

**THE RECEPTION OF THE CONCILIAR LITURGICAL REFORMS
IN THE DIOCESE OF ALBA IULIA
THE CONTRIBUTION OF BISHOP ÁRON MÁRTON**

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Abstract. This essay addresses the reception of Vatican II in Transylvania (Romania), in the diocese of Alba Iulia, with particular attention to the liturgical reform. In the introduction, I briefly tackle the political and ecclesiastic background of the conciliar reception in Transylvania, notably the (non-)participation of the bishops from Romania and Hungary in the Council. In the main part of the essay I discuss the reception of the Council in the diocese of Alba Iulia, during the episcopate of Áron Márton. I focus on the reception of the liturgical ordinances, since of all the reforms initiated by the Council the liturgical reform had the most visible impact on the Transylvanian Catholic Church. This analysis is based on material found in the Archives of the Archdiocese of Alba Iulia and on the speeches and homilies of Bishop Áron Márton.

Keywords: Vatican II, reception, Transylvania, Áron Márton, liturgical reform

In the history of the Catholic Church Vatican II marked in many ways the beginning of a new epoch. Calling the council, Pope John XXIII envisaged a Church able to respond to the changed conditions of modern times, to express its faith without issuing condemnations, through reform and moral renewal, and promoted the restoration of peace and unity, relinquishing the grim worldview of what he called the “prophets of doom”.¹ *Aggiornamento* became the watchword of the Council;² it entailed

¹ For Pope John’s vision of the council: *Ad Petri Cathedram* 3 (AAS 51. 1959, 497–531, here 497); *Humanae salutis* (25 December 1961), original Italian text in *Acta et documenta Concilio Oecumenico Vaticano II apparando* Series II (Praeparatoria) I. Vatican 1964, 139–143, Latin text: AAS 54. 1962, 5–13; *Gaudet Mater Ecclesia* (October 11, 1962) 5.1-6; 6.5; on the “prophets of doom”: 4.3 <http://www.vatican.va/holy_father/john_xxiii/speeches/1962/documents/hf_j-xxiii_spe_19621011_opening-council_it.html>; the Allocution to the members of the Central Commission on the

the renewed expression and transmission of Catholic doctrine to fit the needs of modern society and the reform of the Church, in sum a fresh approach to the mission of the Church.³ While such assessment might seem a commonplace, this original intention should be recalled, since during the last years, beyond the ever louder critique against the decisions and effects of the Council, the “hermeneutic of continuity” was sometimes used to minimise or question the changes brought by the Council, notably with respect to ecclesiology and the liturgy.⁴ A look at the positions taken by representatives of the hierarchy during and shortly after the Council, as well as the local reception of the documents may illuminate the original understanding of the conciliar aims.

This essay addresses the reception of Vatican II in Transylvania (Romania), in the diocese of Alba Iulia, with particular attention to the liturgical reform. In the introduction, I briefly tackle the political and ecclesiastic background of the conciliar reception in Transylvania, notably the (non-)participation of the bishops from Romania and Hungary. In the

occasion of the third session, January 23, 1962 (“quae Ecclesiae doctrinam, morum disciplinam, et apostolatus rationes spectant, quae hodierni temporis necessitatibus congruent”), <http://www.vatican.va/holy_father/john_xxiii/speeches/1962/documents/hf_j-xxiii_spe_19620123_terza-sessione_it.html>.

- ² For the use of *aggiornamento*, *Ad Petri Cathedram* 3 (Italian text); the allocution announcing the Roman Synod, the Ecumenical Council and the reform (*aggiornamento*) of the Code of Canon Law, 25 January, 1959 (AAS 51 [1959], 65-69 <http://www.vatican.va/holy_father/john_xxiii/speeches/1959/documents/hf_j-xxiii_spe_19590125_annuncio_it.html>; General Audience, 1st August 1962 <http://www.vatican.va/holy_father/john_xxiii/audiences/documents/hf_j-xxiii_aud_19620801_it.html>. For a clarification of the meaning of *aggiornamento*, understood as a watchword of the Council: Allocuzione di Sua Santità Paolo VI. Penultima sessione generale del concilio (18 November 1965), <http://www.vatican.va/holy_father/paul_vi/speeches/1965/documents/hf_p-vi_spe_19651118_penultima-sessione-concilio_it.html>.
- ³ Michael BREDECK, *Das Zweite Vatikanum als Konzil des Aggiornamento. Zur hermeneutischen Grundlegung einer theologischen Konzilsinterpretation*, Paderborn–München–Wien–Zürich: Schöningh, 2007, 17–22.
- ⁴ On the changes that occurred in the interpretation of Vatican II: Massimo FAGGIOLI, *Vatican II: The Battle for Meaning*, New York–Mahwah, NJ: Paulist Press, 2012; Joseph A. KOMONCHAK, “Benedict XVI and the Interpretation of Vatican II”, *Cristianesimo nella Storia* 28 (2007) 323–337.

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The Political and Ecclesiastic Background of the Conciliar Reception in Transylvania

Geographically the Transylvanian Catholic dioceses belonged to Romania and from the viewpoint of canon law were part of the Romanian Catholic Church. Yet, due to historical circumstances, they had strong cultural, linguistic and ecclesiastic ties with the Hungarian Catholic Church. Therefore the issue of the conciliar participation and reception should be analysed from this double perspective.

It is not my purpose to offer a detailed discussion of the conciliar activity of the bishops from Romania and Hungary. I only point to those particularities of the historical situation and of the political context, which may shed light on the reception of the Council in this region. The (lack of) participation of the bishops from Romania and Hungary can be assessed only against the background of the special political situation of the time.⁵ The Communist authorities of both countries strictly controlled travel to Rome, and bishops were allowed to leave the country only when authorised by the state. The authorities granted travel permits only to those who were considered dependable, and that often with the manifest intention to attain political aims, such as the recognition of the country by the international community or the conclusion of political or ecclesiastic agreements.

During the Council, in the six Roman Catholic dioceses of Romania (four in Transylvania, – Alba Iulia, Timișoara, Satu Mare and Oradea,

⁵ The Romanian background of the conciliar participation and reception was assessed by Silvia BERECKZI, *A II. vatikáni zsinat hatásai az erdélyi katolikus egyház életére* (unpublished doctoral dissertation), Cluj, 2007. On the Hungarian situation: Béla SAÁD, *A zsinat budapesti szemmel*, Budapest: Vigília, 1967; and especially András FEJÉRDY, *Magyarország és a II. Vatikáni Zsinat 1959–1965*, Budapest: Magyar Tudományos Akadémia Történettudomány Intézete, 2011.

with a majority of native Hungarians, and two Romanian speaking dioceses, – Bucharest and Iași, in the southern and eastern regions), there was only one bishop in office, Áron Márton, head of the Diocese of Alba Iulia. The dioceses of Timișoara, Satu Mare and Oradea were governed by ordinaries, just as the two Romanian dioceses of Iași and Bucharest.⁶

Áron Márton (1896–1980) was the head of the Diocese of Alba Iulia from 1938 until his death.⁷ The bishop was an outspoken and uncompromising character who had constantly fought against totalitarian regimes, pleading against the deportation of the Jews with Hungarian authorities and defending the rights of the Hungarian minority and of the Catholics in Communist Romania. Between 1949–1955 he was imprisoned successively in Bucharest, Sighetul Marmăției and Aiud. After his release, starting with March 25, 1955, he was allowed to govern his diocese. Nonetheless, he was in house arrest for ten years (from June 6, 1957 to November 22, 1967), being forbidden to leave the episcopal residence. Due to his unwavering courage notwithstanding the years spent in prison and house arrest, due to his outspoken critique of all injustice and his extraordinary moral authority, Áron Márton became a legendary figure of the Catholic Church in Transylvania. His beatification is in progress.

Áron Márton was invited to attend the first session of the Council, but he declined, as he resented demanding the Communist authorities to grant him the authorisation to travel. In the light of the existing research, it seems that the bishop did not send or prepare any proposals during the preparatory phase of the Council. Before the third session, several invitations were sent out again, to diocesan priests as well. Áron Márton refused again to attend, as his participation would have sent a false

⁶ József MARTON, *A keresztény jelenkor*, Marosvásárhely, 2008, 180–183.

⁷ György JAKUBINYI, *Romániai katolikus, erdélyi protestáns és izraelita vallási archontológia*, Gyulafehérvár, 2004, 33; Jerome SZALAY, *The Truth About Central Europe 1. Aaron Marton, Bishop of Transylvania*, Columbes, 1955; János SZÓKE, *Márton Áron*, Nyíregyháza: Görög Katolikus Püspöki Hivatal, 1990; Michael PHAYER, *The Catholic Church and the Holocaust, 1930-1965*, Bloomington IN: Indiana University Press, 2000, 106–107; Gergely KOVÁCS (ed.), *Márton Áron – Un vescovo sulla via della croce: atti della commemorazione organizzata dall’Ambasciata di Romania presso la Santa Sede, dal Pontificio Consiglio della Cultura in collaborazione con l’Accademia di Romania in Roma, giovedì, 11 ottobre 2012, Roma, 2013*, Cluj: Verbum, 2013.

message about the (unexisting) religious freedom in the country. Apparently, he remarked in private that no one would have benefited from what he would have said in Rome.⁸ Bishop Márton was an unbending character, who rejected all forms of political compromise. He was allowed to travel to Rome only after his release from house arrest following the intervention of Cardinal König by the Romanian authorities. He participated in the extraordinary 1969-synod on the cooperation between the Holy See and the episcopal conferences, and in 1971, at the ordinary assembly addressing the ministerial priesthood and justice in the world.

Konrad Kernweiss, the delegated ordinary of the diocese of Timișoara was invited to participate in the work of the Council, as member of the preparatory commission that was to draft the liturgical constitution, in view of his connections with German theologians. However, his participation is uncertain.⁹

During the third session two clerics from Romania were permitted to travel to Rome, Károly Pakocs, canon of Satu Mare, and Francisc Augustin, the ordinarius substitutus of the archdiocese of Bucharest.¹⁰

⁸ Imre TEMPFLI quotes the statement of Mihály Tyukodi, one of the intimates of Áron Márton (*Sárból és napsugárból. Pakocs Károly püspöki helynök élete és kora. 1892–1966*, Budapest: Metem, 2002, 885.

⁹ The name of Kernweiss appears in the official list of the *Commissioni conciliari* as Rev. Sac. Kernweiss Conrado. *Commissioni conciliari*, Rome, 1964, 105 and in 1965, 94. Imre TEMPFLI refers to the recollection of Josef-Jakob Schulz, parish priest of Rékás (diocese of Timișoara), according to whom Kernweiss was invited as peritus and was in Rome twice, being present at the promulgation of the *Sacrosanctum concilium*. TEMPFLI, *Sárból és napsugárból*, 884. Others question however his participation in the Council.

¹⁰ Following the Hungarian model, the Romanian government sought a partial agreement with the Holy See. Károly Pakocs and Francisc Augustin were allowed to attend the council for this reason. Károly Pakocs received an invitation to the third session, as *auditor extraordinarius*. In Rome he presented a nine-page report on the situation of the dioceses. The report was very biased and reflected the expectations of the Communist authorities. We have no information about the participation of Pakocs and Augustin in the work of the council. The pope received them in a private audience, but the impression they gave was rather negative. TEMPFLI, *Sárból és napsugárból*, 880–912.

During the last session Petru Pleșca, a diocesan priest of Iași, and László Hosszú,¹¹ dean of Oradea were allowed to attend the Council.¹²

A few other names from Romania could be mentioned. Titular bishop Vasile Cristea, the head of the Greek Catholic diaspora, residing in Rome, figures on the list of the members of the preparatory Commission on the Oriental Churches, alongside prelate Ovidiu Bejan, a collaborator of the Rota Romana.¹³ Among the observers we find the reputed Orthodox theologian Andrei Scrima (†2000), who attended the council as personal representative of the ecumenical patriarch Athenagoras.¹⁴ Scrima lived in emigration and had acquired French citizenship, therefore he did not represent the Romanian Orthodox Church.

This brief overview shows that the representation of the Transylvanian Catholic dioceses and the participation at the Council was insignificant. The largest diocese, that of Alba Iulia, was not involved at any level in the work of the Council. The representation of the other Hungarian-speaking dioceses was of no consequence and, all things considered, it did not serve the purposes of the Church, but the interests of the Communist government.

The Transylvanian dioceses had many historical, ethnic and cultural ties with the Hungarian Catholic Church. Nevertheless, the border and

¹¹ László Hosszú arrived to Rome in October 29, 1965 and stayed until January 1966. He spoke on several occasions with Augustino Casaroli and was received by Pope Paul VI. He claimed that Bishop Áron Márton was a splinter in the eyes of the State, and his ministry harmed the Romanian Catholic Church, therefore he had to be obliged to retire and had to be replaced. “Arhivele Secretariatului de Stat pentru Culte. Dosar personal Ladislau Hosszu. Nota din 22 ianuarie 1966”, in Ovidiu BOZGAN, *Cronica unei eșec previzibil. România și Sfântul Scaun – în epoca pontificatului lui Paul al VI-lea (1963–1978)*, București, 2004: Curtea Veche, quoted by Francisc Carol Octavian LÓRINCZ, *A nagyváradi Római Katolikus egyházmegye története 1945 és 1989 között* (unpublished doctoral dissertation), Cluj, 2012, 209.

¹² BERECKZI, *A II. vatikáni zsinat hatásai*, 67.

¹³ S.E.R. Mons. Cristea Basilio, Vescovo tit. di Lebedo, *Pontificie Commissioni Preparatorie del Concilio Ecumenico Vaticano II*, Rome, 1960, 105; Otto SCHULMEISTER, Otto MAUER, Karlheinz SCHMIDTHÜS, Anton BÖHM (eds.), *Fragen an das Konzil*, Freiburg–Basel–Wien: Herder, 1961, 149–150.

¹⁴ Michael QUINSKY, Peter WALTER (eds.), *Personenlexikon zum Zweiten Vatikanischen Konzil*, Freiburg–Basel–Wien, 2012, 249.

political conditions prevented the latter to influence the situation of the Diocese of Transylvania and to promote the involvement in the work of the Council. The political authorities also restricted the participation of the bishops from Hungary, even though there the situation was slightly more relaxed.¹⁵ Endre Hamvas, bishop of Csanád,¹⁶ Sándor Kovács, bishop of Szombathely¹⁷ and Pál Brezanóczy, apostolic administrator of Eger¹⁸ were allowed to attend the first session. Later József Bánk¹⁹, József Cserhádi, Miklós Dudás²⁰, Sándor Klempa, Vince Kovács, Norbert Legányi, Kálmán Papp and József Winkler²¹ received the permission to participate. József Grósz, archbishop of Kalocsa appears among the members of the Central Preparatory Commission,²² but he died on October 3, 1961. Of the *periti* we should mention the Benedictine Polikárp Radó, a reputed liturgist who participated in the work of the subcommission VII (De lingua Latina).²³

¹⁵ The conciliar participation of the Hungarian bishops was researched by András FEJÉRDY, *Magyarország és a II. Vatikáni Zsinat 1959–1965*, Budapest, 2011.

¹⁶ Endre Hamvas spoke in the public session of November 21, 1963 on the issue of ecumenism, pleading for the need to learn and understand the thinking of the separated Christians. Giovanni CAPRILE (ed.), *Il Concilio Vaticano II, III (Secondo Periodo: 1963–1964)*, Roma: La Civiltà cattolica, 1966, 312–313.

¹⁷ On the festive mass of November 11, 1964 (St. Martin's day), he read the gospel. CAPRILE, *Il Concilio Vaticano II, IV (Terzo periodo: 1964-1965)*, 407.

¹⁸ SAÁD, *A zsinat budapesti szemmel*, 50.

¹⁹ József Bánk spoke on the session debating the issue of priesthood and the formation of priests. CAPRILE, *Il Concilio Vaticano II, IV*, 444.

²⁰ Miklós Dudás, Greek Catholic bishop of Hajdúdorog celebrated the Mass in Saint Peter's basilica according to the Greek rite, on November 19, 1965, in Hungarian, and Pál Brezanóczy recited the gospel. The event signalled the recognition of Hungarian as liturgical language. CAPRILE, *Il Concilio Vaticano II, V*, 423–424.

²¹ SAÁD, *A zsinat budapesti szemmel*, 104.

²² S.E.R. Mons. Grósz Giuseppe, Arcivescovo di Kalocsa, *Pontificie Commissioni Preparatorie Del Concilio Ecumenico Vaticano II*, Rome, 1960, 22; SCHULMEISTER, MAUER, SCHMIDTHÜS, BÖHM, *Fragen an das Konzil*, 167.

²³ R.mo. P. Radó Policarpo, dei Benedettini, *Pontificie Commissioni Preparatorie Del Concilio Ecumenico Vaticano II*, Rome, 1960, 88; Siegfried SCHMITT, *Die internationalen liturgischen Studientreffen 1951–1960. Zur Vorgeschichte der Liturgiekonstitution* (TThS 53), Trier: Paulinus, 1992, 325.

To assess the participation of the Hungarian bishops, we have to consider the political conditions of the time. On the one hand, the government strictly monitored those delegated to participate in the Council. On the other hand, both the Hungarian government and the Vatican were seeking a form of conciliation and agreement.²⁴ The State Office for Church Affairs closely followed the preparations for the Council and its course. The same office supervised the submission of the proposals. Current research shows that the suggestions of the Hungarian bishops did not reach the Preparatory Commission. The only exception was Lajos Shvoy, bishop of Székesfehérvár, whose proposals were mailed secretly, from Germany. As an act of retaliation, he was not allowed to take part in the Council.²⁵

Thus, the proposals drafted by the Hungarian bishops have only a historical interest, but they did not influence the work of the Council. They addressed issues of discipline, as well as moral and liturgical questions. The bishops required a more flexible liturgical discipline with respect to hearing mass on Sunday, fasting and receiving the sacraments, taking into account the local conditions. They also required a more extensive use of the vernacular in the liturgy. The proposals of Lajos Shvoy are interesting from a liturgical perspective. The bishop urged a more significant implication of the faithful in the liturgy, the use of the vernacular in the liturgy of the Word, in the celebration of the sacraments and sacramentals, as well as the reform of the liturgy and of the catechism.²⁶ He also expressed his view on ecumenism, requiring more understanding for those returning into the Church. (He conceived ecumenism as return to the Catholic Church.) Bishop Sándor Kovács of Szombathely commented on the draft of the liturgical constitution during the first session. He demanded additional prefaces, probably under the influence of Polikárp

²⁴ A partial agreement was signed in Budapest on September 15, 1964. SAÁD, *A zsinat budapesti szemmel*, 112–140.

²⁵ FEJÉRDY, *Magyarország és a II. Vatikáni Zsinat*, 64–65.

²⁶ *Acta et documenta Concilio Oecumenico Vaticano II apparando*, Series I (Antepreparatoria), II, Vatican, 1960, 523.

Radó.²⁷ After the Council, Bishop Kovács was appointed to the Council for the Implementation of the Liturgical Constitution.²⁸

In spite of the close ties that linked the Transylvanian dioceses to the Hungarian Catholic Church, to which they had belonged earlier, and notwithstanding the fact that language connected Hungarian speaking Catholics across the borders, we have no indications that Bishop Áron Márton would have been in contact with the Hungarian hierarchy before or during the Council. Furthermore, the Romanian Communist government unilaterally denounced the Concordat with the Holy See (1948) and closed down the nunciature in Bucharest (1950). Consequently, communication with Rome became extremely difficult. During the fifties and sixties the Diocese of Alba Iulia was almost completely isolated and was struggling to survive. The Hungarian reception of the Council started to exert its influence in Transylvania only in the decades that followed the closure of the Council, and it concerned mostly the liturgical reform, notably the translation of liturgical texts.

This isolation of the Transylvanian Church stands in contrast with the slightly better ecclesial situation in other countries of the Communist block. Several of these bishops were able to submit their proposals to the Preparatory Commission. We know for instance of ten proposals coming from the bishops of Yugoslavia, forty-three from Poland and one from Latvia. The bishops of the Eastern block focused mainly on the difficulties faced by their churches, the threats posed by Communist, materialistic ideology and the severe limitation of religious freedom in these countries, but they also paid attention to the concerns of the universal Church. A good number of their suggestions regarded the liturgy. The bishops demanded the adaptation of the sacramental rites, the use of the vernacular in the Mass as well as in the celebration of the sacraments and sacramentals. They promoted the active involvement of the faithful in the Mass, the regulation of the concelebration and the communion under both species. The vernacular was expected to facilitate the active participation of the faithful in the liturgy. The argument was defended for instance by

²⁷ FEJÉRDY, *Magyarország és a II. Vatikáni zsinat*, 184.

²⁸ CAPRILE, *Il Concilio Vaticano II*, vol. III, 645. FEJÉRDY, *Magyarország és a II. Vatikáni zsinat 1959–1965*, 225.

Cardinal Wyszynski and by bishop Czajka of Częstochowa.²⁹ Karol Wojtyła also advocated the partial use of the vernacular.³⁰ Several bishops petitioned the recognition of Mary as co-redeemer and the introduction of a feast in her honour.³¹ Bishops from regions with a significant number of Eastern Christians (especially Yugoslavia) urged a common date for Easter.³²

This brief overview shows that as opposed to the churches of Hungary and other Communist countries, the Diocese of Alba Iulia did not participate in any way in the work of the Council, neither during the preparatory phase, nor during the conciliar period proper. It is all the more striking therefore that the Council, and in particular the liturgical reform was received in Transylvania, even if with some delay.

The Reception of the Council in the Diocese of Alba Iulia

The Council and the Liturgical Reform

Although Bishop Áron Márton did not take part in the Council, he closely followed its course and regularly informed his diocese about the outcome. Before the opening of the Council, he demanded his priests to explain to the faithful the importance of the event. During the entire month of October, the priests and the faithful were expected to pray the Rosary for the intention of the Council and to pray for its success throughout its course.³³ On the opening of the 21st universal council, on Thursday, October 11, 1962, at midnight, a mass had to be celebrated in all parish churches.³⁴ In most places, however, the Communist authorities thwarted this plan. The mass was celebrated in the cathedral of Alba Iulia, while most parish churches limited themselves to ring the bells at midnight. Even a minor gesture like celebrating the mass on such an occasion

²⁹ *Acta et documenta* I, vol. II. 677; 693.

³⁰ *Acta et documenta* I, vol. II. 747.

³¹ Frane (Franciscus) Franić, bishop of Split; *Acta et documenta* I, vol. II. 549. Polish bishops Golinski and Czerniak; *Acta et documenta* I, vol. II. 645, 714. Lajos Shvoy had submitted a similar proposal; *Acta et documenta* I, vol. II. 522.

³² Bishops Pusic and Bezmalinovic from Yugoslavia; Garkovic and Obalk from the same country; *Acta et documenta* I, vol. II, 538, 548.

³³ Archive of the Archdiocese of Alba Iulia (in what follows AAAI), 1171/1962.

³⁴ AAAI, 1225/1962.

encountered serious difficulties. This turn of events is symbolic for the impossible circumstances faced by the Transylvanian Church during and after the Council. Whereas in Western Europe numerous initiatives prepared the reforms endorsed by Vatican II, the Church in Transylvania was struggling simply to survive.

Before the conclusion of the Council, bishop Márton demanded that on December 8, on the feast of the Immaculate Conception, priests briefly address in the homily the results and importance of the Council.³⁵ On the concluding day, in the cathedral of Alba Iulia, the bishop recalled in his homily the aim of the Council: the Church was seeking ways to fulfil its unchanging mission received from Christ in a world that went through great changes. He praised the achievements of the Council and remarked that the Church desired to renew itself in order to become able to understand and approach the world.³⁶ His thoughts expressed the ideal of *aggiornamento* that animated the Council.

The reception of the liturgical reforms in Transylvania was prepared by the spread of the ideas and initiatives of the liturgical movement during the first half of the twentieth centuries. In fact, of all the preconiliar reform movements the liturgical renewal was the best received. The liturgical decrees of bishops Gusztáv Mailáth and Áron Márton, the writings of the professors of the Seminary in Alba Iulia, Alfréd Eröss,³⁷ Ernő Veress and Ferenc Faragó, or of prelates like József Hirschler from Cluj prove the point. The works of major Hungarian liturgists – Xavér Ferenc Szunyogh,³⁸ József Korompai,³⁹ Flóris Kühár, Polikárp Radó

³⁵ AAI, 2185/1965.

³⁶ József MARTON (ed.), *Márton Áron írásai és beszédei* II, Alba Iulia: Altíp, 1977, 91–92.

³⁷ The systematic theologian Alfréd Eröss wrote about the ecclesiological shift marked by the *Mystici corporis*: “A Fej és a tagok közös élete”, in *Papi Lelkiség* 2 (1943/44) 1–10. *Papi lelkiség* [“Priestly spirituality”] was a Hungarian journal initiated by the Jesuite Dániel Hunya that appeared between 1941–1948, being succeeded by the *Magyar Papi Egység* [Hungarian Priestly Unity], published by another Jesuite, Miklós Öry, in Austria, to be replaced from 1969 by the *Szolgálat* [Ministry].

³⁸ Ferenc Xavér Szunyogh was probably the most prominent representative of the Hungarian liturgical movement in the twenties and thirties. He had contacts with Lambert Beauduin, Ildefons Herwegen, Odo Casel and Romano Guardini. He published numerous books on the liturgy. His most important contribution was the

Piusz, Halász, Nándor Cséfalvy – were read by Transylvanian priests. These outstanding liturgists translated and disseminated the works of Romano Guardini, Pius Parsch and Lambert Beauduin in the Hungarian speaking territories, including Transylvania.⁴⁰ This explains why the conciliar liturgical reforms were well received in this area.

The implementation of the liturgical reforms revolved around the same questions as elsewhere: the use of the vernacular, the preparation of the liturgical texts, the liturgical space, the issues connected with the liturgy of the word (the readings and the homily) and the active participation of the faithful. What strikes however in the circulars and homilies of Bishop Áron Márton is his concern to imbue his priests with a new spirituality, with the sense that priesthood involves service, that it requires dedication and respect for human values.

In his letter of July 7, 1964, in accordance with the *motu proprio Sacram Liturgiam*,⁴¹ shortly after the establishing of the Consilium,⁴² the bishop urged the creation of an interdiocesan liturgical commission.⁴³ He appointed Mihály Tyukodi, professor of liturgy, and Ernő Veress, the former spiritual director of the Seminary as representatives of the Diocese of Alba Iulia, and asked the ordinaries of the dioceses of Satu Mare,

editing of the full Hungarian-Latin Missal (1933) that became widely used in Transylvania as well.

³⁹ Korompai was a promoter of the Gregorian chant and of Parsch's popular liturgical apostolate.

⁴⁰ Mózes NÓDA, *Élő liturgia. A II. vatikáni zsinatot megelőző liturgikus megújulás és hatása az erdélyi egyházmegye liturgikus életére*, Budapest–Cluj: Szent István Társulat–Verbum, 2012, 156–167. Beside Guardini's liturgical works, his *Der Herr* was translated by Áron Márton, but this translation was published only posthumously, in Budapest, in 2006.

⁴¹ *Sacram Liturgiam* II (dated January 25, 1964); AAS 56 (1964) 139-144.

⁴² On the birth of the Consilium and the tensions accompanying the drafting of the *Sacram Liturgiam*, Piero MARINI, *A Challenging Reform: Realizing the Vision of the Liturgical Renewal, 1963-1975*, Collegeville, MN: Liturgical Press, 2007, 15–39.

⁴³ AAI, 1048/1964. box 2255, lot 23. In the letter to the ordinaries of Satu Mare, Timisoara and Oradea, the bishop notes that the text of the Liturgical Constitution is available, while the content of *Sacram Liturgiam* is known only partially, from the media. The commission would also prevent uncontrolled initiatives. To the typed draft of the letter, the bishop adds a handwritten reference to SC 45.

Oradea and Timișoara to make their own appointments to the commission. The commission had to study thoroughly the Liturgical Constitution and the *motu proprio*, to establish the most urgent tasks concerning the implementation of the liturgical reform, to follow the work of the Consilium and of the other national liturgical commissions and inform the Diocese about their decisions and initiatives, as well as to gather the local liturgical customs in order to integrate them in the new, vernacular Rituals. Unfortunately, the interdiocesan liturgical commission could not be established. The first meeting was held in Alba Iulia, but during the night the secret police woke up and sent home the appointed members, on the ground that they had gathered for an illicit meeting.⁴⁴

Bishop Márton applied consciously the liturgical reforms in his diocese, but he also advised his priests to keep patient. “Priests should regard as normative not hearsay, but what they read in the encyclicals of their dioceses. If in our region these [reforms] occur with some delay, they should have the patience to wait, since circumstances demand it.”⁴⁵ The introduction of the vernacular led in some cases to hasty solutions, therefore the bishop repeatedly asked for patience. In a letter from December 1967, the archdeacon of Upper-Csík asked on behalf of his priests the permission to say the prayers of the mass in Hungarian, using the Missal of Xavér Ferenc Szunyogh. The Missal of Szunyogh and Pius Parsch’ *Year of Grace* were broadly used at the time, therefore the archdeacon asked whether priests could take the introductory thoughts from these books, to address a few words to the faithful during weekday masses.⁴⁶ The bishop acknowledged the importance of the vernacular, but pleaded for its gradual introduction, in order to ensure the use of unitary, good quality texts. In his view, the disorder characterising the liturgy in some places was chiefly due to priests’ lack of discipline.⁴⁷ In 1970, responding to the questions asked by Béla Baráth, the parish priest of Saint Michael’s and archdeacon of Cluj, Áron Márton demanded compliance with the existing regulations. The vernacular was to be used for the ordinary, the readings, the Pater Noster and the embolism, while

⁴⁴ The recollection of Mihály Tyukodi, quoted by TEMPFLI, *Sárból és napsugárból*, 896.

⁴⁵ AAAI, 110/1964.

⁴⁶ The letter of archdean József Antal. AAAI, 81/ 1967.

⁴⁷ Response to the letter of József Antal. AAAI, 2493/1967.

the new rites and prayers of the mass had to be introduced only after the publication of the new Missal.⁴⁸ In towns with multilingual communities, a Latin mass had to be celebrated on Sundays and holidays.

In 1971, bishop Márton announced with joy that the Hungarian translation of the Missal was published.⁴⁹ In his circular letter (*Executio Constitutionis de Sacra Liturgia IV. Missale Romanum instauratum*), the bishop identified the steps preparing the introduction of the mass in vernacular. The reception involved a theoretical formation and a practical preparation. To that aim, the professor of liturgy had to draft twelve sermons for priests, explaining the theology of the mass, its parts and the new order of the mass, so that these may teach the faithful on the matter. In view of the rediscovered importance of the *liturgia verbi*, the readings and the homily received particular attention. The homily was compulsory on Sundays and holidays, and recommended on weekdays. The professor of biblical studies had started to process the readings. He had to provide the priests with the material needed for the liturgy of the word. The altar for the celebration facing the people and the lectern had to be set up with outmost circumspection, and the most fitting solutions had to be found. The Eucharist could be reserved in the main altar or in a side altar suitable for the purpose.⁵⁰ The setting up of the altar for the celebration facing the people had to be authorised and the plan of the sanctuary, with the future place of the altar, the lectern and the chairs has to be attached to the demand. In larger churches microphones could help the faithful to here and understand the priest.⁵¹

After the publication of the first, provisory Hungarian Missal, a process of revision started. Consequently, in 1973, Áron Márton demanded his priests to submit emendations. These proposals were to be processed by a commission; until the completion of this work all arbitrary

⁴⁸ Response to the questions of dr. Béla Baráth, parish priest, canon and prelate of Cluj, AAI, 3488/1970 September 23.

⁴⁹ The translation was prepared in Hungary.

⁵⁰ In 1972, the bishop regulated the practice of adoration (that had to be held outside the mass), and terminated the practice of masses with the exposition of the Holy Sacrament. January 28, 1972 (AAI, 540/1972).

⁵¹ *Executio Constitutionis de Sacra Liturgia IV. Missale Romanum instauratum*, episcopal circular letter. AAI, 750/1971.

changes were prohibited.⁵² Most responses concerned stylistic or linguistic issues.⁵³ Only a few proposals tackled matters of theology. Jenő Trebits (Türkös) deplored the loss of “*audemus dicere*” in the Hungarian translation, before the Our Father, and emphasised the incommensurate distance between Creator and creatures. Bálint Szabó (Farkaslaka) had two interesting suggestions. For the “*ne nos inducas in tentationem*”, in view of James 1,13, he proposed “do not abandon us in temptation”. He also recommended that the priest and the faithful recite together the offertory, to emphasise the communal character of the sacrifice and the importance of the participation of the faithful. Retrospectively, none of the submitted proposals was taken into account, but they prove that the clergy became involved in the liturgical reform.

In 1974, summarising the decrees and the application of the Council, Áron Márton promulgated the new order of the liturgy noting that the faithful have received these changes with unanimous joy. The renewal of religious life required everyone’s aspiration to a life of Christian perfection.⁵⁴

The new rites of the sacraments were introduced gradually and prepared thoroughly.⁵⁵ The rite of marriage came into use on October 1, 1972. The rite of baptism was introduced in 1975.⁵⁶ The Diocese of Alba Iulia took over the translation prepared by the Hungarian National Liturgical Council.⁵⁷ The other rites were renewed by the successor of Áron Márton, bishop Antal Jakab.⁵⁸ Concerning the sacramentals, it is

⁵² *Az új liturgikus kiadványok magyar szövegének korrekciója*, AAI, 1827/1973.

⁵³ Gábor Bakó, parish priest of Csíkménaság (Armășeni) and archdeacon of Low-Csík complains for instance that the Hungarian translation of the new prayers (collect, the prayer over the offerings and that after communion) are difficult to understand, compared to earlier Hungarian translations. Another priest objects to the use of the passive, inappropriate in Hungarian, in the words of the consecration.

⁵⁴ *Márton Áron írásai és beszédei* II, 155–158.

⁵⁵ Bishop Márton sent out the draft of the new rites to the parishes, and prepared the priests during the spiritual exercises, the faithful with a series of speeches and homilies.

⁵⁶ AAI, 2800/1975.

⁵⁷ The new, trilingual Ritual was published in 2007. The Romanian translation was taken from the Ritual of the diocese of Iași, the German from the German Ritual.

⁵⁸ Penance in 1981 (AAI, 3096/1981), confirmation – with January 1, 1984 (AAI, 1290/1983), the anointing of the sick in 1981 (AAI, 3107/1981), its celebration in the mass in 1987. Bishop Antal also exhorted his priests to study thoroughly the

worth noting that the rite of burial was instituted by bishop Márton in 1978, but the text was not taken from the Hungarian Ritual, because in Transylvania burial rites were performed in Hungarian long before the Council.

Forming the Priests in the Spirit of the Council

During the period of Communist oppression, Áron Márton assigned great importance to the formation of the priests. The bishop frequently used the ordination of deacons and priests to communicate the conciliar teachings, animated by the conviction that the priests had to be the first to appropriate the spirit of the Council and to transmit it in the course of their ministry. In 1965, at the ordination of deacons and subdeacons, he tackled the two main parts of the mass and pointed to the importance and role of the liturgy of the Word. Scripture had to be proclaimed, as it was the word of life.⁵⁹ In 1972, on a similar occasion, the bishop emphasised that in the renewed liturgy the word of God had to receive more attention. The faithful, he noted, manifested an increased interest in Scriptures. The patristic revival and the deepening of the theological formation, the bishop remarked, have contributed to a clearer explanation of the revealed truths.⁶⁰ In 1975, following the spiritual exercises of the seminarians, bishop Márton spoke about the responsibility of the priests and remarked that the vernacular liturgy required from them a more important capacity of accommodation.⁶¹ The priest had to prepare himself thoroughly for preaching.⁶² The bishop also addressed the issue of Christian unity. The Council embraced ecumenism and demanded that education, catechesis and preaching be carried out in an ecumenical spirit.⁶³

The bishop repeatedly emphasised that priesthood involved service, dedication, awareness of the problems of the world, respect for human values and collegiality. In his conviction, both the example of Christ and

principles of the liturgical constitution and to apply faithfully its regulations (AAAI, 1457/1989, after the apparition of the *Vicesimus quintus annus* of John Paul II).

⁵⁹ MARTON, *Márton Áron írásai és beszédei* II, 85–86.

⁶⁰ *Márton Áron írásai és beszédei* II, 142.

⁶¹ *Márton Áron írásai és beszédei* II, 159–160.

⁶² *Márton Áron írásai és beszédei* II, 159–160.

⁶³ MARTON, *Márton Áron írásai és beszédei* II, 155–158.

the political situation compelled all priests to be ready to sacrifice. At ordinations, he explained the principles of the *Presbyterorum ordinis*. In 1967 and 1968, at the conferral of the minor orders, he emphasised the ministerial character of priesthood and noted that the Council defined the mission of the Church as ministry, the duty of the priests as service. The spiritual renewal of the Church and the sanctification of the faithful, he argued, depended firstly on the priests. The priest had to be a man among men.⁶⁴ In 1968, after the completion of the spiritual exercise for priests, Áron Márton emphasised that the Council's desire to renew the Church required priests' ability to respond to local challenges. (Under the circumstances faced by the Church in a communist country, this involved notably the ability to fight against theoretical and practical materialism.)

The first step toward reform, he argued, was the spiritual reform that priests had to start on themselves.⁶⁵ In a homily given in 1971, at an ordination, the bishop maintained that public opinion assigned a major significance to the acts and attitude of the priest and judged the Church according to their actions.⁶⁶

In 1972, at the conferral of the minor orders, tackling the mission and tasks of the priests, he emphasised: "Jesus Christ is the sole mediator between God and humans. The priest is not a mediator, but an instrument in the hands of the sole mediator. He has to serve the salvation of humans. He has to display the unadulterated, true face of Christ, devoid of distortions, to the generations seeking Christ."⁶⁷ One of the most evocative speeches in this sense was that given in 1975, at the completion of the spiritual exercises for seminarians.⁶⁸ He cautioned the seminarians that Vatican II had modified the old image of the priesthood. "Instead of the rigid, dominating, individualistic type, the Council advances the ideal of the informed priest who understands his vocation as service." The priestly office, the bishop said, does not mean exerting power, but service.⁶⁹ The individualistic performance of the priestly office had to be replaced by a

⁶⁴ Márton Áron *írásai és beszédei* II, 103–105.

⁶⁵ Márton Áron *írásai és beszédei* II, 110–111.

⁶⁶ Márton Áron *írásai és beszédei* II, 129.

⁶⁷ Márton Áron *írásai és beszédei* II, 138–139.

⁶⁸ Márton Áron *írásai és beszédei* II, 159–160.

⁶⁹ MARTON, Márton Áron *írásai és beszédei* II, 159.

collegial ministry. The principle of *aggiornamento* involved solidarity with the world. The priest had to learn to respect human values, he had to have the problems of his time at heart, to be solidarious with the people and with the fundamental human values.⁷⁰

Active Participation in the Liturgy and the Royal Priesthood of the Faithful

Bishop Márton addressed the active participation of the faithful in the liturgy already before the Council. In 1958, in a letter to the staff of the Seminary in Alba Iulia, in which, relying on the *Mediator Dei* [MD] he regulated the liturgical formation of the future priests and cantors,⁷¹ he urged the liturgical training of the seminarians, because as priests they were to educate the faithful to participate actively in the liturgy. In 1960, the bishop introduced the new mode of distributing communion within the mass, according to the prescriptions of MD 121 and the instruction *De musica sacra et sacra liturgia* [MSL] 22c. In his letter, he recalled the endeavour of the Church to place the liturgy in the centre of religious existence and to engage the faithful actively in the public worship of the Church. The communion of the faithful within the mass, after the priest, is consistent with the spirit of the liturgy and with the practice in the early Church. The Holy Mass has a communal character: it is not only the sacrifice of the priest, but that of the people as well. The priest offers the sacrifice in the name of Christ and of the faithful belonging to Christ, their Head. The rites and prayers of the mass prove clearly that the faithful participate together with the priest in the offering of the sacrifice (he refers here to a number of prayers that use the plural and refer to the people). Although this communal character exists even when the faithful are not present or only the priest receives communion, the same character demands that the faithful participate, and those present take sacramental communion. The church renews thereby the practice of the first Christians who shared unanimously in the breaking of the bread and in prayers (cf. Acts 2,42). The bishop asked the priests to illuminate the reasons of this change, to explain in detail the Holy Mass and to educate the faithful to participate actively in the mass. He noted that many faithful considered the

⁷⁰ *Márton Áron írásai és beszédei* II, 159–160.

⁷¹ *Letter on the liturgical formation in the Seminary and the School of Cantors*, To the Directorate of the Seminary, AAI, Episcopal Dispositions, 1183/1958, April 23.

mass the individual action of the priest and thought that they were entitled to perform their individual devotions as they desired. That is why they had to be made aware that the mass was an action, the offering of the sacrifice of the cross, in which they had to participate actively.⁷² In the same letter, the bishop regulated the participation of the faithful in the prayers and responses of the mass (according to the provisions of the MSL).⁷³

The topic of active participation comes up again in 1964, when, following the instruction of the Sacred Congregation of Rites (April 25, 1964), the bishop introduces the new formula of communion. He quotes in the explanation the need to facilitate the active and fruitful participation of the faithful, and emphasises that the Church renews thereby the practice of the ancient Church, according to which the communicants professed their faith.⁷⁴

The active participation of the faithful in the liturgy is associated in the writings of bishop Márton with the universal priesthood of the baptised. Thus in 1965, on Holy Saturday, the bishop states: “The priestly dignity of the faithful is not a gift or a concession given by the ordained priest, but a genuine right and duty which pertains to the faithful in virtue of their baptism.” Therefore, according to their priestly dignity, in the liturgy the faithful have to participate as actively as possible in offering the sacrifice of the mass.⁷⁵ He also recalls the teaching of the Council on the universal priesthood of the faithful in a homily given in 1971, at the ordination of priests. This priesthood was received in baptism and it involves sharing in the royal priesthood of Christ.⁷⁶

⁷² AAAI, 3390/1960, esp. 2–3.

⁷³ AAAI, 3390/1960. Annex. In this context, the bishop authorised the Hungarian text of the Gradual, the Gloria, the Credo, the offertory, the prayer after the elevation and after communion.

⁷⁴ *Decretum de nova formula in sacrae Communionis distributione*, AAAI, 1290/1964. The bishop remarks that simpler formula (Corpus Christi, to which the faithful respond with Amen), was in use until the 8th century. It was a confession of faith. The priest is required to preserve the dignity of the distribution, having the patience to wait the response of the communicant. The handwritten addition to the draft emphasizes the fact that with the Amen the faithful consciously profess their faith.

⁷⁵ MÁRTON Áron, *Húsvét* (Márton Áron hagyatéka 6), edited by József MARTON, Marosvásárhely: Mentor, 2009, 94.

⁷⁶ MARTON, *Márton Áron írásai és beszédei* II, 129.

The topic of active participations returns on other occasions as well. In 1971, responding to a question of Gábor Bakó, parish priest of Csíkménaság (Armășeni) and archdeacon of Low-Csík, the bishop notes that the liturgical reform demands that zealous faithful or children perform the reading.⁷⁷ In 1975, he reminds the future priests that the faithful have to be included in the liturgy and have to be prepared for a conscious and active participation.

Conclusions

The fact that the Hungarian-speaking dioceses from Transylvania did not participate in the work of the Council was largely due to the political circumstances of the time. Because of the Communist oppression, the Churches struggled for their mere survival. Consequently, while in Western Europe the Council was prepared and carried out, following decades of theological research, publishing and practical initiatives, in this part of Eastern Europe the problems were of an entirely different nature. As a whole, the Hungarian participation in the Council was very meagre, notably concerning its effects. The proposals made by the bishops from Hungary did not reach the Preparatory Commission (with one exception). The bishops who attended the sessions did not contribute significantly to the work of the Council. The Transylvanian contribution was even more insignificant. The major Transylvanian diocese was not represented at the Council at all. The slim participation of the other dioceses served the interests of the Communist regime. Retrospectively it is difficult to tell what would have been different in the Diocese of Alba Iulia, had its bishop, Áron Márton attended the Council.

Remarkably, although bishop Márton was absent from all sessions, the spirit of the Council was thoroughly present in his thought, his writings and decrees. His attitude toward the Council was entirely positive and coincided with his deep fidelity to Rome. To him, the decrees of the Council were the expression of the magisterium of the universal Church to which he was fully devoted. He recognised in the Council the same desire for renewal that had animated his entire ministry.

⁷⁷ AAAI, 2232/1971. The question referred originally to the mass for children and the reading performed by children. The response is more general, showing that in general the faithful are supposed to proclaim the readings, with the exception of the gospel.

In the last decades it has become fashionable to criticise the Council, to question the idea of *aggiornamento* and to challenge the legitimacy of the liturgical reform. Bishop Márton, who lived the Council in house arrest, after years spent in prison, identified entirely with its goals. He understood that the Church could fulfil its unchanging mission received from Christ only if it was able to recognise the changes that have marked the world, if it became capable to address this world, if it became solidarious with the world and had the problems of the time at heart. His exhortations addressed to priests, in which he emphasised the ministerial character and collegial dimension of priesthood, the need to understand the human person and to respect human values are as actual as decades ago.

The liturgical decrees of Áron Márton reflected faithfully the fundamental intentions of the Council and the liturgical reform. Unlike contemporary exponents of a “hermeneutic of continuity” that question the novelty brought by Vatican II, bishop Márton was deeply aware of and committed to the renewal initiated by the Council, including the renewal of the liturgy. In the same time, his wisdom and authority prevented the chaotic developments that occurred in some other parts of the world. The conciliar decrees were applied with some delay, and this was no doubt a disadvantage, but it had the advantage of preventing hasty decisions.

The bishop endorsed the active participation of the faithful in the liturgy, their preparation for a conscious and active participation, and understood that the vernacular served this goal. The introduction of the liturgical reform was paired with the preparation of the priests, through a number of circular letters and homilies. The bishop emphasised the importance of the Scripture, the need to prepare for preaching and to teach the faithful the basics of the liturgy. The aura surrounding the bishop, his incredible moral authority explains the rather smooth application of the liturgical reform and the absence of any significant opposition.

The application of the conciliar decrees, notably the introduction of the liturgical texts created a certain liturgical and spiritual unity between the Transylvanian and the Hungarian Catholic Church, since the Transylvanian dioceses took over the translations prepared in Hungary. However, this relationship was one-sided, as the Transylvanian Catholic Church was not invited to participate in the translation of the liturgical texts and the editing of the liturgical books.

MÓZES NÓDA

Fifty years are not a long period in the life of a council, but are a long time in the life of a community and of the individual believer. The novelty of Vatican II, the *aggiornamento* can become history, if it is merely preserved in documents that raise the interest of researchers, but its spirit can easily vanish. Nowadays we witness a standstill, a certain tacit resignation. In some circles, the defensive, apologetic style has returned. In many parishes the church is not a community with open doors, but a sort of private enterprise of the priest, a limited company, and the ability to carry out a dialogue with the faithful or the world vanishes. While the priests bury themselves in a one man's ministry, the lay, in the absence of recognition and encouragement, limit themselves to consume the services offered by the church.

The festive commemoration of the past does not provide in itself answers for contemporary questions and challenges, but remembering the original intentions can provide some valuable insights. In spite of the political and social changes that have occurred during the past fifty years and the new challenges that confront the Church today, the spirituality of the Council is as actual as it was at the time, and its principles have to be adapted and applied to the new conditions. The celebration of the fifty years of Vatican II and in particular of the Liturgical Constitution is a good opportunity to weigh the significance of these events and to learn the lessons for today, both in the universal Church and in the local Churches.