosophy. In the school year 1949/50, 46 seminarians studied in Košice seminary – 18 freshmen, 11 students in Year 2, 6 in Year 3 and 7 in Year 4 and 4 in Year 5. In addition, in Rome (in Nepomucen) there were Jozef Tomko, František Figa, Ján Répaši, Štefan Fogač and Andrej Šinaľ. In Bratislava there were students such as Jozef Buranovský, Emil Révay, Ladislav Hračko, Elemír Nickel, Jozef Tóth. Altogether were 56 seminarians for the Košice diocese.

The school year ended on June 15, 1950 and they went home. But also in Košice, theologians had to attend political training. On the course there were 13 of them, but right on July 6, 1950 theologian Ján Baran left the training and the next day all other students claiming: “Now summer work is carried out at us and therefore we are forced to attend to enlarge prosperity in the republic as labour force taking part in the development of economy” (Judák, 2000, s. 10).

On July 10, 1950, the Košice Ordinate was orally informed by the plenipotentiary of the Slovak Office for Church Affairs that Priests’ Seminary of St. Charles Borromeo will be liquidated and that the authorities of the seminary will be disposed at the spiritual administration of the diocese.⁶

So, on July 12, 1950, there was a report written in the seminary in the presence of representatives of the Regional National Committee - Church Department - Comrade Ján Kolár and the commission members- František Šilman and the rep-

5 AACass 1088/1847 *Relatio super qualitatibus, zelo, diligentia Professorum Theologiae Lycei Eppalis Cassoviensis pro anno 1846/47*, Košice 1.8.1847.

6 AACass 1662/1950 Jozef Čársky: Rím. kat. kňazský seminár v Košiciach, likvidovanie (zrušenie), Košice 20.7.1950.

representative of the Seminary, Vice-rector Jozef Adám, the takeover of the seminary building, which was held on July 11 and 12, 1950.

The Commission sent all present people into the chapel, where they were locked. They searched the Seminary for the weapons. Two hours later, they were released. The building was taken over in usable conditions. It consisted of small and large seminaries. The entire inventory was attached to the report.⁷

On July 19, 1950 Bishop Msgr. Jozef Čársky wrote to the general vicar and rector of the seminary, to Ján Onderúv: "If only the disposition did not come too late ...". Then John Onderúv remained in his office in Košice at the post of a vicar general, but on July 24, he was arrested and taken to Mučeníci. Michal Adam was appointed as a parish priest in Raslavice, Ján Švec as a parish administrator in Solivar, Anton Harčar was appointed the tenth chaplain in Košice (he was arrested during his treatment in Luhačovice on July 25, 1950 and taken to Mučeníci) and Jozef Leščák was appointed the fifth chaplain in Košice. The bishop added: "To have arranged according to it until July 31, 1950, because new positions are due since August 1, 1950."⁸

Finally, on August 31, 1950, the real estates of the seminary were expropriated and given to be used by Východoslovenské strojárne Košice (East Slovak Engineering Works).⁹ Later, it became the seat of Conservatory along with its hostel.

After the holidays seminarians could not return to the seminary of St. Charles Borromeo. Many of them had to serve in the battalion of technical assistance (PTP- Prápor technickej pomoci). For those who stayed at home, Bishop Joseph Čársky requested stay and option to study by the letter dated on 6 October 1950 of their admission to the central seminary in Bratislava.¹⁰ On October 12, 1950, Msgr. Joseph Čársky sent a list of seminarians in the first year 1950/51 to the University seminary of St. Cyril and Methodius in Bratislava. "In the first year of seminary in Košice have been reported (9 + 1): Štefan Sahali (Barca), Anton Saloň (Michalovce), Ján Kuchár (Prešov), Ján Piškanin (Dlhé nad Cirochou), Jozef Halaj (Jasenov), Štefan Kulha (Bela nad Cirochou), Štefan Jusko (Župčany), Andrej Labanc (Koškovce), Ján Čech (Kľušov), Michal Dolobáč – Year 2."¹¹

Despite sufficient interest, the number of seminarians in the seminary in Bratislava was very small. Štefan Baník (Prešov) and Pavol Bazar (Ohradzany) and

7 ŠA Košice, KNV (Krajský národný výbor) – Cirkevný odbor, č. škatule 24, Inv. č. 38, p. č. 24.

8 AACass 1662/1950 Jozef Čársky: Rím. kat. Kňazský seminár v Košiciach, likvidovanie, Košice 19.7.1950.

9 AACass 2639/1950 z 31. augusta 1950.

10 AACass 2338, 2339/1950, Košice 6.10.1950.

11 AACass 2361/1950 Jozef Čársky: Zoznam bohoslovcov I. ročníka 1950/51, Košice 12.10.1950.

in the 2nd year: Ondrej Labanc (Ohradzany) and Jan Piškanin (Dlhé nad Cirochou) entered the seminary in the first year representing Košice Bishopric. Marcel Palčo from Torysa, who had been enrolled in Year 1, had to start military service. On 30 October 1951, the number of seminarians was 56. Banská Bystrica diocese had one student, Košice 4, Nitra 6, Rožňava 10, Spiš 2 and Trnava 33.¹²

RESTORATION ACTIVITIES IN THE YEAR 1994

In 1989, a new ray of hope appeared for the renewal of religious life. Many who had experienced the year 1968, however, did not believe it first and they just quietly waited for a few months. But when the Federal Assembly of the Czech and Slovak Federal Republic enacted the Act. 403/1990 of October 2, 1990 on the mitigation of certain property injustices, doubts began to diverge completely.

On August 21, 1991 (on the day of great importance for the Czechoslovak history), the agreement was reached between the Roman Catholic episcopate and the Conservatory on the hand over and have over of real estate by law.¹³

On January 23, 1992, the Košice bishopric thus again became the owner of seminary building (Hišem, 2009a, s. 42). On Holy Thursday 1992, Msgr. Alojz Tkáč first publicly expressed their intention to renew priests' seminary (Hišem, 2009b, s. 36).

During these years, the general repair of gained buildings was being held. Vice-rector Joseph Ondovčák was responsible for overall works. He remembers its beginnings: "In the spring of 1994, after preparation of objects by Ing. Jozef Polák, the repairs started, first the 1st and 2nd floors of the building at 91 Hlavná Street (Main Street). The short time to repair was pushing us as well as the beginning of the school year so that October 4, 1994 became a milestone in the history. In 1995, the ground floor and the façade of Main Street were restored. In 1996, works continued on the top floor and moved to the buildings at Kováčska 48 and 46, from the attic to the first floor and the basement" (Ondovčák, 2003, s. 18–19). In his memoirs he states that in 1998, repair works continued in the attic of the building in Hlavná Street 89, which currently serves the Faculty of Theology. That year, the Conservatory moved from the building and the reconstruction works could continue successfully. Premises of the present Faculty of Theology were handed over to use in 2003.

12 AACass 3259/1951 Kňazský seminár sv. Cyrila a Metoda v Bratislave č. 154/1951 Hlásenie stavu bohoslovcov, Bratislava 30.10.1951.

13 ATF (The Archive of the Faculty of Theology of Comenius University – Archív Teologickej fakulty KU), kr. 3, Príprava rekonštrukcie, Dohoda z 21.8.1991, p. 1-2.

The following year, the construction of the Assembly Hall and later Atrium began (Ondovčák, 2004, s. 35–37). In the last 10th stage of the entire reconstruction of the buildings, in 2007, the area was fenced in Kováčska Street and repairs on the drive and surrounding terrain.

The Institute of Theology was legally established on March 2, 1994 by the rector of Comenius University in Bratislava, pursuant to § 5 par. 3 of Law no. 172/1990 Coll. on higher education as a branch of CMBF in Bratislava. Ecclesiastically it was established by a decree of the diocesan Bishop on 31 March 1994 in accordance with can. 232, 233, and 237 CIC (Hišem, 2009a, s. 42).¹⁴

On 3 March 1994, the Academic Senate of Comenius University in Bratislava issued the establishing document for Priests' Seminary in Košice, with the effect from March 2, 1994 according to the paragraph 5 par. 3 of Law no. 172/1990 Coll. on higher education and the aforementioned modification of the Status of the Comenius University in Bratislava and the part of the Comenius University in Bratislava and is a legal entity with the budgetary principle of management. Having been signed by the Chairman of the Academic Senate of Comenius University and by the rector of Comenius University.

On Holy Thursday, March 31, 1994, a Decree of resuming the Major Seminary activities was published in Košice. At the same time the Status of the Priests' Seminary of St. Charles Borromeo Košiciach was issued.¹⁵ It says: "This decision thus recovered a large seminary in Košice and put it under the heaven protection of St. Charles Borromeo. Also, I count on the kind assistance of my brothers, priests, in the spiritual and intellectual formation of enrolled seminarians". Having been signed by Msgr. Alojz Tkáč, the Diocesan Bishop and Joseph Tandara, the counselor.

Ing. ThLic. Anton Konečný was appointed a rector, Mgr. Joseph Ondovčák became a vice-rector, and the post of a spiritual director was given to Mgr. Juraj Rendeš (Hišem, 2009a, s. 42).

On the 4th October 1994, there was a ceremonial opening of the academic year 1994–95 as well as the gates of Priests' seminary. The ceremony began by serving the holy mass with a solemn Te Deum at 9.30 am with the participation of invited guests such as – rector of Comenius University prof. Juraj Švec DrSc, Doc. ThDr. PhDr. Štefan Vragaš, a dean of CMBF, the representatives of the city and cultural life. The main celebrant was Mons. Ján Sokol, an Archbishop-Metropolitan, a large Chancellor of CMBF. The homily was delivered by the diocesan Bishop

14 *Obnova kňazského seminára sv. Karola Boromejského*. Košice 4. 10. 1994, p. 9.

15 ATF, kr. 3, *História, Obnova seminára III*.

Msgr. Alojz Tkáč. It was concelebrated by Mons. Eduard Kojnok, a bishop of Rožňava, Msgr. František Tondra, a bishop of Spiš, Msgr. Andrej Imrich, a auxiliary bishop of Spiš, Msgr. Bernard Bober, an auxiliary bishop of Košice. On this occasion, Priests' seminary issued a commemorative medal. It showed a view of the complex and the church from Hlavná Street 91 with the inscription: "OBNOVA 4.X.1994" (RESTORATION 4.X.1994) and on the other hand, the sign of the seminary and its exact name. It was carried out in three versions - gold, silver and bronze (Hišem, 2009a, s. 43).¹⁶

On October 15, 1994 bishop Msgr. Alojz Tkáč sacred the Seminary Chapel of St. Charles Borromeo. In this chapel (as well as in the Vatican) on 31 March 1995 at 12.00, the establishment of a new ecclesiastical province, whose seat became Košice, was announced. Moreover, Msgr. Alojz Tkáč was appointed the Archbishop of Košice (*ibidem*).

Seminarians began studying there on 16 October 1994 when the Priests' seminary of St. Charles Borromeo (Kňazský seminár sv. Karola Boromejského) and began the formation and education of future priests in year 1, until 2000, all years were present in the seminary (Cibulakova, 2009, s. 5).

In 1994, the Seminary in Košice was honoured by many important visitors. Of these, the most significant was the visit of Pope John Paul II., when on July 2, 1995 after the ceremonial Holy Mass at which he canonized the Martyrs of Košice, he gave our Bishop Mons. Archbishop Alojz Tkáč a Palia and spent a part of his visit in the premises of the seminary to dine and spend a few hours. His visit was preceded by great building activity, which did not stop even after the visit. Conversely, the seminary got to awareness in Slovakia and abroad (Lenčiš, 2009, s. 26).

Since 1998, there were the negotiations led between Archbishop Msgr. Alojz Tkáč and Msgr. Prof. Dr. František Tondra, Spiš bishop with the participation of rectors and vice-rectors of seminaries that "launched" the efforts to found a faculty at the University of P. J. Šafárik. Having followed a recommendation of the Congregation for Catholic Education, the Faculty of Theology at the Catholic University in Ružomberok was established in Košice on July 1, 2003. The inauguration ceremony was held on November 8, 2003 (Cibulakova, 2009, s. 18).¹⁷ Msgr. Anton Konečný, the rector of the seminary became the first dean of the faculty (Hišem, 2009a, s. 47). He was a dean for two electoral terms from 2003 to 2011. Since 2011, prof. Cyril Hišem, PhD. has been a dean, currently in his second electoral term.

16 ATF, kr. 3, *História, Obnova seminára. Otvorenie seminára.*

17 ATF, kr. 3, *História, Obnova seminára. Zriaďovacie listiny.*

THEOLOGY TODAY IN SLOVAKIA

Theology with specific disciplines like philosophy, ethics, biblical studies (and many others disciplines) is science, human endeavor and historical adventure rooted in history and response to history. That is also why history plays a necessary role in theology and theological disciplines and always will. Moreover, Theology and theological disciplines are also hermeneutic, because its task is to interpret the texts of faith in the light of today's questions so that they become relevant for the contemporary world and also as ethics scholar Bernard Lonergan wrote, in his book *Methodology in Theology*, "theology needs to respect the concrete subject who lives in this concrete world mediated by meaning, that is, if it meditates religion to culture, the intelligibility of authentic faith needs to draw upon forms of meaning that rise up to the measure of meaning in our time" (Lonergan, 1990, s. 337). Lonergan is another author who perceives the present moment as one of crisis. J.B. Metz will add here: "Crisis of identity in Christianity is not primarily a crisis of the Christian message, but rather *a crisis of its subjects and institutions*. The problem is that Roman Catholic theology and practice have fallen into the trap of the totalizing idealism and technical rationality of the Enlightenment, placing ideas and concepts ahead of the subjects who articulate and employ them" (Metz, 1980, s. 12).

Like Lonergan, likewise observed that "theology needs to respect the concrete subject who lives in this concrete world" a question which we have decided to undertake in this part of our paper with specific focus on theology in Kosice and Slovakia as well is: "What are the signs of the times for theology and her disciplines today?"

SUFFERING REALITIES

First of all, it is good to note that suffering represents the power to dehumanize and degrade human beings and is always done by other persons – individual, political, patriarchal religious or social structures. On a personal note, in the times of Soviet communism in Slovakia we have been dehumanized and degraded so many times. Every time, when *our memories* goes back we still can see a suffering of my parents, friends inflicted by another human beings and our "dangerous memories" stays with us always. Compassion and solidarity in those times disappeared. We had just our faith, hope and community.

Johannes Baptist Metz in one of the author who in his book, *Faith in History and society: toward a practical fundamental theology*, presents his ideas with a particular focus on *the suffering* of those who are oppressed. Metz also acknowledges that the *suffering reality* places greater expectations upon non-suffering persons

to devise effective strategies for resisting this suffering. Moreover, Metz found especially in his idea of “dangerous memory” a way how to link the biblical tradition, Christology and theological anthropology. Here it is good to emphasize that Metz’ theological background bears important similarities with Gustavo Gutiérrez. Both of them addressed forms of suffering and relationship between life vs. faith and Church vs. world. According to Metz: “Modern theology has lacked sufficient self-critical awareness, awareness that it thinks about an abstract subject rather than actual social subjects. Theology has failed to grasp “that religion no longer belongs to the social constitution of the identity of the subject, but is rather added to it” (Metz, 1980, s. 13; see: Gutiérrez, 1988). Today, not just biblical stories of salvation should be told, but also the *stories of history* which can interrupt and disrupt the status quo.

Lastly, Johannes Baptist Metz and many others emphasized the necessity of a hermeneutical approach for a better understanding of the theology of suffering in history and linked to our contemporary culture today. It is good to also add that this *theology of suffering* through historical consciousness impacts/presents us in a particular understanding of God as the source of all that share human suffering and the God’s compassion for all who suffer. Indeed, the historical consciousness reveals that human history is also the salvation history. Moreover, for theology today this view is important, because it represents *the ethic of solidarity* with those who suffer today around the word and drawing us into solidarity with them. It is a personal, societal and political call of self-critical openness; articulation of hope; responsibility for others and expression of our love for them.

ENCOUNTER WITH OTHERS

The second significant sign of the times represents “encounter with others”, which in our contemporary culture and society is important as the reintegration of spiritual belief and community social praxis. Here we may go back to Johannes Baptist Metz’ ideas and to emphasize that according to Metz’ ideas, the Christian message is not independent of human beings and human praxis and theology according to him must likewise be tied to particular beings, to their suffering in their concrete historical and social contexts. However, according to the feminist biblical scholarship and ideas, this “encounter with others” through recognition of women’s experience is shaped by relationality and isolating social marginalization. To this important extent, personal encounters with the suffering others uniquely shaped not just theology, ethics or biblical studies but also contemporary arts.

This second sign of time emphasized especially necessity of compassion. Encounter with others lies at the heart of our retrieval of compassion. This encounter with others creates upheavals within the subjects of compassion and invites us to transformation of our responses to *human suffering*.

THE NECESSITY OF HOPE AS FORCE OF TRANSFORMATION IN SLOVAKIAN SOCIETY

The third significant the sign of the times represents a necessity of hope for transformation in society. This third sign is also linked to our second – it is linked to concrete experience, both in history and today. Growing significance of free-market economies and increase of the gap between rich and poor, oppression and rape of women, violation of poverty and many others characteristics generally describe how significant is this sign of times.

This call full of hope is not something new. It is linked to the biblical stories and many prophets in Old and New Testament who has been struggling against the oppression. The presence of God as the source of their hope is relevant here and still continuing. Call full of hope from marginalizes communities is a call for justice, social responsibility and compassion especially with those who suffer provoke moral agents – today’s “prophets” to raise questions regarding: how to live together better and how to help those who help those who suffer from the injustice of today’s society. This hope as profound belief is very important today and should be done via our personal and societal conversion and transformation or change of structures with active commitment to the reality of those who suffer. Attention must to be done also to their cultures, religions, races, power, values and genders.

CONCLUSION

At the beginning of this paper we undertake to identify the history of theological formation in Kosice and Slovakia and then we have identified signs of times. Now we have to add, that it is not enough to merely read the signs of times. They just map and put the red flags on urgent tasks for all of us. We must turn and face those affected by our times, marginalize and oppressed in societies or around the world, and with willingness to accurately perceive them and then to perceive ourselves from their perspective.

Theology and its formation in Kosice and generally in Slovakia today have to provide the foundation for concrete praxis today and also emphasized the *compassion, solidarity* and *hope* as necessary task for humanity. We may added here

important note that according to presented ideas a proper hermeneutical training for all us in already mentioned fields, may very well be an appropriate starting-point for any journey towards a more adequate understanding of God, self-understanding and the mystery of our being in this world.

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THEOLOGICAL FORMATION IN THE HISTORY OF KOŠICE

SUMMARY

Košice significantly contributed and still contributes to the development of theological formation in present-day Slovakia. This need was established here in time re-Catholisation of the Slovak Republic and later at the time of Košice diocese establishment. Nowadays, we face the questions concerning the future of theology and of theological formation not only in Košice but also in Slovakia as well.