

the most longed-for and best-loved customs. However, the observance of national festivals does not prevent many parents from celebrating religious ones as well (Easter, Shrove-tide, Christmas Eve etc.). Participation in these sustains religious traditions and creates a basis for building a positive disposition among children towards the cult-ritual system of the church. Many parents acknowledge that they believe in incantations, fortune-telling and witchcraft; they may thus undermine their children's understanding and conviction regarding the strength and invincibility of the human genius and a belief may become implanted in the intervention of supernatural forces and the availability of religious miracles in the life of the people.

An investigation into the feelings of parents about atheist activity shows that a significant proportion or parents consider scientific atheist propaganda and educational work needful and beneficial; but others, for various reasons, undervalue it.

Taking everything into account so far, we consider that the political, social and pedagogical aspects of atheist education ought to be considered as questions of current importance, awaiting a solution from the socio-pedagogical system of today and tomorrow. Atheist instruction must be carried out as an integrated educational process, under the combined pedagogical influence of the kindergarten and the family.

In their common work, it is imperative that the functions of each of these two agencies of influence be made clear, that modern forms of pedagogical instruction of parents be sought, forms that show how the family can exert its influence endorsing the children's atheist outlook as inculcated in the kindergarten. Only through the combined forces of the kindergarten and the family will the desired goal be attained, namely that the foundations of atheism may be laid in children's characters while they are still young.

Bulányi Replies to the Vatican

In RCL Vol.15 No.3, pp. 346-50, we published the Vatican's condemnation of the teachings of Fr György Bulányi as it was conveyed in the form of a letter to Bulányi from Cardinal Joseph Ratzinger, Prefect of the Sacred Congregation of the Faith, dated 1 September 1986. We also included in that issue a short bibliography of published documents and articles concerning the Bulányi controversy and its place in the current Hungarian Catholic context.

Cardinal Ratzinger's letter was published in the Hungarian Catholic press in June 1987. In his response to the letter, published below,

Fr Bulányi criticises the Cardinal for allowing his letter to be published, defends his own actions and repeats a qualified declaration of loyalty to the teachings of the church.

Budapest, 15 October 1987

Your Eminence,

In your letter of 31 January 1986 you told me that you had found "wrong, dangerous and mistaken" views in my essay (*Church Order*); you were intending to publish this assertion of yours and were requesting me for my part to recant.

In my immediate answer of 4 February 1986 I declared it to be unacceptable that your office should publicly condemn an essay which I could not publish. I stated that for many years the Hungarian hierarchy has been attacking my reputation in their press without giving me any opportunity to defend myself. I asked your Eminence that your office should not continue this practice, which is hardly fitting for a Christian church.

In my subsequent lengthy letter of Good Friday 1986, I demonstrated that my *Church Order* does not question the teachings on the consecration of bishops, but simply discusses which people with which qualities should be consecrated by our bishops. All doctrines based on the unchanging nature of revelation are in fact left unquestioned in my essay.

Six months later I received from your Eminence another letter (1 September 1986) which did drop a number of your earlier accusations, but in a milder form repeated your assertion of "wrong, dangerous and mistaken, as it was written". I was no longer called to "recant", but requested to "declare publicly my loyalty to the teachings of the church".

In obedience to your request I declared my adherence to the teachings of the church in a short answer on 29 September 1986.

Two months later, on 24 November 1986, I was informed by you that the expression of my loyalty in my letter was not "clear". In a new and lengthier Christmas letter of 1986 I endeavoured to make my declaration of loyalty as clear as possible.

I have received no answer so far from your Eminence to this last letter of mine. However, six months later I saw in the Catholic press in Hungary (*Magyar Kurir*, 11 June 1987) a letter

from the Sacred Congregation with your signature, dated 30 April 1987, in which you declare firstly that you are "now publishing" your letter of 1 September 1986, and secondly that "the answers of the author (i.e. my answers) were not satisfactory". To my knowledge you did not publish the letter on that day, or at any later date. Nor have I so far seen the letter in the *Acta Apostolicae Sedis*. It was only in the Hungarian Catholic press in June that your letter was published. From this press report I concluded that you did not consider my declaration of loyalty in my Christmas letter satisfactory either.

If your Eminence had informed me that my reply to you at Christmas also seemed inadequate to you, I would certainly have attempted a third formulation of my expression of loyalty within a month. Now I am doing so without your asking. I shall also list the reasons which motivate me to do this.

In my Good Friday letter, I told you that the publication of your letter would not help the pastoral situation in Hungary in any way, but would make it more difficult. This assertion of mine has been proved correct by the events which followed in the few months after its publication.

Within a week of its publication, Archbishop Paskai published an interview in the Hungarian Catholic press (*Magyar Kurir*, 18 June 1987), "to give the readers objective information". I shall refer to only two of the many assertions made by the Archbishop. The first is this. The basic motivation of my (our) pastoral activities is seen by the Archbishop to lie in our "spirit of political opposition". Thirty-five years ago the state prosecutor called for the death penalty by hanging for me with the same accusation. If we were to stand trial again at some time in the future because of our pastoral activity, the

state prosecutor could call for us to be punished because of this assertion by the Archbishop. The letter from your Eminence informs me that you have not forgotten my past sufferings for the Gospel of Christ and for my brothers. The publication of your letter encouraged the Archbishop to make the above quite different assertion publicly. The second of his assertions was that I "had not passed the test of dialogue", because I had not accepted his proposals. In our conversation he wanted me to withdraw everything in my *Church Order* which was not in accordance with the teaching of the church. For my part I suggested to the Archbishop that the Hungarian episcopate should withdraw the discriminatory measures which they published in 1982. Neither of us accepted the suggestion of the other. On the basis of this the Archbishop declares me unfit for dialogue. How can this be possible? Only because the Archbishop says "dialogue" and means "obedience".

In the following summer months, the Hungarian atheist press informed the country of your letter and of Archbishop Paskai's statements at great length and with satisfaction. Shall I also remind your Eminence that in 35 years of continual attacks on me, neither my home country nor my bishops have granted me any opportunity to publish my views? Not even two lines' worth. "Only if you admit your mistakes", then I could only publish *that* and nothing else, said Archbishop Paskai to me in the course of our "dialogue".

As far as our pastoral situation is concerned, I shall mention three small incidents which took place in the months following the publication of the letter.

In August, Archbishop Paskai called in a priest from his diocese, Gyula Havasi, a long-standing and well-known personality in our basis groups, to get an explanation: he

wanted to find out what Havasi thought about your published letter. In earlier years the bishops pensioned off several priests in accordance with the purposes of the state and in spite of the shortage of priests. Havasi was afraid: if his answer didn't please the Archbishop, would he too be pensioned off? So Havasi replied that only if this question were put to every priest of the diocese would he too give an answer.

In September Lajos Fila, the pastor of Pécel (a suburb of Budapest), told the church council of Pécel that your Eminence would soon write a new letter to me, in which you would excommunicate me. Then the pastor asked the members of the church council if they wanted to wait until I had been excommunicated, or if they wanted to act immediately to ban my friend Endre Halász, the previous pastor of Pécel, from all the functions of a priest. The church council chose to do so immediately.

The third incident involved the same Endre Halász. He leads a ministry in the parish to save alcoholics, and asked his bishop for moral support in this venture. The bishop promised this support, but later informed Halász that the State Office for Church Affairs found him unacceptable, and that therefore he could not carry out this work on church premises.

Perhaps these concrete examples will demonstrate clearly to your Eminence that after the publication of your letter there was no let-up in the combined efforts of the state and of our bishops to drive the "Bulánysts" out to the margins of church life.

These awful events are one factor motivating me to declare my loyalty a third time. The other factor is that our bishops make their ad limina visit to Rome this month.

Five years ago, our bishops led by

Cardinal Lékai used the ad limina visit to speak about us before the Holy Father in seriously slanderous terms. Cardinal Lékai also communicated this slander to his priests in a circular letter. I select only one slanderous statement: "They (i.e. we, the 'bad' communities) say that the holy ceremony performed by a bishop for the consecration of priests is not necessary, but that the vote of the congregation is enough." Your Eminence has read my writings, selected for your Congregation by Cardinal Lékai who made this allegation. You will therefore be able to see that the Holy Father was given wrong information.

My second motive is therefore to prevent any new misrepresentation of my case to the Holy Father. To this end — even if I can get no publicity in Hungary for these words of mine — I am writing an open letter to you now, so that it will at least gain some publicity abroad.

In your September letter to me you wrote: "When our Congregation asked you to accept the texts approved by the [Vatican] Council, it wanted to give you an opportunity openly to declare that you accept these doctrines which have been given to mankind once and for all,

and which no subsequent church decisions can alter, since they express aspects of revealed mystery." Using your words, I express again my adherence to the doctrine of the church:

I ACCEPT THESE DOCTRINES WHICH HAVE BEEN GIVEN TO MANKIND ONCE AND FOR ALL, AND WHICH NO SUBSEQUENT CHURCH DECISIONS CAN ALTER, SINCE THEY EXPRESS ASPECTS OF REVEALED MYSTERY. IF THERE IS ANYTHING IN MY *CHURCH ORDER* WHICH CONTRADICTS THESE DOCTRINES, THEN I DO NOT WISH TO REPRESENT THAT VIEW.

After this third expression of my loyalty, I would like to ask something of your Eminence. Since I do not expect that any good can come to the church of Christ from the kind of condemnation which involves preventing anyone from publishing his statements and writings, I ask your Eminence to make it clear that you will not prevent the publication either of my writings which your Congregation has read, or of our correspondence. I thank you in advance.

Commending myself to your love, I greet your Eminence with the respect due to one who follows in the tradition of the Apostles.

Fr György Bulányi

Samizdat Bibliographies and Documents

Keston College continues to publish a comprehensive listing of Soviet religious samizdat, which is updated periodically as new documents are received. Readers may request bibliographical summaries of all Soviet religious samizdat, or of specified denominations only. Photocopies of complete documents are also available. Summaries and texts ordered from Keston College cost 10p per page (plus VAT, UK only), plus postage.

Information about samizdat documents from other countries is available from the respective researchers at Keston College.

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