

The History of Roman Catholic district of Sighet between 1940-1948

Keywords

Roman catholic, maramureş, district, church, pastoral, war, policy

Summary

In my dissertation, I describe the history of the Roman Catholic Church in my home county of Maramureş/Máramaros, focusing on a brief period, more precisely between the years 1940-1948. To be even more exact, I study the life of the Vicariate Forane of Sighetu Marmaţiei/Máramarossziget.

My reasons for choosing this subject matter are both personal and academic. It is a personal matter because I was born in Maramureş/Máramaros, more precisely in the former county (comitatus) seat of this historical region: Sighetu Marmaţiei/Máramarossziget. I have been fuelled by local patriotism since I was a child and was always interested in my region's past. It is not a coincidence therefore that for a few years now I have been collecting and reading books on local history, specifically on the history of local churches. My personal connection to this subject is also strengthened by the fact that the church in Sighetu Marmaţiei/Máramarossziget and its immediate surroundings have been my second home: I was an altar boy here, this is where I experienced a social life etc.

These were the personal motivations that led me to be interested in the history of the region and that of the local Roman Catholic Church. This interest was fomented by presentations, cultural events, publications, as well as conversations that I had on this topic, which gave me an insight into the recent past, if not necessarily a more historical perspective. This prompted me to start researching the history of my parish and that of the vicariate forane.

Until now no detailed research has been done on the history of the Roman Catholic Church in Maramureş/Máramaros county. This is an enormous task and challenge, which - due to lack of time, proper professional experience, and also practical setbacks - I could not undertake until now. However, a few years ago, I felt that the time had come for me to start exploring a period that was fairly recent and also richly documented in the archives. Despite the fact that the 20th century and specifically the Second World War is fairly close to us (in a larger historical perspective), I realized that this is not a well-known period in the history of the local Roman Catholic Church. Although people who lived through this time do occasionally share their personal experiences, but these often merely reflect a

personal point of view. This, however, did not discourage me from using these as a starting point for my research.

The extremely valuable information and stories that I have learnt through personal conversations have led me to continue researching this subject from an objective perspective as well in the church archives. Enjoying the support of the church leaders, I started my research of the archives.

I have limited my search to the Vicariate Forane of Sighetu Marmației/Máramarossziget mainly for practical reasons. Firstly, because this particular subject has not been studied before, and secondly, due to the fact that I was partially familiar with the archival material concerning the period in question. Another deciding element was the fact that the Vicariate Forane of Sighetu Marmației/Máramarossziget was a part of the Roman Catholic Church which was greatly impacted by border changes in the 20th century, and also by the varying political and social context, as I show in this paper.

Maramureș/Máramaros county is a corner of the world where several nations, cultures and religions have lived side by side over the centuries. My choice of a subject matter was also influenced by issues relating to the relationship between the different nationalities and congregations living here. Due to the border changes that occurred in the previous century, the Diocese of Satu Mare/Szatmár was divided into four, while the county of Maramureș/Máramaros into two parts. These factors are not only interesting from a political and social history perspective, but also from an ecclesiastic point of view, given that the members of the congregations mentioned have been divided between four different countries and dioceses.

In the period examined, the Vicariate Forane of Sighetu Marmației/Máramarossziget included not only parishes from today's Romania, but also parishes that are presently a part of Ukraine. The fact that I could not access the archives of these latter parishes made the research process more difficult, and therefore, when it came to looking into the history of these parishes that are now in Ukraine, I could only rely on materials that could be found in the Archives of the Deanery of Maramureș/Máramaros.

I wanted to further examine how the life of the local Roman Catholic congregations was organized in the researched period and in those circumstances, also considering their relationship with other denominations.

In my doctoral dissertation I chose to look into a brief period, namely between 1940 and 1948, the reason being that during this time the Deanery of

Maramureș/Máramaros went through great political, social and ecclesiastic changes, and especially concerning the latter there is a lot of hiatus. In my research I have tried to shed a light on the situation of the Roman Catholic Church in Maramureș/Máramaros in this socio-politically “odd” period.

The role of archbishop Áron Márton in the life of the Diocese of Satu Mare/Szatmár is particularly notable. He became an important figure in the life of this diocese following the change of government in 1940, and also indirectly in the life of the Vicariate Forane of Sighetu Marmației/Máramarossziget, since after the dismissal of bishop István Fiedler, he also took over as head of the Diocese of Satu Mare/Szatmár. It is possible that after bishop János Scheffer’s inauguration he couldn’t imagine that he would ever represent this diocese. After the state eliminated the dioceses, the Diocese of Satu Mare/Szatmár, degraded to the level of “deanery”, once more fell under the administration of Áron Márton in 1948, which the Holy See took as the archbishop representing the diocese in front of the Romanian government, but otherwise interior matters were conducted by the Ordinary approved by the Church. This new type of management linked the clergy of the Diocese of Satu Mare/Szatmár even more closely to archbishop Áron Márton until his arrest (21st of July 1949), and after his release from prison the “orphaned” priests in Satu Mare/Szatmár considered him as their own even more.

My research was made more difficult by the fact that no studies have been published dealing with this particular subject and time period. Studies that have been published only tangentially cover the life of the Vicariate Forane of Sighetu Marmației/Máramarossziget in that period. The literature on this subject, however, helped me in placing the events and processes that I tackled in a historical context. It also aided me in understanding the ecclesiastic and social processes, but also how these two interacted. Only by taking these into consideration can one comprehend the connection between the life of the parishes of the Vicariate Forane of Sighetu Marmației/Máramarossziget, the actions of the Church’s leadership and those of the state. The information I found in the specific bibliography afforded me a wider perspective and helped me understand the causal relations.

For this reason, in developing the subject matter of this thesis, I relied mostly on sources from the church archives. Therefore, 80 percent of the bibliography consists of primary sources: previously unprocessed archival documents and papers. The bibliography on church history and social history served to set the findings in a historical context, and principally to help understand significant events and processes.

The truly valuable source material were the archives, which - for reasons unknown - nobody has yet studied for such purposes. I am referring in particular to the documents found in the Archives of the Deanery of Maramureş/Máramaros, but also the Diocesan Archive of Satu Mare/Szatmár, the Central Archives of the Hungarian Province of the Piarist Order, and to some degree that of the Archdiocesan Archives of Alba Iulia/Gyulafehérvár.

The fact that the archival material of the local parishes and the deanery was unprocessed presented some difficulties, and during my research I first had to organize these, so that in recounting the events the chronology would not present a problem.

For the most part, completing the partial information contained in the local parishes' documents by relying on the data I found in the archives of the bishopric did not present a problem, but in many instances the files documented in the registry could no longer be found among the archives. Given this, we might have been able to learn a lot more about the Szeklers that settled in Maramureş/Máramaros, for example. Another disadvantage I encountered was the fact that I could not research the parishes which in the 1944 - 1948 period were left on the territory of the Soviet Union, and which are now a part of Ukraine, the archives being almost inaccessible. But this information can be added in time. Moreover, a minor problem was the incomplete *Historia Domus* of the parish in Vişeu de Sus/Felsővisó, as well as the missing *Historia Domus* of Velikij Bicskiv/Nagybocskó (Ukraine). Despite these difficulties, through my hypotheses I was able to draw a comprehensive picture of the researched topic.

The most important archival material, which formed the basis of my research, was found in the Archives of the Deanery of Maramureş/Máramaros (ADMM), but equally as important were my findings in the Diocesan Archive of Satu Mare/Szatmár, the Central Archives of the Hungarian Province of the Piarist Order, the Archdiocesan Archives of Alba Iulia/Gyulafehérvár, and also the funds of the Maramureş County Directorate of the Romanian National Archives. The files kept in the ADMM can be considered one of the most significant source materials because these contain the most important documents and sources of the parishes in the Vicariate Forane of Sighetu Marmăţiei/Máramarossziget, such as the *Historia Domus* diaries, church registers, records of the church councils etc. In the Diocesan Archive of Satu Mare/Szatmár I studied the correspondence of the bishops, while in the Archdiocesan Archives of Alba Iulia/Gyulafehérvár I looked into information on archbishop Áron Márton, who also led the Diocese of Satu Mare/Szatmár, but this archive was also useful when I later researched matters relating to the Archdiocese of

Alba Iulia/Gyulafehérvár. Finally, looking into the files of the Maramureş County Directorate of the Romanian National Archives was also inevitable due to the significant materials kept there regarding political history and also the history of the church and of minorities.

It should be mentioned here that the documents of the ADMM represented the biggest challenge during the research, because the source materials from the researched period were unorganized and had to be processed for the sake of transparency. The progress of the research was slowed down by the fact that the documents on the relevant years were mixed up. Consequently, files that were found later and which concerned the topic of my research required revisiting a few issues, redefining, as well as amending them. This being the archive of the Deanery of Maramureş/Máramaros, it worked to my advantage that the files of the parishes (as the issuers of official documents) were available, which allowed for clarifying causal relations.

In the archives of the bishopric my focus was almost exclusively on the bishops' correspondence, with the exception of archival materials of one or two parishes held in the Diocesan Archive of Satu Mare/Szatmár. In the end, the core of my research were the rich materials of the parishes, particularly the *Historia Domus* diaries, the church registers, the records of the church council meetings, correspondences and other registries.

It is undeniable that regarding the questions that were raised while I was processing the archival materials, I relied on the bibliography about the Church's history, which also helped me to set a historical context. Often this was the only way to acquire a clearer picture on a given phenomenon, or to get better acquainted with an issue that I partially learnt about during the research. As an example, one can mention the relocations to Maramureş/ Máramaros county and the related questions concerning church governance, but also events in the life of the church closely connected to the war.

Some of the more important bibliography that I relied on regarding the Church's history: Gergely Jenő, *A katolikus egyház története Magyarországon. 1919–1945*, Budapest 1997, Marton József, *A gyulafehérvári római katolikus egyházmegye a 20. Században*, Csíkszereda 2014, Muhi Csilla–Várady Lajos [Ed.], *A múltat be kell vallani. Háborús dokumentumok 194 –1945*, Szatmárnémeti 2006, Salacz Gábor, *A magyar katolikus egyház a szomszédos államok uralma alatt*, München 1975, Sas Péter, *Az erdélyi római katolikus egyház 1900 – 1948*, Budapest 2008, Tempfli Imre, *Sárból és napsugárból. Pakocs Károly püspöki helynök élete és kora 1892 – 1966*, Budapest 2002.

Regarding life as a minority and also Hungarian - Romanian relations I would highlight the following publications: Ablonczy Balázs, *A visszatért Erdély 1940–1944, Budapest, 2017*, Ákosi Zsolt, *A máramarosszigeti kisebbségek egymásról alkotott képe a XX. században, Máramarossziget 2016*, L. Balogh Béni, *Küzdelem Erdélyért. A magyar-román viszony és a kisebbségi kérdés 1940-1944 között, Budapest 2013*, Lönhárt Tamás, *Uniunea Populară Maghiară în perioada instaurării regimului Comunist în România (1944-1948), Cluj Napoca 2008*.

From a professional and bibliographic point of view I could not ignore the scientific studies, document collections, articles and interviews, which appeared in journals such as *Magyar Szemle*, *Magyar Egyháztörténeti Vázlatok*, *Revista Arhivei Maramuresene*, *Bányavidéki Új Szó*, while also relying on personal testimonials.

Due to the shortness of the researched period the dissertation had to be divided into three main chapters. In the first chapter I try to outline the historical context. I do this by describing the period leading up to the Second Vienna Award, with a specific focus on the Diocese of Satu Mare/Szatmár and in particular the vicariate forane in question. I considered this to be necessary in order to make the questions related to later periods, as well as the answers and processes easier to understand. Furthermore, it was important to describe the state of the Vicariate Forane of Sighetu Marmăției/Máramarossziget as a result of the political and border changes.

In the second chapter I examine the life of the Vicariate Forane of Sighetu Marmăției/Máramarossziget between 1940 – 1944. Here I describe issues relating to church management in the Diocese of Satu Mare/Szatmár up until the inauguration of János Scheffler, after which I detail the harassment of the priests prior to the Second Vienna Award, the economic and social situation of the Church, the organization of pastoral work, the relocation of the Szekler families to Maramureș/Máramaros, religious conversions, the organization of the new parishes, the relationship of the Roman Catholic Church with other local denominations. The Roman Catholic schools are also of great significance in my dissertation, in particular the school of the Sisters of Mercy of Satu Mare/Szatmár, as well as the educational institutions operated by the Piarist fathers in Sighetu Marmăției/Máramarossziget. Studying the interior workings of the Church, in my paper I also reflect on the priests and their work as pastors. In discussing this issue, I had to briefly touch upon the activities of the devotional movements and associations.

In the third chapter of the dissertation, I lay out the life of the Vicariate Forane of Sighetu Marmăției/Máramarossziget in the 1944 – 1948 period. In terms of political

changes, this period is also quite eventful and varied. I start my examination with the final outcome of the Second World War and its impact on the Roman Catholic Church. Looking at the issue more generally, I discuss the relationship between the Roman Catholic Church and the situation of the Jews, the priests and the members of the church who fled the country. I talk about the local war situation as reflected in the accounts of the parishes, up until the arrival of the Russian army and also after that. In this chapter I also highlight issues like the territorial affiliation of Maramureş/Máramaros, deportations to and interments in the Soviet Union, which were factors of great impact on the life of the local Roman Catholic Church. Regarding the priests and church members held in the relocation camps in Sighetu Marmăţiei/Máramarossziget I also reflect on questions concerning the Archdiocese of Alba Iulia/Gyulafehérvár, as well as the Diocese of Timişoara/Temesvár.

The new political regime that was installed after the war forced the Roman Catholic Church to take a position. Given that beside the political leaders, the Roman Catholic Church also took an important role in fighting for the causes of the Hungarian minority, in this chapter I examine the relationship between the Church and the state, as well as the Hungarian People's Union. The difficulties of living as a minority are most apparent in the fight for Roman Catholic religious education.

My working hypothesis was to be able to reinforce the already known, but generally treated and scientifically unfounded information through my research, or to complete it with new data. In the centre of my research, I put the life of the parishes in the Vicariate Forane of Sighetu Marmăţiei/Máramarossziget, trying to paint the most exact picture possible of church life in the 1940 – 1948 period.

Given that the territory in question is a border region, where several religions and cultures meet, I tried to reflect also on the relationship between the Roman Catholic Church and other denominations, encountering quite a few surprises on the way. I was particularly interested in the relationship with the Romanian Greek Catholics, the Reformed Church, the Jewish community, and I was also intrigued by the issue of conversions.

However, my main goal was first and foremost to examine questions relating to the local Roman Catholic Church during the war, using archival sources to (successfully) shed light on the impact of the war on the life of the local parishes. Given that this period was a fraught one both from an ethnic, as well as a political point of view, I tried to study the

trajectory of the relationship between the state and the Church, its impacts and causal relations, assuming that the state also used the Church as a means of reaching its goals.

Due to the border changes that occurred during the 20th century, the Deanery was first divided into two parts, then reunited, and finally, after the Second World War, it was once again partitioned into two separate territories. Regarding this issue, my goal was to study the unique situation of the parishes that fell under two different states and different church governances, especially during the 1940 – 1944 period.

It is worth mentioning that in the period before, during and also after the war, the Deanery, which was at different times under the rule of two different states, had to maintain a relationship with state authorities, whether it wanted to or not. One set of questions that I looked into relates to the nature and the quality of this relationship with the Romanian state in the period right before the Second Vienna Award, with the Hungarian state during the war years, and once again with the Romanian state after the war had ended. Here I was particularly interested in the fate of the Catholic schools and the teaching of the Catholic faith, also reflecting on the consequences and the impact these had on the community's life as a minority.

I was interested in looking into not only the devotional, but also the social role of the Church during the researched period, what were the effects of the war on the everyday life of the Church, how was the relationship between the Church and the Hungarian state, and later the Romanian state, but also its relation to other denominations, to what extent did the state want to and was it able to use the Church as a tool, and what perceptions were created within the Church regarding this issue, whether people were receptive to this. Another question I was interested in was the level and the impact of state actions on the life of the Vicariate Forane after the war, especially on its institutions, and what effect did these negative measures affecting the Church have on life as a minority.

I started my research trying to prove the various hypotheses that I laid out above. I assumed that life was not at all easy for the Vicariate Forane of Sighetu Marmăției/Máramarossziget in the brief period prior to the Second Vienna Award, which my research proved to be true. In the year leading up to the decision, members of the local churches, especially their leaders, experienced severe oppression from state authorities in certain localities. During this time the Church was treated as being against the state, so authorities tried to win members of the church over to their cause, targeting the priests in particular, or to dissuade them from their presumed intent.

Despite efforts by the Romanian state, due to global political events, the parishes of the Vicariate Forane were once again under Hungarian rule, which put these parishes and communities in a new situation, in which they enjoyed the wide scale support of the Hungarian state. One need only think of the issues surrounding the person who would occupy the bishop's seat of the Diocese of Satu Mare/Szatmár. Until János Scheffer was inaugurated as bishop in 1942, instead of István Fiedler, who was forced to resign, the Diocese was led by Áron Márton, the archbishop of the Archdiocese of Alba Iulia/Gyulafehérvár. Following the inauguration of János Scheffer there is a boost and intensity that can be felt in the life of the Vicariate Forane of Sighetu Marmăției/Máramarossziget. Under the new bishop confirmations were held once again, religious and cultural life improved, priests were given more serious attention, new schools and parishes were established. All of this would not have been impossible for archbishop Áron Márton either, despite the fact that he had multiple tasks, was far away from the Diocese of Satu Mare/Szatmár and lived on the territory of a different state. However, previously mentioned circumstances prevented him from performing tasks which needed a separate person to be in charge of them anyway.

Following the changes that occurred in 1940 the revitalization of church life is obvious. Despite the war and related circumstances, the Church was on an upward trajectory from an economic, social, cultural and moral perspective as well. All of this was possible thanks to effective support from the Hungarian state. The Roman Catholic Church was starting to face some financial difficulties, which the priests blamed on the behaviour and attitude of Protestant public officials. However, Catholic parishes later received financial support from the state, which led to an economically easier life for the Vicariate Forane of Sighetu Marmăției/Máramarossziget as well. These parishes would later on benefit from Jewish properties, forestry, and proceeds from patronages. Due to the support, in certain places they started to build new churches, parishes, schools and other community buildings. The end of the war hindered some of these projects to be finished, like in Cămara Sighet/Szigetkamara for example, where the parish and the community house were eventually not built.

It is important to underline that the infrastructural development of the parishes was also justified by the growing number of Roman Catholics in the countryside. Especially from 1942 onward, in order to change the ethnic proportions, the Hungarian state relocated a lot of Szekler families with many children to Maramureș/Máramaros. In this field also, a close relationship and a strong cooperation developed with state authorities, so

as to meet the spiritual needs of the Szekler families, pastoral support was provided to the priests in the scattered communities, who had to travel longer distances in order to care for the spiritual life of the settler families in the smaller parishes. State programmes supporting the pastoral activities of the Roman Catholic Church in the scattered communities were conducted through the Hungarian Cultural Society of Transylvania (EMKE) and served both state and ecclesiastical interests on a reciprocal basis. Bishop János Scheffler of Satu Mare/Szatmár did not deny that catering to the needs of the scattered communities was both in the interest of the Church, as well as the Hungarian state. If the state and the Church would have ignored them, the scattered and small Hungarian communities would have been assimilated.

Another notable factor is the increase in the number of Roman Catholics due to religious conversions. The changes in the political and social relations led many to convert to the Roman Catholic religion or rite, especially in the case of those who worked in the public sector and were forced to convert to the Roman Catholic religion or the Latin rite, even if only out of interest. And we are not only talking about religious conversion, but also about a change of rite, in which case numerous people adopted the Latin rite, converting from the eastern one. In very few cases the opposite also occurred, namely that Roman Catholics became Greek Catholic or apostate.

Given that Maramureş/Máramaros, throughout history, has always been a border region, it has become a meeting point of several nations, cultures and religions. In the case of the Vicariate Forane of Sighetu Marmăţiei/Máramarossziget, we can talk about Hungarian, Romanian, Rusyn, Jewish, etc, nationalities. In the majority of cases the Hungarians were either Roman Catholics or Reformed - with the exception of the Greek Catholics who declared themselves Hungarian -, and Romanians were either Greek Catholic or Orthodox. In the case of the Jews, the Israelite religion is obvious. The relationship of the Roman Catholics with other denominations and sister churches can only be assessed in the light of relations between states, since these relations, or the perception of these religions about one another, could largely be determined by state policy also. The relationship between the local Roman Catholic and Reformed churches is difficult to analyse in the period between 1940-1944, as no significant ecclesiastical source has been found so far. The perception of Roman Catholics about those belonging to the Reformed Church during this period was, however, greatly influenced by the public officials of the Reformed denomination, who - according to sources - oppressed the Roman Catholic parishes. Only after 1944 can we speak of a positive and concrete

cooperation between the Roman Catholic and the Reformed Churches, when due to their minority status and interdependence they maintained a close relationship based on mutual respect. Regarding the Orthodox Church we cannot speak of an institutional relationship, since the Orthodox institutions were rendered impossible in 1940 and the majority of Romanians living in Maramureş/Máramaros were Greek Catholic. The relationship maintained with the Greek Catholic Church was facilitated by bishop Scheffler, who tried to favor the Greek Catholic Church even against the Reformed. An example is the case of the acquisition of the Orthodox church in Ocna Şugatag/Aknasugatag, during which Scheffler supported the Greek Catholics. Evidently, one has to mention the dependency on the Greek Catholic Church, since in the Vicariate Forane of Sighetu Marmăţiei/Máramarossziget, especially in the scattered communities, in the absence of a church, Roman Catholics had to go to mass in Greek Catholic churches or schools. For his priests, as well as for members of the church, bishop János Scheffler strictly required that all this be done with the knowledge and consent of the Greek Catholic ecclesiastical authorities. As far as the interdenominational relationship with the Jews is concerned, it is difficult to determine its nature, since Roman Catholic archival sources do not elaborate on the subject. Here we cannot talk about the relationship between the two denominations, but rather about the perception regarding Jews and the different situations, and only based on the view of one or two Roman Catholic priests, of which some were favourable and some unfavourable. Speaking of the attitude of the Roman Catholic Church, I was able to rely on the general ecclesiastical attitude when trying to present the position on deportations. On a local level, the *Historia Domus* diaries provided a good basis.

As far as the teaching of Catholic faith and moral theology are concerned, I have come to the conclusion that the existence of these was largely dependent on the political forces in power at the time. Teaching doctrine and moral theology were both a strength and a sensitive point for the Roman Catholic Church. This was especially true for the Vicariate Forane of Sighetu Marmăţiei/Máramarossziget, where teaching was rendered impossible and was accompanied by the weakening of minority existence after 1945. On the other hand, the fact that during the period of Hungarian statehood this same issue constituted the cornerstone of national and ecclesiastical education is evident.

The development of teaching moral theology was made possible by resuming the teaching of the Catholic faith. At the beginning of the Hungarian dominance this process was rather slow and cumbersome, but later, especially starting from 1943, a stronger development could be felt in this area. In this regard we have to mention the Piarist

school, as well as the school for girls operated by the Sisters of Mercy in Sighetu Marmăției/Máramarossziget, but also the religious schools reopened and operating around the parishes. The education system that functioned outside schools was also decisive in the education of young people. Religious schools, as well as the teaching methods and materials available outside schools, provided a religious and patriotic education, particularly between 1940 - 1944. In Sighetu Marmăției/Máramarossziget pupils of other nationalities and religions were taught patriotism and commitment to the homeland. In the school operated by the Sisters of Mercy emphasis was put not only on lexical knowledge, but also on educating youngsters in the spirit of Christianity and patriotism.

Studying the interior workings of the church I came to the conclusion that the spiritual life of church members was quite deficient, which was occasionally applicable to priests as well. Reading opinions that were recorded during meetings it is clear that all of this is due to a stale spiritual life in the period between the two world wars, but also to the circumstances surrounding the war. Bishop Scheffler was very zealous in trying to bring together the priests and the members of the church, who were at the time divided between two states and two ecclesiastical jurisdictions. His motto as a bishop was “*so that they may be one*”. He firmly emphasized to his priests the importance of taking part in spiritual exercises.

He thought it extremely important to regain the members of the church who at the time were living on the territory of Czechoslovakia and who had left the church. For the sake of promoting the spiritual life of those who lived in scattered communities he sent missionaries. Such was the mission of the Transylvanian Franciscan fathers, most notably Berárd P. Vitéz. An interesting aspect of these is that in the reports regarding these missions conducted in the scattered communities, ethnic issues were also raised, which were a basis for both the church, as well as the state in devising strategies on how to embrace Hungarians living in scattered communities. Through the Hungarian Cultural Society of Transylvania, the Hungarian state promoted pastoral care in Maramureș/Máramarossziget, since the Church represented a guarantee in this sense. While the Church, on the other hand, could perform its missionary task due to the support it received from the state.

The higher echelons of church authority tried to set and strengthen the basis of religious life and Christian spirituality by involving all sections of society. A great opportunity for this presented itself within the framework of the Actio Catolica. Consequently, although the constructive process started in the 1940 – 1944 period faced

setbacks due to factors such as the economic situation, the unresolved matter of patronages and also the inherited moral laxity, all in all, considering the situation of the church in the Roman Catholic Vicariate Forane of Maramureş/Máramarossziget, it can be said that progress was underway, even if it was slow. If the circumstances surrounding the war had not encumbered this, a lot more could have been achieved.

Towards the end of the war unforeseen events came to pass and several disadvantages resulted from these. With the war front getting closer, the Szekler families that had settled two-three years prior fled the region, while the Soviet army took hundreds of Catholic prisoners, women and men alike, to face the so-called “malenkij robot”. Add to this the members of the church and the priests that fled from the war, of whom many never returned. Due to the priests that ran away, church members that stayed put were left without priests for a while. As a result of the huge wave of people fleeing, as well as the deportations, the centuries old Roman Catholic community was hit by an immense loss of people, while the newly settled Catholics living in scattered communities completely vanished. Aside from the loss in church members, another devastating issue was the fact that the Diocese and within it the Vicariate Forane of Sighetu Marmaţiei/Máramarossziget was once again divided into two, which resulted in the parishes and priests being unable to form a single Diocese. Based on the war reports it can also be said that there was no parish in the Vicariate that did not suffer damages.

The issue of territorial affiliation in the case of Maramureş/Máramaros disconcerted the priests who were already in a difficult position. Letters written to his superiors by the Piarist father József Kádár, who took a lot upon himself, including problems stemming from the Hungarian community’s minority status, reflect that the issue of the county’s affiliation prompted the Church to prepare itself as well.

Due to his personal abilities also, József Kádár was a well-respected and recognised leading figure of the Hungarian community in Maramureş/Máramaros. This may have been the reason for him being nominated first on the county list of the Hungarian People’s Union for the parliamentary elections. Throughout his career in public life, he always kept the Hungarian cause in mind. His participation in public life ended when in 1948 the Romanian Communist state rendered the monastic orders and the monks’ lives impossible.

One of the most important and delicate matters in this period was the situation of religious education and religious schools, which were at first rendered impossible gradually, but later on completely. In addition to this, the nationalisation of ecclesiastical

institutions also took place, so that the church could only carry out its activities within a narrow framework. The very fact that the church in the countryside was already in a minority from the perspective of the population, and the fact that these important institutions were rendered impossible and that the buildings were nationalised, was a major blow.

To summarise, I can formulate my conclusions thus: The imperium change had a profound effect on the life of the church. During the time interval examined in the dissertation, the parishes of the Vicariate Forane of Sighetu Marmăției/Máramarossziget went through a busy period, one might say that it had its “ups and downs”. At the beginning of the imperium change, starting from rock bottom, from miserable conditions, but in all respects seemed to flourish. The church prospered from the perspective of the number of its members, spiritually and in wealth. This lasted until the end of the war, when a decline began again, which gradually worsened.

It is clear that the period of the two different reigns had different effects on the life of the Vicariate Forane of Sighetu Marmăției/Máramarossziget. While under Hungarian authority it flourished, under the Romanian Communist state it began its decline. Of course, the political conjuncture cannot be ruled out either, because while it was in the interest of the Hungarian state to support the church, the communist regime rendered everything impossible on an ideological basis.

Contents

List of abbreviations..... Error! Bookmark not defined.

0. Introduction Error! Bookmark not defined.

- 0.1. The source material **Error! Bookmark not defined.**
- 0.2. The structure of the Dissertation..... **Error! Bookmark not defined.**
- 0.3. Working hypothesis..... **Error! Bookmark not defined.**
- 0.4. Acknowledgments **Error! Bookmark not defined.**

1. Territorial changes in 1940 and their impact on the Roman Catholic dean district

1 Error! Bookmark not defined.

- 1.1. The impact of political changes on the diocese of Satu Mare/Szatmárnémeti **Error! Bookmark not defined.**
 - 1.1.1. Antecedents of the 2nd Vienna decision: the resignation of Bishop István Fiedler **Error! Bookmark not defined.**
 - 1.1.2. Struggles for the episcopal seat..... **Error! Bookmark not defined.**
 - 1.1.3. Scheffler Janos is the new bishop **Error! Bookmark not defined.**
- 1.2. The impact of political changes on the life of the Roman Catholic dean district from Sighetu Marmației/Máramarossziget **Error! Bookmark not defined.**
 - 1.2.1. Accusation of Baumgartner Alajos the parish priest of Alsóvisó/Vișeu de jos **Error! Bookmark not defined.**
 - 1.2.2. Torture of the parish priest of Nagybocksó/Bocicioiu Mare Faulwetter János **Error! Bookmark not defined.**
 - 1.2.3. Problems of Aknasugatag/Ocna Șugatag **Error! Bookmark not defined.**

2. The Roman Catholic dean district between 1940–1944 Error! Bookmark not defined.

- 2.1. Church affairs of the Catholic dean district between 1940-1944 **Error! Bookmark not defined.**
 - 2.1.1. Economic and social situation..... **Error! Bookmark not defined.**
 - 2.1.2. The financial problems of the Roman Catholic Church and the autocracy **Error! Bookmark not defined.**
 - 2.1.3. The organization of the pastoral work **Error! Bookmark not defined.**
 - 2.1.4. Settlement of Szekler familys in Maramureș/Máramaros **Error! Bookmark not defined.**
 - 2.1.5. Religious conversions **Error! Bookmark not defined.**
 - 2.1.6. New parishes in the district of Sighetu Marmației/Máramarossziget.... **Error! Bookmark not defined.**
- 2.2. The relationship of the Roman Catholic Church with other local denominations **Error! Bookmark not defined.**
 - 2.2.1. The attitude of the Roman Catholic Church to the Greek Orthodox and Reformed Church **Error! Bookmark not defined.**
 - 2.2.2. The attitude of the Roman Catholic Church to the Greek Catholic Church **Error! Bookmark not defined.**
- 2.3. The religious schools of Maramureș/Máramaros between 1940 and 1944 **Error! Bookmark not defined.**
 - 2.3.1. Organization of religious education between 1940 and 1944 **Error! Bookmark not defined.**
 - 2.3.2. The School of the Sisters of Mercy from Satu Mare-Szatmárnémeti on Sighetu Marmației/Máramarossziget..... **Error! Bookmark not defined.**
 - 2.3.3. The piarist gymnasium on Sighetu Marmației/Máramarossziget..... **Error! Bookmark not defined.**
 - 2.3.4. Religious education in the parishes of Maramureș/Máramaros **Error! Bookmark not defined.**
- 2.4. The inner life of the church between 1940-1944 **Error! Bookmark not defined.**
 - 2.4.1. The Roman Catholic clergy **Error! Bookmark not defined.**
 - 2.4.2. The Pastoral work **Error! Bookmark not defined.**
 - 2.4.3. The Catholic Action..... **Error! Bookmark not defined.**

3. The Roman Catholic dean district from Sighetu Marmației/Máramarossziget

between 1944–1948 Error! Bookmark not defined.

- 3.1. The end of the Second World War and its impact on the life of the Catholic dean district from Sighetu Marmației/Máramarossziget **Error! Bookmark not defined.**

3.1.1.	The Roman Catholic Church and the Jewish Question in Maramureş/Máramaros	Error! Bookmark not defined.
3.1.2.	Fugitive priests and believers	Error! Bookmark not defined.
3.1.3.	Situation of war in the light of parish accounts	Error! Bookmark not defined.
3.1.4.	Roman Catholic parishes at the time of the Soviet invasion	Error! Bookmark not defined.
3.1.5.	The case of Maramureş/Máramaros territorial affiliation	Error! Bookmark not defined.
3.1.6.	Deportations and internments	Error! Bookmark not defined.
3.1.7.	The Sighetu Marmaţiei/Máramarosszigeti collection camp	Error! Bookmark not defined.
3.2.	Ecclesiastical affairs of the dean district on Sighetu Marmaţiei/Máramarossziget	Error! Bookmark not defined.
3.2.1.	The search for a way for the Roman Catholic Church in the new political conditions in Maramureş/Máramaros	Error! Bookmark not defined.
3.2.2.	Kádár József the new piarist prior	Error! Bookmark not defined.
3.2.3.	Kádár József attitudes towards MNSz	Error! Bookmark not defined.
3.2.4.	Religious schools in Maramureş/Máramaros between 1944 and 1948	Error! Bookmark not defined.
3.2.5.	The problem of priestly training between 1944 and 1948	Error! Bookmark not defined.
3.2.6.	The impact of pastoral work between 1944 and 1948 in the coming period	Error! Bookmark not defined.
3.2.7.	Conclusions	Error! Bookmark not defined.
Summary		Error! Bookmark not defined.
Rezumat		Error! Bookmark not defined.
Summary		1
Függelék		Error! Bookmark not defined.
Bibliography		Error! Bookmark not defined.