

## **Rezumat în limba engleză**

My relationship with the Church I am a member of, I know and love and became a priest was strongly influenced by the religious life of my surroundings. My parents, my grandparents, my larger family, priests and the surrounding Christian communities.

They were the role models who endeared God to me. And because I endeared Him I became more and more curious and interested about Him, about His likeness and plans. I found the answers to these questions in the Holy Script and in the Christian communities inside the Church He has founded. I strongly believe that my life would have been totally different if I hadn't met with His teachings and the Church He has founded in time. For me the daily personal connection with Him is indispensable and as I consciously became member of the Christian community I had realized that God's presence in their everyday lives is very important for other people as well. Then after becoming a priest during confessions, discussions or while visiting diseased people the conclusion often was that one can live without God as well, but that life would be without a meaning. This was mentioned especially by persons with incurable diseases. These opinions became the driving force of my pastoral activity that strengthened my desire to ever increase my efficiency in my service.

As a young priest I felt that the increase in efficiency of the pastoral service can be achieved mainly through reformation. Today I think the efficiency problem has a much more complicated background. I do not reject my earlier point of view but I am more cautious, and the goal of my dissertation is exactly that to search for, to discover what sort of community and what kind of church does the 21st century man need, what changes would we need to imply to become a valuable, meaningful and joyful medium for the contemporary man, without moving apart from God.

Relaying on countless discussions, community and society observations, experience, research and my pastoral missionary activity up until today, I am trying to chart the identity of the Church founded by Jesus Christ. More precisely in my dissertation I am trying to find the answer to the question how did the 20th century roman catholic men from Csík experienced their religion, what did the connection with God

mean to them, how did this influence their everyday lives, way of thinking or decisions and what kind of effect did the service of the priests have on the lives of the individuals and the entire society.

Studying the live of the 20th century roman catholic church from Csík is both easy and challenging. It is easy because there are still many who can relate about their 21st century experiences as it is a relatively recent period. And challenging in the same time because of this as this period has not been documented yet, all sources are to be found and checked.

I consider it important to state that my thesis is based on both written sources and confessions of living witnesses based on which I tried to draw a picture of the era as accurate as possible. During my studies I have been relying first of all on the Domus History of the Csík area presbyteries and the archdeaconry registers of Ciucul de Jos and Ciucul de Sus. Also the materials provided by the archives of the Roman Catholic Archdiocese Alba Iulia and the Romanian and Hungarian national archives were of great help in my attempt of drawing a comprehensive reconstruction of the social and religious live of that period. In the Ciucul de Jos and Ciucul de Sus area there have been priests, researchers who made comprehensive studies about the values of some of the communities, but most of them did not cover the priest's activities. This is the reason why the life in some of the townships are presented much more detailed than the others, depending on the amount of information former priests have gathered or how much in detail did they study their communities with its habits and traditions. Also it is an important factor that these villages and towns differ from one each other in size, or by the number and importance of the events that occur in them, so in my study I tried to do a more comprehensive presentation of the bigger, more important townships. I used the chronological method of presentation in presenting and discussing the period's history. I did that because this approach makes it possible a more thorough-full understanding of the every day life and religious life of the presented church communities, priests and followers of Christ.

In the first and third part of my dissertation I am studying the historical background of the church-life in Csík area. I only follow the historical events of the 20th century if they are relevant to the priests activity. After studying the historical background of the church-life of the century I would classify it into 3 periods based on the most

influencing factors: 1. The first world war, 2. The period between the two world wars, 3. The communist era. I study the first two periods in the first chapter, while the third part in the third chapter of my dissertation.

The first year of the 20st century has been celebrated as a holly year by the Christianity which seemed a hope raising beginning for the universal Church and the part churches as well. This had an effect on the soul of the people of Csík as well. No one has imagined at that time the changes society and in it the Church would go through in the century that was beginning. It became a century that brought important changes in society, politics and never the less in the life of the church. Being part of the world and working in it the political and societal changes had their effect on the life of the church as well. The cruelty and corruptive effects of the world war urged the church the composure and faith awakening activities.

During the changes that occurred in the Transylvanian society the priests lead by their hierarcs - and the committed non-church people represented the keeping force for the community. The world wars, Transylvania's linking to one country or another, the chauvinism fuelled by the political changes and the anti-church movement has unbalanced the Csík area society as well. The church and the priests had a great task to deal with. Generally we can say that despite the countless difficulties the Csík area priests bravely did their shares of serving the faithful. They did their Christian mission in a way the sekler and Armenian communities also benefited of it in societal and cultural ways as well. Thanks to its secular institutional system (diocesan office, monk orders, status, schools, press, brotherhoods and associations) despite the existing minority discriminative circumstances it managed to hold the field up until 1948.

The school has had an important role in the religious education as education in schools has been assured mainly by the church. Respecting the commandment received from the founder of the Church: Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you. (Mt 28,19 20) - it always considered education to be one of the most important holly tasks for which it undertook even the biggest sacrifices.

It is known that throughout the history the church has been the only one creating and maintaining schools. The local priests and the consistory lead by him were the ones responsible for maintaining the local elementary schools (and in some places pre-schools

as well). Governments, civil authorities only started to take charge of these in the modern era only. Even if some of the universities have been founded by lords, the teaching itself has been assured in them by the church and the studies were conducted in a Christian spirit.

The 20th century brought changes in the educational politics as well, for that I have studied the Romanian educational system as well which has put in front of serious challenges the priests and church communities of the Csík zone. The repression against church schools started in Transylvania after 1918, when Transylvania has been annexed to Romania following the First World War. The so called school war started with the 1919/20 school year. The Romanian authorities informed the school owners that all Hungarian state schools and roman catholic educational institutions became property of the Romanian state. They withdrew the salaries and aids of the school teachers and professors but for the moment left intact the school system itself. This has been done by the communists in 2 August 1948 with the Decree no. 176 signed by the presidency of the Congress, that has nationalized every school and all school property. Bishop Márton Áron has expressed in his circular letter that has been read in every church the hope that the Romanian state will eventually recognize the worth and utility of the catholic church's work in people's education and will restore the church in its rights.

During these changes, lead by the bishop, the priests and catholic teachers of the Csík area began their war for keeping and functioning the catholic schools of the are. They have founded a central school committee and than school councils. They tried to help and keep functioning the star of the Csík area schools, the teacher training-college from Miercurea Ciuc, which had the support of both the church and the Old Students Association (1930) lead by professor Csipak Lajos. But despite all efforts to preserve the existing schools in 1938 he already mentions closed down schools in his notes to dean Sass Antal. An other constraint of the religious education in schools was that beside reducing the number of the religious hours teachers were obliged to report the exact time of these hours as well. That was the beginning of the religious education in catacombs that has lasted until 1990.

The press that has become a world power by the 20th century has also had an important role in the life of the society. The importance of the presented information was established by those owning the press. As a result of the press apostle's commitment the

Transylvanian catholic press and religious interest has known an important growth until the beginning of the Second World War. Press had a great influence in the Csík area as well regarding the perception of the church and its services by the people. Priest Bíró Ferenc from Siculeni has noted in 1924 that press represents our only outer space in which we can fight for our catholic perception of the world, we can defend our remaining spiritual values and we can gain back the ones we have already lost.

While studying the press apostle's activity in Csík I have discovered a few curiosities as well. The *Határőr*, the publication of the Maria Congregation of the *Segítő Mária* Gymnasium was a peculiarity of the zone. Though we do not yet have studies about the publication it is being studied now I have copies that prove that against the cyclopaedia information the publication has existed as early as in June 1942. It cannot be decided whether it existed a previous edition as well, but we can continue the research by studying the texts and columns of that edition and we might even discover newer editions of the publication. The last edition of the paper had the 2nd year 2 number and has been printed in 1943. The editor of the publication was Székely László, teacher of the Roman Catholic Gymnasium and leader of the students *Segítő Mária* congregation. In this quality did he organize the 12-member ethnographic workshop and printed the *Határőr* publication. Nowadays the *Határőr* is a educational ethnographic publication that is considered a rarity.

The *Egyházközségi Apostol* was a local paper printed from 1947 in the Csík area dealing with local catholic news mainly about the internal issues of the church in Miercurea Ciuc. The *Egyházközségi Apostol* was meant by the local priest to be a periodical information about the local religious events. It was first published by the initiative of Antal József the local dean-priest of the area. Its first still existing edition has been published in 1948 on Twelfth-night authorized by the authorization number 3191/1947 issued by the diocesan high authorities. The publication was printed in the *Haladás* typography in Miercurea Ciuc and has been financed by the parish. The existing 5 editions of the *Egyházközségi Apostol* can be found archived in the *Domus History of the Szent Kereszt Parish* from Miercurea Ciuc. From there we know the structure and looks of the publication which has been the source of inspiration for the new *Egyházközségi Apostol* that is being published weekly since 2004.

I would like to highlight a column published in the 1948 Twelfth-night edition of the Egyházközségi Apostol: New rosary-secret. An old demand has been satisfied by adding a new series of Jesus Christ's life's mysteries between the Joyful and the Sorrowful Mysteries of the Rosary. The new mysteries are the following: 1. Who Got Baptized in the Jordan by Saint John. 2. Who was Present with his Followers at the Wedding of Cana. 3. Who went around the world helping, healing and benefaction. 4. Who Proclaimed to Us The Holly Glory. 5. Who Gave Us The Institution of the Eucharist. - These mysteries were published in the above publication in 1948, long before the Luminous Mystery of the Rosary was accepted by Pope John Paul II in October 2002.

After the press I have mentioned the religious associations of the Csík area (Katolikus Népszövetség, Szent Kereszt Hadsereg, Virgin Mary associations, Élő Rózsafüzér, Oltáregylet, KALOT, Kalász, Kaláka) and the most important events they have organized (The Convocation of Csík, One Thousand Sekler Girl's Day), the religious orders (Szociális Testvérek Társasága, The Franciscans) and the Armenian Catholics, whose presence was of importance in the Csík area men's spiritual forming (especially in Frumoasa and Miercurea Ciuc).

In the second part of my dissertation I am studying the spirituality of the Csík area men and the ministerial service. The people in the Csík area has a closed view of the world: the existence and power of God, men's dependence and fragility towards God are never questioned. They strongly believe in the after-life and based on the do ut des philosophy they are convinced that the good will receive it's prize while the bad it's punishment. The faith of the Csík area men is child-like and it represents a constant source of power for them.

The emotional life of the Csík area men is rooted in his religion and although they don't tend to publicly show it, it is present in both universal and community levels. An evidence of this is the way they participate in the celebrations and how important it is for them to take the sacraments. Their Holly Celestial lives is surrounded by a real live custom system that defines their place and relationships in live. While examining the Csík zone pastoral activity I have realized that not only the community's dimensions are of importance but also the individual spiritual lives. The spiritual life is largely influenced by the way the people live out their personal prayings and fasting. The weekly and annual spiral-type liturgical schedules, church pilgrimage, folk missions, processions and other

special occasions (ordination of a priest, primycin, monastic vows, priestly funeral) have a determining role in the spiritual development.

In the liturgical life an important role has the sacred music and songs as well. It is one of the most powerful tools with which people's feelings can be influenced. Music has always been a powerful tool in the Bible as well. It had the power of razing down walls. The effect music had on Christians is undeniable. Music is part of our everyday lives. We often listen to it while eating, shopping or resting. Today's youth's favorite pastime is not football anymore but music and conversations about the music. Musci often can reach people in a way preaching wouldn't be able to. Music can bridge intellectual differences and deliver the message straight to the heart. It is a powerful mean of evangelization.

Based on the above the question arouse in me how did the church assessed the role of hymns and music in liturgies in the 20th century? So in the last chapter of the second part of my thesis therefore I have researched the evolution and role of church music and songs in the Ciuc Basin.

In the third chapter of my dissertation I analyze the Communist time and its influence on the pastoral life. During the communist regime the government wanted to set aside everything that doesn't fit in the proletarian dictatorship framework like other political parties, social classes if their thinking has even a least deviated from the directions of the dictatorship.

The long-term plan of the religious persecution was the destruction of Christianity and other religions. Its efforts were based on the divide and rule principle, based on which they tried to divide the Christian community in every possible level. Because they were aware of the fact that by braking the uniteness of the community they will brake its power as well and a powerless community, a powerless church can easily be defeated. For that they constantly sought to turn away believers from Rome by undermining the credibility of the priests. Fighting against it became vital. Over the time it became clear to everyone they wanted to tear the Transylvanian Catholic Church totally apart from the world church lead by the papacy. Today it is inconceivable the difficulties former priests had to face. But during that same period it was also found out who the true Catholics were.

The Church due to the small communities and religious associations proved to be the most viable during the oppression and persecution of the communist dictatorship. The church has survived underground, in jails and forced labor camps. It was similar to the beginnings of Christianity. Reading the memoirs of the imprisoned priests it seems that behind bars existed a true spiritual brotherhood between the convicts which often became even stronger than blood connections.

All these had a bipolar effects on the pastoral work. On one hand it represented a serious obstacle on the other hand it increased the commitment of both the clergy and the faithful community.

For forty years had to face the Catholic Church in Transylvania, and in the Ciuc basin the forces of evil. In our opinion the resistance was a success. If throughout the confrontation between the Church's representatives and communist authorities we only compare human means and forces the latter had an obvious advantage. It was all about an unequal fight. But in this David-Goliath battle the defenseless Christian confessors and martyrs can still be regarded as winners as they enjoyed the divine grace and the heavenly protection of the Blessed Mother of Sumuleu that gave them the necessary strength for the final perseverance. They could convict and imprison Catholic Christians witnessing their faith based on trumped-up charges and show trials, but they could never unrobe their human dignity. Due to their creed and suffering they have become martyrs of the time.

In the difficult years full with hard trials between 1945-1990 the famous Tertullian saying came true in Romania as well: *Plures efficimur, quotes metimur, semen est sanguis christianorum* We multiply whenever we are mown down by you; the blood of Christians is seed.

Looking at the events of the 20th century Ciuc social and religious life in the light of the world wars and the difficulties of the communist period we may even state that even persecution can be of good for the Church as it cleaned it up and forged it's members. Because the pursuits were a storm after which the aer became clearer and increased our visibility. The storm removed the dust and dirt and left behind something much cleaner and this thought would be the final conclusion of my dissertation.

I have studied and summarized a period of the Ciuc Basin church history that still has living witnesses. I am aware that with this I have omitted the fundamental rules of historiography as there is a lack of perspective from the events. Yet I consider that my



approach, the study of the region's Catholic Church's recent history was necessary and of good use for both the present and posterity.

## **Cuvintele-cheie în limba engleză**

Church

Csík

20th century

Historical background

School

Religious associations

Press

Armenian

Spirituality.

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