

**The Second Vatican Council as an impetus to the New Evangelization
in the Greek Catholic Church in Slovakia**

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Résumé

In the paper, the author deals with the New Evangelization in the Greek Catholic Church in Slovakia. The Second Vatican Council was the impetus which started it. The author also deals with the historical context of the introduction of the council documents to the life of local Church. Also, he deals with the comparison between the Year of Faith and Cyril-Methodian Jubilee, which were celebrated by the Church at the end of the sixties of the last century, and the Year of Faith and Cyril-Methodian Jubilee, which is going to be celebrated this and next year. The author also discusses some of the specific impetuses and their implementation in the past and at present. The paper seems to be an appropriate introduction to the issue of the New Evangelization in the context of The Second Vatican Council.

Keywords

The Second Vatican Council. New Evangelization. Greek Catholic Church in Slovakia. The Year of Faith. Saint Cyril and Saint Methodius. Laypeople. Youth. Lay movements. Pastoral centres.

Introduction and explanation of the title of the paper

The term *new evangelization* cannot be found in the documents of The Second Vatican Council nor even in the *Evangelii nuntiandi* by Paul VI. The term was initially introduced to the life of the Church by blessed John Paul II, when he used it for the first time on 9th June 1979, in the homily during the liturgical celebration in the Sanctuary of the Saint Cross in Mogila in Poland. But then, it was still “without specific accent or concrete idea about its role in the future”. He used it once again in Latin America, at 19th meeting of the CELAM (Latin American Episcopal conference) in Port au Prince on Haiti, on 9th March 1983 during his

speech.¹ Gradually, the term of New Evangelization has become one of the most frequently used terms in the Catholic Church. So it is latter-day term in the Church, which can be included in the post-conciliar period.

However, in the preparatory working document for the Synod of Bishops about *The new evangelization for the transmission of the Christian faith*, which is taking place in October 2012 in Rome, we can find the text, which makes a connection between ideas of the Second Vatican Council and the term of the *new evangelization*: “Ever since the Second Vatican Council, the New Evangelization has increasingly presented itself as an appropriate, timely tool in addressing the challenges of a rapidly-changing world, and the way to respond to God's generosity in our being gathered together by the Holy Spirit to experience God as the Father of us all and to bear witness and proclaim to all the Good News – the Gospel – of Jesus Christ.”²

Hence, according to the text mentioned above, I allowed myself to call the Second Vatican Council an impetus to the New Evangelization in the Greek Catholic Church in Slovakia. This council prepared the way to find new forms of the transmission of faith, responding thus to the new challenges of rapidly changing world. The council was pastoral, therefore evangelizing. In *Evangelii nuntiandi*, Paul VI wrote that council's conclusions can be summed up into one: to make the Church ever better fitted for preaching the Gospel to the people of these days.³ “And we added that in order to give a valid answer to the demands of the Council which call for our attention, it is absolutely necessary for us to take into account a heritage of faith that the Church has the duty of preserving in its untouchable purity, and of presenting it to the people of our time, in a way that is as understandable and persuasive as possible.”⁴ “The Second Vatican Council was defined as a «missionary council».”⁵

It is important to remind ourselves the words of the Holy Father Benedict XVI, who often says, that we cannot perceive the Second Vatican Council as a breakthrough, but as a part of the continuity of the Church. “The Church remains same before and after the council – one, holy, catholic and apostolic during the ages. When we read and understand the Second Vatican Council with the correct hermeneutics, it can be growing source of power to

¹ See in: BISKUPSKÁ SYNODA: 13. riadne valné zhromaždenie Biskupskej synody Nová evanjelizácia na odovzdávanie kresťanskej viery – Lineamenta. In: <http://www.kbs.sk/?cid=1306308633>, loc. 5, (17.05.2012).

² BISKUPSKÁ SYNODA: 13. riadne valné zhromaždenie Biskupskej synody Nová evanjelizácia na odovzdávanie kresťanskej viery – Lineamenta. In: <http://www.kbs.sk/?cid=1306308633>, loc. 1, (17.05.2012).

³ See in: PAVOL VI.: *Evangelii nuntiandi*. <http://kbs.sk/?cid=1117103183>, loc. 2 (28.05.2012).

⁴ PAVOL VI.: *Evangelii nuntiandi*. <http://kbs.sk/?cid=1117103183>, loc. 3 (28.05.2012).

⁵ KAROTEMPREL, S. a kol.: *Nasledovanie Krista v misiách. Príručka misiológie*. Trnava : SSV v spolupráci s Pápežskými misijnými dielami v Bratislave, 2000, p. 16.

restoration of Church for us.”⁶ The hermeneutics of the continuity is important in relation to the documents of the Second Vatican Council, as well as the hermeneutics of reform, as it takes into consideration what is already being there, and in respect of truth, it applies to changed, or new conditions. Truly, the Second Vatican Council can be called an impulse, or source, for constantly needed restoration of the Church, which appears to be a priority nowadays.

Context of the New Evangelization

In 2010, the Holy Father Benedict XVI established the Pontifical Council for Promoting the New Evangelization and has convened the Synod of Bishops in October 2012 which will be dealing with the New Evangelization for the transmission of the Christian faith. We can already see the outline of this synod in its preparatory document *Lineamenta*.

In 2007, the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith issued important and specific document *Doctrinal note on some aspects of evangelization*, also many boards of the Church and the Eastern Catholic Churches deal with the questions of evangelization. For example, from 29th of November to 9th of December 2009, the Synod of the Ukrainian Greek Catholic Church in Lviv was dealing with the questions of evangelization. Also, the Greek Catholic bishops met in Oradea in Romania from 3rd to 6th of November 2011 to discuss the contribution of the Eastern Catholic Churches in Europe to the new evangelization. Necessity of the evangelization is also emphasized in the documents and homilies of the Holy Father and of our bishops as well.

We must see the connections. The New Evangelization is one of the main themes in the Church at present. Many of us might like the term *new evangelization*. But there is a question whether we actually know what the New Evangelization is about?

“When attempting to make a comprehensive definition of the New Evangelization, we are at the risk of not considering the richness and complexity of its nature. [...] The New Evangelization requires the ability to justify its faith, to present Jesus Christ, Son of God, the only Saviour of Mankind. According to this ability we will be able to offer the answer, which people expect. The New Evangelization arises from the conviction, that grace can change a heart until it is changed and also from the credibility of our testimony.”⁷

⁶ BENEDIKT XVI.: Príhovor na predvianočnom stretnutí s kardinálmi, arcibiskupmi, biskupmi a členmi Rímskej kúrie v Klementínskej sále 22.12.2005. In: *Pápež Benedikt XVI. vyhodnotil rok 2005*. <http://pda.tkkbs.sk/view.php?cislocianku=20060103019> (18.05.2012).

⁷ FISICHELLA, R.: Príhovor predsedu Pápežskej rady na podporu novej evanjelizácie Mons. Rina Fisichellu na stretnutí zodpovedných za novú evanjelizáciu. In: <http://www.kbs.sk/?cid=1327055827> (10.02.2012).

When Church celebrated 30th anniversary of the end of the first part of the Council, under John XXIII, on 8th December 1992, Otto Hermann Pesch wrote at the beginning of his book on the Second Vatican Council these words: “On the basis of historical experiences, the historians regard fifty years as the period necessary for «reception» of the council, that is its conscious implementation to the Church life. Thus, we still have some time – it is exactly calculated to 2015.”⁸ Based on this argument, the time has almost expired. The half of a century from the opening and closing of the council is coming. This year (2012) already marks the 50th anniversary of the beginning of the council and inexorably approaching the 50th anniversary of the end of the council – 2015. Today, the question where we have moved since the Second Vatican Council is even more urgent.

If we accept the argument that the Second Vatican Council was an impetus for the New Evangelization, and we also see that the New Evangelization is very relevant in the Church today, this paper wants to be the introduction to the closer look on the facts, what the Second Vatican Council actually offered as impetuses to the restoration, and how has the Greek Catholic Church in Slovakia managed to implement these impetuses to its life during the period of 50 years.

Historical context

Although this paper wants to be more pastoral than historical, it is important to note the fact that during the Second Vatican Council, the Greek Catholic Church was prohibited in Slovakia, or in the former Czechoslovakia⁹, as well as in other socialist countries around. It could not work publicly – in Czechoslovakia it lasted from 1950 to 1968. Although its activity was restored during the Prague Spring, the hard normalization in the seventies of the last century (after the invasion by the Warsaw Pact troops into Czechoslovakia and the subsequent non-democratic political situation) condemned the Greek Catholic Church to the role of the unwanted Church for a totalitarian state. This situation lasted till the Velvet Revolution in November 1989. Since 1990, we can talk about its free life. Hence, when the Church in the world was already preparing for the 30th anniversary of the beginning of the Council, the Greek Catholic Church in Czechoslovakia only then started full reception of the Council to its life with the delay of 30 years.

⁸ PESCH, O. H.: *Druhý vatikánský koncil 1962 – 1965. Příprava, průběh, odkaz*. Praha : Vyšehrad, spol. s. r. o., 1996, p. 24 – 25.

⁹ Slovakia is an independent state from 1st January 1993 and Czech Republic too. Until 1993 they were part of the common state Czechoslovakia.

However, we cannot say that the introduction of the Council in the Greek Catholic Church in Czechoslovakia has affected the Greek Catholics only since 1990. Massiveness of the Council testimonies could not avoid the Church whose official existence was forbidden, though it did not cease to exist in lives and sufferings of its blessed bishops – bishop of Prešov, Pavel Peter Gojdič OSBM, who died in prison in 1960 and his auxiliary bishop Vasil' Hopko, priests, monks, nuns and plenty of lay believers.

The voice of a silenced Church at the Council

About the unfortunate position of the Greek Catholic Church in Czechoslovakia spoke bishop Michal Rusnák CSsR¹⁰ – auxiliary bishop of Izidor Borecký in Toronto and visitor to the Slovak Greek Catholics in Canada, later on bishop of the Slovak Greek Catholics in Toronto, in his address on 26th September 1965, when the Council Fathers discussed 13th scheme of constitution *Gaudium et Spes*. He also said: “The whole diocese of Prešov in Slovakia, which is of the Byzantine-Slavonic rite and has more than three hundred-thousand souls, was declared non-existent in 1950 by casual administrative act of the government and it is still under the strict control. Its believers are not allowed to attend Latin Church rites and to receive the sacraments from Latin Church priests. The priests of this diocese chose hard manual work rather than turning to the forced orthodoxy.” John Babjak SJ, the archbishop and metropolitan of Prešov noticed: “I do not know whether we are fully aware of the fact that the bishop, who became a voice of a silenced Greek Catholic Church in Slovakia, was at such a forum as the Second Vatican Council. It claims our great thank to the bishop Michal Rusnák.” In the end of his address, he demanded the Council Fathers to extend the paragraph on atheism, but he also demanded a separate declaration on theoretical and practical communism and its relation to religion.¹¹

Karol Wojtyła, archbishop of Krakow also spoke about the 13th scheme. That is, some bishops were not silent about the situation in the socialist countries. However, the communism was not included in the council documents, finally. The archbishop of Krakow was afflicted with this.¹² Certainly, many others were afflicted as well. Otto H. Pesch sees it

¹⁰ The bishop Michal Rusnák CSsR came from Slovakia

¹¹ See in: BABJAK, J.: Hlas umlčanej Cirkvi. Prejav gréckokatolíckeho biskupa Michala Rusnáka CSsR na Druhom vatikánskom koncile. In: RYDLO, J. M.: *Bzovík. Jubilejník k 75. narodeninám veľkodušného človeka Jána Hnilicu, člena Slovenského ústavu*. Bratislava : Libri Historiae, o. z. v spolupráci s Vydavateľstvom Dobrá kniha v Trnave, 2011, p. 95.

¹² See in: ODER, S. – GAETA, S.: *Prečo svätý? Zákulisie procesu blahorečenia Jána Pavla II.* Bratislava : Karmelitánske nakladateľstvo, 2010, p. 40 – 41.

in the wider context. According to him, only Patriarchy of Moscow reacted negatively from all the scrutators from non-catholic churches invited to the Council. Under such conditions, many others orthodox churches did not want to participate at the Council, as they did not want to avoid oppressed Russian Church. Blessed John XXIII., tried to make the first contact with Nikita Chruščov (Khrushchev), the first man of Kremel', in the way as not to arouse mistrust in the Roman Curia or in western countries. This pope's endeavour resulted as being provident when the Cuban crisis broke out and the world was on the edge of the atom war. The Vatican gain the trust of the both sides and to a great extent helped to overcome the crisis as intermediary between the Soviet Union and the USA. In Pesch's opinion, it definitively helped in the issue of the orthodox scrutators. Vatican showed Moscow that "council does not speak up politically or with a judgement to political issues." Finally, the Orthodox Church sent its official deputies as scrutators.¹³ This may be seen as the reason why the voice of the bishops from the communistic countries (mostly, they were not allowed to come at the council) remained unheard.

The totality of the communist ideology raged in the former Czechoslovakia, similarly like in the whole socialist block. This socio-political context is very important in order to understand how the spirit of the post-counciliar Church could come to this country.

At the time, when the invitations on the Second Vatican Council were arriving, the bishop of Prešov – blessed Pavel Peter Gojdič OSBM was already dead for two years and blessed bishop Vasil' Hopko was still in the prison where he received the information about the opening of the council. "Towards the end of the spring of 1962 bishops Vojtaššák, Zela and Hlad received the invitations on the Council, what caused sensation in the prison. Bishop Hopko did not receive the invitation and was sad, as he thought that Vatican did not appreciate him as a legal bishop and that some priests were telling lies about him. But on the other hand, it could be maliciousness of the prison management, which did not get him the invitation. Eventually, they did not let any of the bishops from prison on the Second Vatican Council to Rome. Because of these reactions of bishop Hopko, we can see his interest in the Greek Catholic Church in Slovakia and also his faithfulness to the Holy Father."¹⁴

The year of Faith 1967 – 1968

¹³ PESCH, O. H.: *Druhý vatikánský koncil 1962 – 1965. Příprava, průběh, odkaz*. Praha : Vyšehrad, spol. s r. o., 1996, p. 92.

¹⁴ HROMNÍK, M.: *Blahoslavený Vasil Hopko*. Trnava : Vydavateľstvo Dobrá kniha, 2003, p. 29 – 30.

On May 21, 2012, archbishop Agostino Marchetta, one of the co-authors of the new book about the Second Vatican Council, entitled *Keys for understanding the Second Vatican Council through the eyes of Benedict XVI*, said during the presentation of the book for the Radio Vaticana that another key of Benedict XVI to the interpretation of the council, besides the key of continuity, is his vision in the light of The Year of Faith. “The key to understanding of the council is also the faith: we have to remember that it is not possible to understand the Church if we do not look at it with the eyes of faith, if we do not accept the presence of the Holy Spirit, for example, especially during the ecumenical council.”¹⁵ We know that the year of the faith already took place in the Catholic Church, during the pontificate of the pope Paul VI, who announced it in 1967, on the 1900th anniversary of martyrdom of the Saint Apostles Peter and Paul. It lasted from their holiday on 29th June 1967 to 29th June 1968. There are no coincidences in God’s will. Similarly, we cannot perceive the fact that the Greek Catholic Church in the former Czechoslovakia arouse to life during the Year of Faith as a coincidence. The Greek Catholic Church was loyal to Peter — Holy Father and this was also the reason why it was prohibited. But on the other hand, it was resurrected to a new life because of it. Benedict XVI makes a connection between the Year of Faith during the pontificate of Paul VI and the Year of Faith, which was declared on the occasion of the 50th anniversary of the opening of the Second Vatican Council: “In some respects, my venerable predecessor saw this Year as a consequence and a necessity of the postconciliar period, fully conscious of the grave difficulties of the time, especially with regard to the profession of the true faith and its correct interpretation. It seemed to me that timing the launch of the Year of Faith to coincide with the fiftieth anniversary of the opening of the Second Vatican Council would provide a good opportunity to help people understand that the texts bequeathed by the Council Fathers, in the words of Blessed John Paul II, «have lost nothing of their value or brilliance. They need to be read correctly, to be widely known and taken to heart as important and normative texts of the Magisterium, within the Church's Tradition ... I feel more than ever in duty bound to point to the Council as the great grace bestowed on the Church in the twentieth century: there we find a sure compass by which to take our bearings in the century now beginning». I would also like to emphasize strongly what I had occasion to say concerning the Council a few months after my election as Successor of Peter: «if we interpret and implement it guided by a right

¹⁵ TK KBS: *Vyšla kniha pre správne pochopenie II. vatikánskeho koncilu.*
<http://tkkbs.sk/view.php?cisloclanku=20120522033> (25.05.2012).

hermeneutic, it can be and can become increasingly powerful for the ever necessary renewal of the Church».”¹⁶

After the eighteen years of its prohibition by the totalitarian regime, the Greek Catholic Church in Czechoslovakia needed the real restoration. This is the reason why the council documents have become a great reinforcement to it.

When Alexander Dubček became the first secretary of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of Czechoslovakia in January 1968, he started universal renewal of life, based on the motto: *socialism with a human face*. The Greek Catholic Church began to claim its rights because it had endured much in the previous years.

“According to the Government Decree no.70/1968 Coll. of 13th June 1968 the Greek Catholic Church was again permitted.”¹⁷

Also, Pope Paul VI in his apostolic letter *Antiquae nobilitatis* (2nd February 1969) on the occasion of 1100th anniversary of St. Cyril’s death, dedicated especially to bishops, clergy and believers from Czechoslovakia, in the second part of the letter, described his feelings and pleasure about the news of the Greek Catholic Church in Czechoslovakia: “We remember that, just as news about the state of the Greek Catholic Church pleased us – we hope this state will ever improve – we also trust there will be sufficient conditions for legal organization of the Church in Slovakia.”¹⁸ However, this was already in time after the invasion of the Warsaw Pact troops into Czechoslovakia on 21st August 1968. “This day braked many things and ruined every hope, even threatened re-disposal of the Church. They were looking for a way how to do it. From 21st August 1968 to 17th November 1989 the Greek Catholic Church was suffering and suffered. It was the period full of injustice and lawlessness.”¹⁹ Incoming normalization began to return everything to its previous, abnormal state.

It is noteworthy, that in such a short time, from January to August 1968, the Greek Catholic Church was restored and priests could go back to their homes and to the people entrusted to them. It was God’s grace which the Greek Catholic priests and ThDr. Vasil’ Hopko, auxiliary bishop and already blessed now, could promptly and markedly cooperate with. The bishop of Prešov, blessed Pavel Peter Gojdič OSBM died on 17th July 1960 in prison. Certainly, his martyrdom, contributed to the restoration of the Greek Catholic Church, too. This thought leads one to the great idea: that God granted a short time to show his power

¹⁶ BENEDIKT XVI.: *Porta fidei*. Apostolic letter *Motu proprio* for the indiction of the Year of Faith. loc. 5. <http://www.kbs.sk/?cid=1322062477> (25.05.2012).

¹⁷ SZÉKELY, G. – MESÁROŠ, A.: *Gréckokatolíci na Slovensku*. Košice : Slovo a.s., 1997, p. 26.

¹⁸ See in: PAVOL VI.: *Antiquae nobilitatis*. *Apoštolský list na 1100. výročie smrti sv. Cyrila* (2. februára 1969), <http://www.kbs.sk/?cid=1117103147> (25.09.2007).

¹⁹ SEMAN, J.: *A znova žijeme*. Prešov : Spolok biskupa Petra Pavla Gojdiča, 1997, p. 71.

and love in a visible way on the Greek Catholic Church. And although everything turned to original its conditions after the August '68, it is at least very interesting that the Greek Catholic Church could exist publicly, however limited it was. It was a tangible grace of God.

Beginning of the introduction of the council in the Cyril-Methodian context

The big success of the period was that in 1969 the publication of *Slovo* (The Word) began, the official magazine of the Greek Catholic Church in Slovakia, and it has been published since then. The fact that *Slovo* has been published even during the totality without the interruption until now can be considered a miracle. In the zero issue, or in the occasional printing with the title *The Word to 1100th anniversary of St. Cyril's death*²⁰ from 14th February 1969, the author²¹ started his contribution with greeting *Sláva Isusu Christu!*,²² its author wrote six points, which are still, even after many decades, relevant. The year 1969 was the Jubilee Year of Ss Cyril and Methodius in the Catholic Church in Czechoslovakia. Similarly, the Jubilee Year of 1150th anniversary of the of Ss Cyril and Method arrival to our region starts on 5th July 2012 in Slovakia (also in Czech Republic) and 11th October 2012 is the date of the beginning of the Year of Faith in the Catholic Church. Thus, these two years will overlap in our country. It is something similar to the situation after the restoration of our Church in the year 1968 and 1969, the Year of Faith and Cyril-Methodian year. In this context, I would like to draw our attention to the Slav Apostles – Saints missionaries Cyril and Methodius, who spiritually stand near us during the resurrection and restoration of our Church. We hope that they will also accompany us when celebrating the 50th anniversary of the opening of the Second Vatican Council as well as when looking back on what has happened over the years in the reception of the council documents to life of our local church.

The *Sláva Isusu Christu* paper²³ among the other things also states: “We enter Cyril-Methodian year in the name of God, in the hope of the intercession of the Virgin Mary and the saints Slav apostles Cyril and Methodius – with decision: [...]” What follows are six points in which we can distinctly feel the impact of the documents of the Second Vatican Council and

²⁰ This zero issue was not allowed magazine, but it was only occasional printing which was a precursor of the magazine *Slovo*. The 1st and 2nd issue were published in July 1969.

²¹ Although the author is not signed, based on the dialogue between me and Mgr. Pavol Kušnir – a member of the redaction – I found that author of this contribution was secret Greek Catholic priest and scientist – bibliographer Michal Fedor SJ from Košice. More information you can find in the contribution PETRÍK, L.: *Publikačná činnosť gréckokatolíckych kňazov v časopise Slovo*. In: PAĽA, G. – GRADOŠ, J. (eds.): *Slovo – vývoj a perspektívy*. Prešov : Prešovská univerzita Gréckokatolícka teologická fakulta, 2009, p. 107 – 122.

²² In English: it is greeting – Glory to Jesus Christ!

²³ *Sláva Isusu Christu!* In: *Slovo k 1100. výročiu úmrtia svätého Cyrila*. Košice : Gréckokatolícky biskupský úrad, 1969, p. 3 – 4.

the influence of the conciliar renewing atmosphere, which came to the Church after the council. It would be appropriate to address in detail each of them. At least, it can be briefly stated that the first point deals with the deepening of the faith and growing up in it. "In the preaching of the Christ and his salvation we can see the starting point and aim of our mission." The greater emphasis is to be put on catechization at schools, because of it, methodical instructions will be published and catechist's courses will be organized. "In your parishes, there will be youth liturgies with the series of homilies for them during the year. There will also be regular spiritual exercises for the priests and the believers." The second point, which deals with the liturgy, exclusively mentions the Second Vatican Council: "After the period of 1100 years, the Second Vatican Council realized the fact that every liturgy must be understandable to people, the fact which our liturgy is based on. Our measures will not be managed only by theme of modernity but also by prudent pastoral aims. We will organize cantor courses to improve and simplify the liturgical chants." The third point deals with maintaining of vigorous love and loyalty to the Holy Father along the lines of Saints Cyril and Methodius and to the Church authority as such. Also there is noticed that: "We will remove all elements that disrupt spiritual-religious-ecclesiastical unity of Catholics. In this year we undergo the specific steps to solve tasks of lenten and holiday discipline, to clarify religious-legal married and register tasks." The fourth point talks about the dialogue: "In the dialogue, it means to gladly accommodate to each other, we can see call of Christ to the world today. [...] It will be about understanding and willing encounter with conditions and attitudes of the Greek Catholic Church (older opinions: new needs, priests: lay people, older generation: youth generation). We would like to establish fraternal inter-rite connections. Finally, we want to create new conditions and to seek new forms to meet with people of other faiths. In every occasion, we will observe necessary conditions of the dialogue: the love, the truth, the justice, the liberty." In the fifth point, the paper says: "The Greek Catholics will purposefully work on their self-awareness." The sixth point says that the Greek Catholics are open to the world: They will distinguish the living tradition from the tying traditions. They want to understand needs of the time and they want to accommodate to people's desires. The following conclusion states that the Greek Catholics want to place these points through the intercession of Saints Cyril and Methodius.²⁴ Almost with no change, it is possible to use these words at the beginning of the Jubilee Cyril-Methodian year 2012/2013. The previous contribution says at least about the author's knowledge of documents of the Council.

²⁴ See in: Sláva Isusu Christu! In: *Slovo k 1100. výročiu úmrtia svätého Cyrila*. Košice : Gréckokatolícky biskupský úrad, 1969, p. 3 – 4.

In the first years after the Council, there were the documents of the Second Vatican Council published in two pocket-sized volumes in Slovak language. First one was published as annex to the magazine for catholic clergy – *Duchovný pastier*²⁵ – in 1969 (with permission from 1967).²⁶ It contains four constitutions. The second book was published in 1972.²⁷ It contains other documents – nine decrees and three declarations. At the time of totality these books were given to theologians on Cyril-Methodian Faculty of Theology in Bratislava,²⁸ although the subject of the Documents of the Second Vatican Council was not taught.

The contribution *Sláva Isusu Christu* is followed by *Niečo z dekrétu o východných cirkvách katolíckych*,²⁹ (Excerpts from the decree on the Eastern Catholic Churches) written by rev. Ján Ďurkáň. In the beginning, he explained the title of the decree, then wrote out some important texts and in the conclusion he wrote: “The challenge to honor our own rite, keep it and work on its bloom is so urgent for us all.”³⁰

Bishop Vasil' Hopko and Bishop Ján Hirka wrote at the first page in united first and second volume of the Greek Catholic magazine *Slovo*: “The Second Vatican Council concentrated all stock of intellectual capacities to find the appropriate word which would be the basis for fruitful dialogue with all people of good will. It was not an easy task but they were not afraid and they tried to find a word which would be understood by all people of good will, despite the current pluralistic society.”³¹ Then there are other articles which are clearly mentioned by Jozef Jurko in his publication *Prienik koncilových dokumentov, zámerov, myšlienok cez SLOVO na Slovensko a Košickú arcidiecézu IV. (1969 – 2008)*.³²

Also, book calendars of the Greek Catholic Church in Slovakia did not keep silence about the Second Vatican Council. In the first calendar after restoration of the Greek Catholic Church activities in Slovakia in 1969, rev. Ján Mastiliak CSsR introduced to the Greek Catholics the Second Vatican Council. He did it in extensive, but on the other hand clear

²⁵ In English: The Shepherd.

²⁶ *Dokumenty Druhého vatikánskeho koncilu I.* Trnava : SSV v CN Bratislava, 1969.

²⁷ *Dokumenty Druhého vatikánskeho koncilu II.* Trnava : SSV v CN Bratislava, 1972.

²⁸ It was only the one Faculty of Theology and seminary of the Catholic Church in Slovakia where also Greek Catholic theologians studied and were formed.

²⁹ In English: Something from the decree about Eastern Catholic Churches.

³⁰ ĎURKÁŇ, J.: Niečo z dekrétu o východných cirkvách katolíckych. In: *Slovo k 1100. výročiu úmrtia svätého Cyrila*. Košice : Gréckokatolícky biskupský úrad, 1969, p. 4 – 5.

³¹ HOPKO, V. – HIRKA, J.: Dnes vstupujeme... (nie je to názov, ale prvé slová článku). In: *Slovo. Časopis gréckokatolíkov*. Trnava : SSV v CN Bratislava, 1969, vol. 1., no. 1 – 2, p. 1.

³² In English: The effect of the conciliar documents, plans and ideas through the magazine *The Word* in Slovakia and in Archdiocese in Košice. JURKO, J.: *Prienik koncilových dokumentov, zámerov, myšlienok cez SLOVO na Slovensko a Košickú arcidiecézu IV. (1969 – 2008)*. Prešov : Tlačiareň Kušnír, 2009.

article with the title: *K tretiemu výročiu II. vatikánskeho snemu*,³³ (*On the 2nd anniversary of the Vatican Council*) on the occasion of the 3rd anniversary of the Council completion. It is very valuable contribution. After previous contribution is published contribution by rev. Andrej Zima with title: *Kto sú laici?*³⁴ (*Who are Lay people?*) Also contribution which is titled *Apoštolát? Nechať vyžarovať Krista!*³⁵ (*Apostolate? Let Christ Radiate!*) which is without author,³⁶ is also very valuable. These articles are still so clear and current and filled with fresh spirit of the Council that they should be published in separate edition. For example, in the calendar from 1971, it is possible to sense the totalitarian normalization, but on the pages 9 – 31 there are short quotes from the documents of the Second Vatican Council under the annual reports. I mention these facts to document in order to show that fact of the Council has not appeared in the life of our local church only after the arrival of democracy in 1990 but it has been a part of the Greek Catholic Church life in Slovakia since the Second Vatican Council although totalitarian state limited it. It is necessary to say that it was not only about the articles in restoring the Greek Catholic press but it was also about the transformation of the Second Vatican Council teaching to the lives of the Greek Catholics believers although it was limited.

Some specific impetuses to the New Evangelization and their implementation

It is difficult to simply define the New Evangelization, because it includes a very wide range of the Church activity. It is easier to say what it is: the gospel of Jesus Christ, kerygma that Jesus Christ died for us and he resurrected, and how this kerygma – living Jesus Christ effectively transmit to man today. “The Church is here for preaching the Gospel.”³⁷ This is a renewal of faith and trust in Jesus Christ and his Church. It is concerned with the salvation of man. In order to evangelize, we need to be evangelized in the first place: “The Church as evangelist begins by evangelizing itself.”³⁸ Our view of the New Evangelization is certainly clarified by the Synod of Bishops, which is to be held in October 2012 in Rome, and

³³ In English: The 3rd anniversary of the Second Vatican Council. MASTILIAK, J.: *K tretiemu výročiu II. vatikánskeho snemu*. In: *Kalendár gréckokatolíkov 1969*. Trnava : SSV v CN Bratislava, 1969, p. 72 – 79.

³⁴ In English: Who are lay people? ZIMA, A.: *Kto sú laici?* In: *Kalendár gréckokatolíkov 1969*. Trnava : SSV v CN Bratislava, 1969, p. 79 – 81.

³⁵ In English: Apostolate? Let the Christ shine! *Apoštolát? Nechať vyžarovať Krista!* In: *Kalendár gréckokatolíkov 1969*. Trnava : SSV v CN Bratislava, 1969, p. 82 – 83.

³⁶ The author of contribution might be rev. Ján Seman who is signed in the next article *The God is not fiction!...* Also the author might be rev. Michal Fedor SJ who was “soul” of editors of this calendar. This opinion is based on dialogue with Pavol Kušnir.

³⁷ PAVOL VI.: *Evangelii nuntiandi*. <http://kbs.sk/?cid=1117103183>, loc. 14 (28.05.2012).

³⁸ PAVOL VI.: *Evangelii nuntiandi*. <http://kbs.sk/?cid=1117103183>, loc. 14 (28.05.2012).

especially the Post-Synodal Apostolic Exhortation by the Holy Father, which is expected after its ending.

In this part of our contribution, we would like to highlight some specific aspects of the new evangelization in the Greek Catholic Church in Slovakia, which found their impetus in the council and began gradually, some still in totality, other implemented since 1990.

“Pope John XXIII. wanted to convene a council mainly to empower the Church to work in today's world (aggiornamento).”³⁹ Dogmatic Constitution *Lumen Gentium* is very important, as it represents a grand synthesis of how the Church understands itself and its universal mission. The importance of the people of God as such is getting to the forefront, because the Church - these are mainly religious people – men and women. And these people of God are of primary importance. They form a visible sign of the presence of God in the world.⁴⁰ The Holy Spirit “sanctifies, leads and virtues decorate not only the people of God through the sacraments and services, but also that divides the faithful of all states of the special grace – «everybody wants to like» (1 Cor 12, 11) – through which He makes them able and willing to undertake a variety of useful tasks and work to restore and build up the Church, as it is written: «Everyone is given the manifestation of the Spirit for the common good» (1 Cor 12, 7). These charismas, whether unusual or common and widespread, should be taken with gratitude and satisfaction, particularly as the needs of the Church and to its benefit. [...] To judge their accuracy and correct use is only on those who are superior in the Church and particularly on those whose role is not to quench the Spirit, but to examine everything and stick to what is good (cf. 1 Thess 5, 12 and 19 – 21)” (LG 12). Even under those words, in the church there was a rapprochement between clergy and laity. Although there had been created some lay movements prior to the council, we are not talking here about the movements of ancient history, such as Movement of St. Francis, the reform movement of Cluny and the like, but the new movement, for example Focolare, Communion and Liberation, yet their flourishing and clear integration within the context of the Church as God's people occurred only with the teachings of the council about the Church. Most of them have arisen from the council. Even in the Greek Catholic Church in Slovakia, the movements have begun to establish themselves. In particular, with the advent of democracy and openness to the world of our society, we can better understand that the Holy Spirit also acts in this manner to save many.

³⁹ MORIN, D.: *Učení II. vatikánskeho koncilu*. Praha : Nakladatelství Paulínky, 1999, p. 23.

⁴⁰ See in: MORIN, D.: *Učení II. vatikánskeho koncilu*. Praha : Nakladatelství Paulínky, 1999, p. 24.

Already during the totality, some Greek Catholic priests and lay people became familiar with the Focolare movement, and today is this Work of Mary known in the Greek Catholic Church in Slovakia. From the Greek Catholic priests, 7 are Focolarines and several priests sympathetic, who, for example, subscribe The word of life. There are no new parishes built in the spirit of the Focolare Movement in our local church, but there are a few parishes where also believers meet together and share the Word of life.

The movement Light – Life, oases movement is very intense among the Greek Catholics, which has its origin in Poland, and it has become known to the Greek Catholics in Slovakia during totality. Moreover, one priest from Prešov Greek Catholic archeparchy is moderator of the national movement in Slovakia since 2003. Each year, the oases are passed by about 200 people, mostly young from the Greek Catholic parishes. About 15 Greek Catholic Diocesan priests are engaged in the movement, but also the redemptorists and Sister Servants, lay people also.

John the Baptist Community has since 2007 has its Greek Catholic Reality directly in Prešov, which includes about 300 members and it is a Greek Catholic priest who is in charge, who is earmarked for this service. At the same time, other six Greek Catholic priests are among its members and many are supporters of its spirituality and participate in its spiritual activities.

Very useful activity among children in several Greek Catholic parishes is developed by eRko - Christian Children Communities Movement. Registered groups eRko are placed approximately in thirty-five Greek Catholic parishes and in about seventy parishes activity eRko – Christmas carol singing Dobrá novina (Good News) takes place. This movement is committed to several Greek Catholic priests and nuns, such as the Sisters of the order. Of St Basil the Great. The movement has also implemented a unique project for children in Slovakia – Christian Theatre Festival – Rybka (Fish). This year (2012) takes place, his eighth year. From 9 to 15 children's theater groups from Greek Catholic parishes participate in this festival.

The neocatechumenal way operates between the Greek Catholics in Slovakia since 1988, when its first community in Prešov was set up. Today, it consists of 14 communities between the Greek Catholics, about 350 people and about 20 priests who are on the neocatechumenal way, which is not movement in the strict sense of the word, but it is rather introducing to the Christian life in the service of bishops and priests.

We cannot left out Marian priest movement. In many parishes Cenacle of Mary are held. Among the latest of movements in our parishes, which are becoming very popular, belong the Prayers of mothers and Prayers of Fathers.

A few years ago, one of the Greek Catholic priests, along with several lay people, founded a Greek Catholic school of St. Nicholas of evangelization, which belongs to the International Group of Schools of Evangelism. The basis of the evangelizing work of the school is the Course Philip, who has already been held in dozens of parishes or it is carried out in the Greek Catholic pastoral centers. Then, in some parishes there is a group of people who are meeting with the Word of God. Evangelistic school provides them with materials for the meeting for the period of one year, after which they are offered a different course. Other courses include, for example, course Ruth for married couples, Samuel etc.

Even during the totality, the Christian Families movement was established in Slovakia, which is led by a Greek Catholic married couple. Some Greek Catholic believers and priests belong for example to the Charismatic Renewal in the Holy Spirit, to Cana Movement, to the Emanuel Community, to the Movement of Christian Youth Communities and to Catholic Scouting.

These movements allowed by the Church, have among other common denominators also one, that is, they offer people a small community in which their faith is formed very specifically. One of other common denominators is the missionary dimension of such a formation. That is, they prepare believers for very specific evangelization. Therefore, mostly unfounded criticism of these communities is not appropriate, just because they do not meet someone's tastes or expectations. The most important criterion is to obey the pastors of the Church and help people on the way of conversion. They are, of course, not the only way for God's people to become missionary, but they are definitely one of the most recent ways to the New Evangelization.

In this article, we cannot devote more space to this highly topical issue related to the New Evangelization, but it was at least enough in order to illustrate that in the Greek Catholic Church in Slovakia, thank to the council, still more and more is the Church perceived as people of God. "All people are called to a new community of people of God. Therefore, these people, though they remain the one and only, has to be spread all around the world and across all ages, to meet the intention of the will of God [...]" (LG 13).⁴¹ *Lumen Gentium* speaks with

⁴¹ More about lay movements and new evangelization in the contributions: PETRÍK, Ľ.: Nová evanjelizácia cez malé spoločenstvá v Gréckokatolíckej cirkvi na Slovensku. In: *Význam „malých spoločenstiev“ a ich vzťah k farnosti*. Nitra : Kňazský seminár sv. Gorazda, 2005, p. 36 – 45.; PETRÍK, Ľ.: Nová evanjelizácia na

great respect for the role of the laity, which is then specifically elaborated in Decree on the Apostolate of the Laity *Apostolicam Actuositatem*. We contemplate the place of lay people in the Greek Catholic Church. Perhaps, we are too concerned with their place in the temple, in the celebration of the liturgy, where we cannot offer them much space for the self-realization besides active participation in liturgical celebrations and some services, such as the cantor, ministers, acolytes, choir singing and the like. The Council and the New Evangelization, however, invite us to see the laypeople outside the temple, because “in the Church there is diversity of services, but unity of mission” (AA 2). This mission is apostolate – evangelization. “Lay people have a vocation from God to ignite Christian spirit, a way to leaven carried out his apostolate in the world” (AA 2). “All Christian believers thus have a noble duty to ensure that all people around the world know and accept the divine message of salvation” (AA 3). Here it is worth noting that when we talk about faithfulness to the Greek Catholic Church and the suffering, we cannot overlook the fact that not only bishops, many priests and religious, but also many Greek Catholic believers with God's help, persisted and did not deny Christ, his Church, the Holy Father and remain faithful to their conscience. After the resurrection of the Church in 1968, many lay people were involved in its restoration. I do not think only of the curatorial groups in the parish, now the parish pastoral council and the economic, but also some individuals who were involved in the reconstruction of the Greek Catholic Church and in the reconstruction of its press, for example.⁴²

This view of the laity is closely related to youth, to which the Second Vatican Council also pays attention. “Adults may seek to establish a friendly dialogue with young people, regardless of the age difference, to know each other internally and mutually enriching” (AA 12). The young, even children, are invited by *Apostolicam Actuositatem* to be Apostles, especially among their peers. “Adults may encourage the young to the apostolate, especially by example, and when they saw an opportunity, also by wise counsel and effective help” (AA 12). When talking about children and youth, it is appropriate to incorporate their catechization into these coordinates.

The priests of the Greek Catholic Church after its restoration started to devote to catechism zealously. Where possible, they began to teach religion at schools, where it was not, they taught catechism in rectories and churches during and after liturgies, and they did so even despite the fact that they were managing several parishes, because of the lack of priests.

odovzdávanie kresťanskej viery. In: *V brázde Metodovej. Gréckokatolícky kalendár 2012*. Košice : Byzant s. r. o., 2011, p. 56 – 60.; PÁPEŽSKÁ RADA PRE LAIKOV: *Cirkevné hnutia v pastoračnej starostlivosti biskupov*. Bratislava : Vydavateľstvo Don Bosco, 2003.

⁴² For example, JUDr. Jozef Pichonský, Mgr. Pavol Kušnír and others.

Various meetings were held, which had to remain hidden from public authorities. They also used a variety of old catechisms, Roman Catholic as well, or they taught without catechism. In 1982, Father Stephen Papp elaborated *Biblical catechism of Greek Catholics*,⁴³ which was published in Slovak and Ukrainian languages, also under the same name. The author, in an excellent form through the biblical texts of the Old and New Testament, managed to explain the most basic teachings of the Church. A passage from the Scripture was always followed by the questions which at the same time served as discreet guidelines for the priest how to teach catechism. At that time, the biblical catechism fulfilled its role. It was the attractive way to help priests to teach religion.

After the fall of the totality, the new possibilities of catechization opened up. Religious education began to be taught in elementary and secondary schools. Therefore the Commission for catechesis of the Slovak Bishops Conference (KBS) initiated writing and publishing of textbooks for each grade of elementary and secondary schools, on the creation of which - version "Eastern Rite" – participated the Greek-catholic priests, too. So, nowadays, schools religion textbooks approved by the KBS are used in catechization. Biblical competitions are held every year.

Since the fall of totality, meetings of the Greek Catholic youth have been taking place on the regular basis during summer holidays. They are run in several turns, divided according to age group and are organized by the commission of young people. Over the last few years, they are held separately for Košice and Prešov. It has become a powerful phenomenon of the Greek Catholic Church work with youth in Slovakia. The topic is always identical with that which is annually offered to young people around the world by the Holy Father. To the effectiveness of these meetings, but mainly to the efficiency of perennial youth work in parishes significantly contributes purposeful training of animators in animation school in Prešov and Košice.

Meetings took place on Palm Sunday, there are meeting of the bishops with children who received the First Communion, tourist days, meeting of young people within their parishes, within protopresbyteries and so on.

The Greek Catholic metropolitan church sui iuris in Slovakia has several active pastoral centers of formation. For example, in Prešov archeparchy, is situated the Greek Catholic Youth Center in Bárka Juskova Voľa⁴⁴, where there is also a leisure center and school in the

⁴³ PAPP, Š.: *Biblický katechizmus pre gréckokatolíkov*. Trnava : SSV v CN Bratislava, 1982.

⁴⁴ 21st November 2008 – Consecration of the expanded and renovated premises of the Centre for youth n Juskova Voľa. But it had begun to work already on 1st August 2005.

countryside, The center for Family in Sigord – Prešov,⁴⁵ The center for Gipsy in Čičava⁴⁶ and the Greek Catholic Youth Pastoral Center for Secondary and University Students in Prešov.⁴⁷

But all this does not mean that we should not realize the problems which form the basis for the mission of the Church - the apostolate. For example, we are still not courageous enough to proclaim the Gospel outside the temples and pilgrimage sites, where people, although baptized, almost or completely do not feel like members of the Church, and there are also non-believers. Thus a lot of work is done for the reinforcement of faith of those who are religious or have a natural religiousness, but very little for those who do attend the temples and pilgrimage, or if so only sporadically. Some hope, however, is offered by lay religious movements, which seek specific forms to reach these people.

Other ideas to develop

It would be appropriate to deal with some other impetuses of the Second Vatican Council, which inspired and still inspire the New Evangelization in the Greek Catholic Church in Slovakia, but there is not enough space for it in this in this paper. We should paid closer attention to the formation and operation of the laity, for example pilgrimage to the places that are increasingly popular. Also, to what the Greek Catholic Church is doing for the children and young people, for example in education, as based on the Declaration on Christian Education *Gravissimum educationis*. It would be good to point out closer to family and activities in this direction as well as the formation and training of future priests in the context of the Decree on priestly formation *Optatam Totius*, or to talk about performances and life of priests under Decree *Presbyterorum ordinis*, also with which Archbishop and Metropolitan Ján Babjak SJ of Prešov dealt in editorial circulars of the archeparchy from the beginning of the Year for Priests onwards up to December 2011.⁴⁸ It would be also possible to deal with ecumenism in our local church, which is also positively developing on the basis of the council teaching. Or to talk about the activity of the Greek Catholic Church in Slovakia in the field of the means of social communication, which is in Archeparchy of Prešov, Košice and Bratislava Eparchy very intense. Interesting would be to point out a decree on missionary activity *Ad gentes* and its implementation, on work of priests and laity with the Word of God, on the area of liturgy, as well as many other facts related to the New Evangelization.

⁴⁵ 14th November 2008 – Consecration of the Centre for family in Sigord.

⁴⁶ Established in 2005

⁴⁷ 7th January 2007 – Consecration of the Centre for secondary and university students in Prešov.

⁴⁸ From the Circular letter no. 5 (September 2009) to Circular letter no. 6 (December 2011), so in the fifteen circular letters.

For example, it would also be interesting to deal with the cooperativeness of bishops in detail, which is so close to the Eastern Churches (synodality). Together with the Pope, they are not worried only about their local church, but also about the universal Church. Particularly, this was reflected in the provisions of the Synod of Bishops that the Pope regularly (approximately every 3 - 4 years, meanwhile, there are also extraordinary meetings) meets. At the Synod of Bishops in Rome, the bishops meet to discuss issues related to the whole Church. Starting with the establishment of the Greek Catholic Metropolitan *sui iuris* in Prešov, in Slovakia, on 2008, 30th January, its head – Archbishop and Metropolitan Ján Babjak SJ has become a full member of the Synod of Bishops. He already participated in the Synod of Bishops on the Word of God in 2008. This is a very concrete expression, or it even continues the council, which is intimately affecting our local Greek Catholic Church in Slovakia.

The conclusion

This conference on the Ukrainian Catholic University in Lviv is inspirational in the sense that it leads us to reflect on the above facts in the context of the Second Vatican Council and the New Evangelization in other works and papers, as this is a very broad topic. Therefore, this paper appears rather as an introduction to the current issue, which we are going to address in detail in the next years 2012 – 2015.

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