

## THE IMPACT OF THE CATHOLIC CHURCH'S SOCIAL DOCTRINE ON LIFE IN THE ARCHDIOCESE OF ALBA IULIA

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**Abstract.** In the Transylvanian Diocese, just as in the universal Church, there is an underlying ambition to formulate practical answers to the era's social issues through the various institutionalized forms of fraternal love. In this regard, the Roman Catholic Status of Transylvania and the education system directly maintained by the Diocese constitute the most significant factors. In addition, several other attempts may also be considered that have been trying to provide answers to the social issues of the past centuries. The present study is an investigation into the impact of the social documents of the Catholic Church on the Transylvanian Diocese, or the Diocese of Alba Iulia, lately also known as the Archdiocese.

**Keywords:** Diocese of Transylvania, Archdiocese of Alba Iulia, social issues, denominational education, orphanages, girls' education

In the Transylvanian Diocese<sup>2</sup> – which, following the Reformation, could re-establish its affairs only from the early 18<sup>th</sup> century on –,<sup>3</sup> just as in the universal Church, there could be found practical answers to the social issues of the different ages as well as the various institutionalized forms of fraternal love. Besides

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<sup>2</sup> The name Transylvanian Diocese, founded by King Saint Stephen Hungarian Apostolic King in 1009, was changed to Diocese of Alba Iulia by the concordat signed between the Holy See and the Romanian Government in 1927, following World War I, and then the Holy See raised the diocese to the rank of archdiocese on 5 August 1991.

<sup>3</sup> Prior to the Reformation, the Diocese of Transylvania comprised an area of over 70,000 km<sup>2</sup>. Beyond the approximately 60,000 km<sup>2</sup> of the historical Transylvania, it would also encompass the current Diocese of Satu Mare. Due to the Reformation, by the second half of the 16<sup>th</sup> century, the Observant Franciscan monastery of Şumuleu Ciuc was the only one left out of the 54 formerly existing monasteries, while the more than 600 parishes in Szeklerland were reduced to 30 Catholic parishes altogether.

the more than two hundred *volksschule* maintained by the parishes,<sup>4</sup> seven national colleges<sup>5</sup> supported by the Catholic autonomy – that is, the Roman Catholic Status of Transylvania – headed by the incumbent bishop and twenty more educational institutions under the direct supervision of the diocesan authority served this purpose.<sup>6</sup>

Beyond its Catholic self-governmental nature,<sup>7</sup> the Status was in and of itself a social institutional system should we consider that it managed its assets clustered around eight different funds in accordance with the purposes as designated by the Foundation and for the benefit of the Transylvanian community. Thus, in addition to securing the renovation of churches, parishes and ensuring supplemental wages for diaspora priests, these *religious funds* were meant to support social institutions as well. The purpose of the funds enjoying the strongest financial support, namely the *study and scholarship funds*, are realized through the denominational education carried out in the seven national colleges, the maintenance of the colleges established next to these, the so-called boys' board-

<sup>4</sup> There was a varying number of *volksschule*, which revealed a downward trend in the second half of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, especially owing to the nationalization of schools set in motion by the Hungarian liberal government at that time. Immediately preceding the 1948 nationalization of the denominational school system by the socialist Romanian government, 17,965 children were educated under the guidance of 488 Catholic schoolmistresses and preschool teachers in 17 Roman Catholic nursery schools and 172 Roman Catholic schools. Cf. *Jelentés a Gyulafehérvári Latin Szertartású Róm[ai] Kath[olikus] Egyházmegyei Tanács 1946. november hó 28-ikára összehívott közgyűlésére* [Report for the 28 November 1946 General Assembly of the Alba Iulia Rom[an] Cath[olic] Diocesan Council in Latin Rite] (hereinafter: *the 1946 Report*). Cluj-Napoca, 1946, 24–25.

<sup>5</sup> In 1946, the seven national colleges of the Status (Braşov, Miercurea Ciuc, Alba Iulia, Târgu Secuiesc, Cluj-Napoca, Târgu-Mureş, and Odorheiu Secuiesc) gave home to 140 teachers and 3, 134 high-school students. Cf. unnumbered insert between pages 16 and 17 of *the 1946 Report*.

<sup>6</sup> All over the diocese, 231 teachers instructed and educated high-school-age male and female students in altogether 20 teacher-training colleges as well as girls', coeducational, commercial, and unified gymnasiums. Cf. unnumbered insert between pages 28 and 29 of *the 1946 Report*.

<sup>7</sup> On the self-governmental nature of the Status, see: cf. László HOLLÓ, *A laikusok által „vezetett” egyházmegye. Az Erdélyi Római Katolikus Státus társadalmi jelentősége* [The Diocese 'Led' by the Laity. The Social Relevance of the Roman Catholic Status of Transylvania]. Vol. I. Cluj-Napoca, 2009, 35–126.

ing schools, the management and allocation of the Foundation's scholarships, and paying for the salaries of the denominational teaching staff. The *Elementary School Fund* was intended to be at the service of denominational elementary education. The *Theresian Orphanage Fund* was created for the maintenance of the social institution operated in the Theresian Orphanage in Sibiu. In accordance with their essential function, *civil servants' and teachers' pension funds* were utilized in the form of private pension funds for the benefit of Status employees and the teachers working in schools under its aegis. The *insurance fund* was created by the Status for the fire insurance of Church properties, parishes, churches, denominational educational and social institutions, and other Church buildings.<sup>8</sup>

According to our knowledge, the very first official cautionary exhortation – in its modern sense used in *Rerum novarum* (Rights and Duties of Capital and Labour) –, after the Encyclical Letter has been issued, in the Transylvanian Diocese to carry out work 'on the social front' besides pastoral work was expressed in the bishop's impromptu opening speech at the 25 October 1899 Status Assembly.<sup>9</sup> The minutes offer us merely an abstract of the speech, wherefore we know nothing more than that the bishop calls the attention of those present to the relevant social issues. He pointed out that for the common good we must be 'practical Christians', and every effort should be made to have the congregation gathered around the altar with true devotion; however, in order for this to happen, work for the benefit of the people must be performed on the social front as well. Apart from spiritual matters, we must also provide financial support to our people to keep them safe from the socialist fallacies. This becomes feasible with the establishment of labour unions and youth leagues and a more efficient aiding of the poor. The young bishop gave evidence of an extremely vigilant policy and modern social skills when arguing that from the pulpit the poor should not be encouraged only by the prospect of Heaven, but the Church must pay attention

<sup>8</sup> Cf. László HOLLÓ, Az erdélyi katolikus autonómia, ill. az Erdélyi Római Katolikus Státus tegnap és ma [Catholic Autonomy in Transylvania – The Past and Present of the Roman Catholic Status of Transylvania]. In: László Holló (ed.), *Katolikus autonómia. Fejezetek az Erdélyi Római Katolikus Státus történetéből* [Catholic Autonomy. Chapters from the History of the Roman Catholic Status of Transylvania]. Miercurea Ciuc, 2007, 15–34.

<sup>9</sup> Cf. *Az Erdélyi Római Katholikus Státus 1899. október 25-ik napján Kolozsvártn tartott évi rendes közgyűlésének jegyzőkönyve* [The Minutes of the Annual General Assembly of the Roman Catholic Status of Transylvania held in Cluj-Napoca on 25 October 1899] (hereinafter: *the 1899 Minutes*). Cluj-Napoca, 1900, p. I.

to improving their living standards here on earth.<sup>10</sup> He mentioned an action programme that he would elaborate on at a later date.<sup>11</sup>

In all likelihood, attacks coming from the Hungarian Government and threatening the very existence of the Status as well as World War I serve as explanations in support of the fact that this enthusiastic initiative did not leave the design table after all and remained a mere paper exercise. The 'social' label appeared again in the wording of the report for and the minutes of the 1917 Status Assembly, just as the issue of global social responsibility besides the usual social activities of the Status (education of orphan children, schooling of poor children, provision of construction subsidies for parishes in need, etc.). In para. IX. of the annual report, Deputy Chairman Dr Lajos Farkas brought forward two motions at the Status Assembly. In one of them, he proposes the following: (1) 'The Status Assembly should resolve the supplementation of its functions performed so far with the single common organization and consolidated management of the diocese's relations of social nature; to this end, he finds necessary to have a proper department set up at the heart of the Executive Board.' Further, he proposes that (2) 'the Status Assembly establish appropriate methods of its own for the mitigation of the grave consequences of the war and, in order to obtain adequate information on the actual needs, adopt a resolution that – in agreement with His Excellency, our Lord Bishop – requests the deans, vicars, and priests of the districts belonging to the diocese to make a report, with the involvement of the schoolmasters and school boards, on the number of congregation members in the pertaining community, on their social status, and in particular on the number of widows, orphans, and the helpless poor, and have it sent up directly to the Executive Board by 30 September of this year the latest'.<sup>12</sup> In his reasoning, he brought forward that the diocesan autonomy, in its conformation to the teachings of the universal Church, took the separation of the religious and secular matters as its starting-point. Experience shows that the inflexibility taken shape as a result of

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<sup>10</sup> He cited the example of the breads distributed on a weekly basis in Cluj-Napoca by the Franciscan friars among approximately 300 poor people, the charitable activity being known as 'St Anthony's Bread'. Nowadays, this is still in practice.

<sup>11</sup> Cf. *the 1899 Minutes*, p. I.

<sup>12</sup> *Az Erdélyi Róm[ai] Kath[olikus] Státus igazgatótanácsának jelentése az 1917. november 22-ére összehívott státusgyűlés részére* [Report of the Executive Board of the Roman Catholic Status of Transylvania Drawn Up for the Status Assembly Convened on 22 November 1917]. Cluj-Napoca, 1917, 53–55.

this separation can be remedied by a spirit of compromise alone, for want of which conflicts of competence issues might easily arise. At the same time, ‘it is also lagging behind the standards of modern life’. However, since certain aspects regarding the implementation of the motion as a matter of ecclesiastical governance in the strict sense fall under episcopal purview, the Status Assembly decided to have recourse to the bishop in handling this case.

In his opening speech delivered at the Status Assembly – in all likelihood, influenced by the above-presented motion he had already known from the report –, the bishop himself placed great emphasis on the importance of cooperation towards finding solutions to social issues, but he hoped for the implementation thereof in the period following the soon-to-be-realized national autonomy. In the meantime, however – it appears so –, he did not wish to make any step forward in an institutionalized form within his diocese, but he saw the possibility of strengthening the kingdom of God, the conscious education of the youth in the spirit of Christ, and reaching out to his people within the framework of the centuries-old Transylvanian autonomy, the Status.<sup>13</sup> As a response to the proposal – adopted by the Status and referred to the bishop –<sup>14</sup> concerning the social-wise expansion of the Status’ line of activities, he considered it as a matter that cannot be associated with the Status, as the introduction of a third organ between institutions performing social activities and the bishop would entail bureaucratic difficulties.<sup>15</sup>

Notwithstanding, Leonárd P. Trefán, the Transylvanian Provincial of the Franciscan Order had a much more pragmatic view of this issue, making a proposal at the upcoming Status Assembly on 22 November 1918, according to which:

<sup>13</sup> Cf. *Az Erdélyi Római Katolikus Státus 1917. évi november hó 22-ik napján Kolozsvárt tartott évi rendes közgyűlésének jegyzőkönyve* [The Minutes of the Annual General Assembly of the Roman Catholic Status of Transylvania held in Cluj-Napoca on 25 November 1917] (hereinafter: *the 1917 Minutes*). Cluj-Napoca, 1918, p. I. To gain insight into the importance of the issues around the national Catholic autonomy, see: László HOLLÓ, *The Laity ...*, 110–119.

<sup>14</sup> Cf. *the 1917 Minutes*, p. XXI.

<sup>15</sup> *Az Erdélyi Róm[ai] Kath[olikus] Státus igazgatótanácsának jelentése az 1918. november 14-ére összehívott státusgyűlés részére* [Report of the Executive Board of the Roman Catholic Status of Transylvania Drawn Up for the Status Assembly Convened on 14 November 1918]. Cluj-Napoca, 1917, 56.

'[T]he Status Assembly, besides making use of the moral and financial resources at its disposal, should resolve to establish social welfare and worker-protection institutions, especially for saving the Catholic people of Szeklerland, and to make every effort for the practical implementation of the social principles in a patriotic and Christian spirit; to establish industrial sites next to its large estates in order to facilitate an efficient apprentice protection.<sup>16</sup>

Although the motion was not accompanied by an enthusiasm worthy of its significance, the Status Assembly brought it to the attention of the Executive Board for consideration.

Proposals submitted in favour of the commitment to modern social issues, repeatedly put forward throughout quite a few years by then, seemed to become ripe at the 1920 Status Assembly when, at Dr Mihály Bochkor's proposal, the Status Assembly ordered the Executive Board to set up, besides its already existing specialized committees, a permanent social committee under the name 'Central Social Council of the Transylvanian Catholic Status'.<sup>17</sup> Regrettably, this enthusiastic initiative has never come to be realized as, on the one hand, its mentors, Church Councillor Dr Mihály Bochkor (†3 November 1920) and Honorary Lecturer Dr Lajos Farkas († 25 June 1925), passed away,<sup>18</sup> while, on the other hand – as mentioned in the introductory lines of the Executive Board's *Report* made for the 1921 Status Assembly –, consequent upon the change of empire, 'this year, gone by rapidly, is one of the most challenging and critical years of our Status'.<sup>19</sup> This is the time of repairing the damage caused by the war as well as the period of the Romanian agricultural laws, which meant an even bigger blow

<sup>16</sup> *Az Erdélyi Római Katholikus Státus 1918. november hó 14-ikén tartott évi rendes közgyűlésének jegyzőkönyve* [The Minutes of the Annual General Assembly of the Roman Catholic Status of Transylvania held on 14 November 1918]. Cluj-Napoca, 1919, p. XXIV.

<sup>17</sup> Cf. *Az Erdélyi Római Katholikus Státus 1920. szeptember hó 29-ikén tartott évi rendes közgyűlésének jegyzőkönyve* [The Minutes of the Annual General Assembly of the Roman Catholic Status of Transylvania held on 29 September 1920]. Cluj-Napoca, 1921, p. X.

<sup>18</sup> Cf. *Az Erdélyi Róm[ai] Kath[olikus] Státus igazgatótanácsának jelentése az 1921. november 10-ére összehívott státusgyűlés részére* [Report of the Executive Board of the Roman Catholic Status of Transylvania Drawn Up for the Status Assembly Convened on 10 November 1921] (hereinafter: the *1921 Annual Report*). Cluj-Napoca, 1921, 11.

<sup>19</sup> *The 1921 Annual Report*, 3.

to the Status when the state expropriated the majority, approx. 75%–80% of the Status' real estates serving for the maintenance of denominational schools and social institutions.

Regarding the social activities carried out in the diocese, orphanages and retirement homes of various sizes may also be noted. The orphanage network built up by the 20<sup>th</sup> century included four large institutions besides several smaller ones: The Royal Catholic Theresian Orphanage (Sibiu, 1771), Saint Gregory the Illuminator Armenian Catholic Orphanage (Gherla, 1800), Marie Valerie Educational Institution and Foster Care for Orphan Girls (Cluj-Napoca, 1872), and Augusteum Roman Catholic Orphanage (Cluj-Napoca, 1907).<sup>20</sup>

In the Transylvanian Diocese of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, first of all, the religious orders acted as the depositaries of implementing the social idea. Thus, the Congregation of the Sisters of Charity of Satu Mare, settled by Bishop Lajos Haynald on 18 August 1858, besides the nursery schools, elementary and higher elementary girls' schools, and boarding-schools found under their leadership in Alba Iulia, Gheorgheni, Odorheiu Secuiesc, and Valea Crişului, also managed hospitals in Alba Iulia and Sfântu Gheorghe as well as the Saint Elisabeth Retirement Home in Cluj-Napoca.<sup>21</sup> Similarly, the congregation of the Franciscan Sisters of Mällersdorf – yet another congregation approved by Bishop Lajos Haynald from Rome at the initiative of Countess Juliana Batthyány – also excelled in the religious education of women and nursing. With approval from Bishop Mihály Fogarasy, they began their beneficent work on 16 November 1864. In a short time, they would be exercising their activities in 16 convents altogether to educate and nurse poor and orphaned children in accordance with their vocation.<sup>22</sup> The Sisters of Charity of Saint Vincent de Paul served in the mental institution of Sibiu starting from 1896 and founded an orphanage and elementary school in Şumuleu Ciuc in 1913. The

<sup>20</sup> Cf. János VICZIÁN, *Katolikus árvaházak* [Catholic Orphanages]. In: *Magyar Katolikus Lexikon* [Hungarian Catholic Lexicon], vol. VI. Budapest, 2001, 339–340.

<sup>21</sup> Cf. József MARTON, *Az erdélyi katolicizmus 90 éve (1900–1990)* [90 Years of the Transylvanian Catholicism]. Cluj-Napoca, 2009, 98–99.

<sup>22</sup> Gábor BOTÁR, *Krisztus szeretetének sürgetésében. A Szent Családról nevezett Mällersdorfi Szegény Ferences Nővérek tevékenysége Erdélyben* [Urged by the Love of Christ. The Activity in Transylvania of the Franciscan Sisters of Mällersdorf Named after the Holy Family]. Cluj-Napoca, 2014, 93–117.



School Sisters of Notre Dame also undertook the work of girls' education in Dej and Cluj-Napoca starting from the year 1906.<sup>23</sup>

Established in Budapest, 1923, the Society of Sisters of Social Service had the most comprehensive social programme. Being witness to the 'orphaned public concerns', at the Social Seminary of Cluj-Napoca and later at their social college run by the name 'Catholic Women's Vocational School of Social Sciences', they embarked upon educating those members of the Church establishment who were willing and able to cooperate in finding solutions to social-related issues. The Society formulated its mission regarding the social- and movement-related work as follows:

The Society's mission is to place professional and qualified labour force into all areas created by modern life, wherever such type of work is necessary in the context of children, women, and family protection or from a charity, social, religious morality, economic, public health, cultural, and civic point of view ... with the addition that ... social work and women's movement activities shall receive particular emphasis in our Society.<sup>24</sup>

The Transylvanian Roman Catholic League of Nations founded on 14 June 1921 and the Transylvanian Catholic Women's Society established in 1926 were trying to keep together the 'proliferating' life of the Society between the two world wars. The KALOT's (National Body of Catholic Agrarian Youth Associations) activities stood out from the various societies for men, boys, women, girls, and industry associations. Following the motto of 'More Christ like people! Better-educated villages! People full of vitality! Self-respecting Hungarians!', this Association took roots in Transylvania as well, namely in Șumuleu Ciuc in 1941, and they endeavoured to fulfil their motto by operating adult education centres.

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<sup>23</sup> Cf. MARTON, 99–102.

<sup>24</sup> Minutes of [the Society's] Formation, 1., 12 May 1923 (manuscript); qtdin: Ilona WALTER, *A Megszentelő Szeretet szolgálatában. A Szociális testvérek Társasága Romániai Kezletének munkatörténete a szerzetesrendek működésének betiltásáig* [In the Service of the Sanctifying Love. The History of Activity for the Romanian Region of the Society of Sisters of Social Service until the Prohibition of the Operation of Religious Orders]. The abridged version of the dissertation defended at the Department of Religious Teacher Training within the Theological Seminary in Alba Iulia in 1995. Manuscript. At: <http://docplayer.hu/1802509-Walter-ilona-hittudomanyi-foiskola-hittanarkepzo-tagozatan.html> (downloaded on: 14 November 2017).



In a similar vein, the following entities and initiatives were also manifestations of the Church's social engagement: the Kolping youth league reaching out to youth working in the industry; the Parochial Departments of Workers (EMSZO) was operated next to parishes and was an ideological and social organization with a particular focus on religious morality, trying to introduce the principles of the social encyclical *Quadragesimo anno*; the Men's League; the Working Girls' Association; various girls' clubs; the Zita, Katalin, or Márta circles, having maids as their target group; Saint Margaret's Circle organized for college girls.<sup>25</sup>

Regarding the implementation of the Church's social doctrines, *Actio Catholica*, founded by mathematics professor Dr Ferenc Faragó along the lines of those already existing in the universal Church, has achieved a far greater prominence. Among other things, this movement was at the service of keeping together the Catholic associations. The first paragraph of the Hungarian *Actio Catholica*'s regulations sums up its objective as follows:

1. §. *Actio Catholica* is the joint apostolic mission of the lay Catholics and the clergy. Its objective is to bring all forces and all the benign willingness of the Hungarian Catholic society together, to unite it into a self-conscious, capable, and social body in favour of the religious life, the Church, and the country, thus supporting and facilitating the work of the clergy, urging and synthesizing the protection of Catholic rights and interests, the flourishing of Catholic institutions, and the upsurge of Catholic ambitions, whereby promoting the emergence of the Kingdom of Christ in all aspects.<sup>26</sup>

Unfortunately, these noble initiatives fell victim to yet another double change of empire brought along by World War II as well as to the subsequent accession to power of the socialist-communist regime. In any case, these were fine examples of the will to survive despite the radically changing and changed circumstances in ideological and national terms alike, which may be exemplary even for us.

After the fall of communism, there were further attempts at finding solutions to the contemporary social problems. Triggered by a charismatic initiative, a solution-seeking spirituality in the early 90s created space for the following entities

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<sup>25</sup> Cf. MARTON, 105–113.

<sup>26</sup> The Hungarian *Actio Catholica*'s regulations (as approved by the episcopal conference in the year 1936). As a manuscript. Budapest, 1937, 1. §.

as a response to the alarming social issues and to meet the educational needs of orphaned children: the network of child protection centres of the *Saint Francis Foundation of Deva*, covering all corners of Transylvania;<sup>27</sup> the *Csibész Foundation*, running an orphanage in Frumoasa in addition to the one in Șumuleu Ciuc; the *Saint Elisabeth Association*, maintaining a soup kitchen and family-type children's home in Târgu-Mureș; the *Possibilitas Association* of Vița, maintaining family-type children's homes in Vița and Cristeștii Ciceului.

Among the groupings of the lay members of Christ's faithful people, we should mention the *Cursillo*, the *Focolare Movement*, and the *Catholic Charismatic Renewal* spiritualities, which have as their mission the deepening of spiritual life and enabling people to experience it 'first-hand'. The spirituality of the *Camillian Family* comprises the spiritual family communion of the sick, of their relatives, and of the healthy.

The primary goal of the so-called prayer communities present in a number of settlements on the territory of our archdiocese is to pray for the families, the local communities, and the nation. Such communities are: *propitiatory prayer groups*, the *Secular Franciscan Order*, *Jesus'Friends Prayer Community*, *families of the Sacred Heart*, *Legion of Mary*, and *rosary societies*.

In a similar vein, we may also encounter movements targeting the spiritual education of children and the youth, such as *Szeretet Város* [Town of Love] or

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<sup>27</sup> The following residential homes are maintained by the Saint Francis Foundation in the year 2014: Magyarok Nagyasszonya [Sovereign Lady of the Hungarians] Child Protection Centre – Deva; Saint Elisabeth Child Protection Centre – Orăștie; Jézus Szíve [The Sacred Heart] Child Protection Centre – Petroșani; Child Protection Centre – Marosillye; Archangel Gabriel Child Protection Centre – Alba Iulia; Kis Szent Teréz (Saint Thérèse of Lisieux) Child Protection Centre – Rimetea; Isteni irgalmasság [Divine Mercy] Child Protection Centre – Gheorghe Doja; Saint Cecilia Home – Târgu Mureș; Saint Joseph Child Protection Centre – Sovata; Saint Teresa of Calcutta Child Protection Centre – Sighișoara; Kájoni János Child Protection Centre – Lăzarea; Saint Anne Home – Gheorgheni; Vigasztaló Szentlélek [The Paraclete] Child Protection Centre – Ghimeș-Făget; Saint Stephen Child Protection Centre – Șumuleu Ciuc; Saint Ladislaus Child Protection Centre – Tușnad; Saint Ladislaus Child Protection Centre – Sânsimion; Apor Vilmos Child Protection Centre – Covasna; Irgalmasság Anyja [Mother of Mercy] Maternity Home – Arcus; Saint Catherine Home – Plăieșii de Jos; Undergraduate Residential Home – Cluj-Napoca. In: *A Gyulafehérvári Főegyházmege név- és címtára* [The Register and Directory of the Archdiocese of Alba Iulia]. Cluj-Napoca, 2014, 44–49.

groups in support of Christian families as the so-called *Marriage Encounter* or the *Teams of Our Lady* movement.

However, in the spirit of *Rerum novarum* and that of the papal social encyclicals issued as per its context for 127 years now, we can perhaps get closer to answering the constantly recurring social issues if we take a more thorough look at movements performing social activities. Such is the *Young Christian Workers* movement, which, with its motto: ‘See, judge, act’, encourages the reorganization of life in conformity with Christian values. The re-established *KALOT*, as the successor of the onetime *National Body of Catholic Agrarian Youth Associations*, carries on its motto: ‘More Christlike people! Better-educated villages! People full of vitality! Self-respecting Hungarians!’. The *Catholic Men’s Movement* and *Kolping Society* are educational communities that, based on the Catholic Church’s social doctrine, provide further education in terms of religious matters, world-views, professional and vocational issues. The *Society of Saint Vincent de Paul* and the *Roman Catholic Women’s Society* is at the service of communities by means of its charitable activities, the promotion of general education, and fostering cultural life.

### Summary

It is clear from the above that, in a bid to find solutions to the social problems emerging in the different ages to keep abreast of the universal Church, there were certain attempts on the territory of the Transylvanian Diocese as well, that is, the Alba Iulia Diocese – as it was named from the 1927 concordat –, or the Archdiocese, as termed from 1991 onwards. These ambitions were achieved, on the one hand, as grassroots initiatives, whereas, on the other hand, through movements organized in a top-down fashion by the leadership of the diocese.

Ambitions increasingly flourishing from the second half of the 19<sup>th</sup> century to address the emerging social problems gained a new momentum in the early 20<sup>th</sup> century, which, however, was broken by the coming to power of communism. At that time, there would have been a dire need to work out an independent contextual theology in the communist-dominated particular separatism of Central and Eastern Europe. Nevertheless, there was a lack of appropriate potential due to oppression on the part of the communist system, which severely constrained the free development of the churches.

Today's tendencies demand the 'quick-fix' type of approach focusing on solving practical problems to be supplemented with the elaboration of a comprehensive theological intention. At the cross-roads of Western and Eastern Christianity, an explanation of the specifically evolved image of man and mentality would be required, which then would help in systematizing the great number of practical pursuits presented above, which do have the capacity to solve certain sub-questions but are unable to serve with a comprehensive and satisfactory explanation and, what is more, to provide assistance.

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