

I want to emphasize a few key features which are common to Central and Eastern Europe and to Croatia, which, as a part of that region, faces the same same or similar problems and issues. Since I am a history student, I want to underline that this region through its history has had a common interest and a shared common past in the Austro-Hungarian Empire, and, later, Communism. This year we mark the 100th anniversary of the break-up of the Austro-Hungarian Empire and the emergence of nation-states. The question of nation-states is an important part of political ethics within a CST-based reflection.

The Social Teaching of the Church at the Catholic University of Croatia

The Social Teaching of the Church at the Catholic University of Croatia (henceforth, CUC), is presented in a course of the same name: Social Teaching of the Church (henceforth CST). The University is still young, and it has five departments (History, Sociology, Psychology, Nursing and Communication Sciences) + a Chair of Theology. In all course programmes, including nursery, CST is an obligatory subject. It is one of the subjects the constitute the identity of CUC.



As the apostolic constitution of Pope John Paul II on the Catholic University, "Ex Corde Ecclesiae", proposed, CST is at the foundation the CUC. This course is intended for students of the following years of study: third year in the undergraduate programmes of history, communication sciences, nursing and sociology, and first year in the undergraduate programme of psychology.¹ The course objectives are: understanding the nature of the Church's social teaching, insight into its historical development, an overview of fundamental principles, the overview of major social topics in the context of social teaching, and familiarisation with the principal Church documents on social teaching.

The syllabus of the course CST² is divided into 14 teaching units among which each deal with key social issues that are at the center of CST. The syllabus goes from the definition of the

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CST, to an historical overview, then the main social questions like politics and ethics, human rights, family, Church and environment, then key social issues of today's society (poverty), and, finally, an overview to the key social encyclicals.

There are several other courses that are obligatory for CUC students who have connections with CST: Introduction to Theology, Introduction to Bioethics, Theology in Dialogue, Theological Anthropology, The Church in the Modern World. These subjects offer students another perspective, from the point of view of Catholic Church, on the main social issues, encouraging students to think about today's world from the perspective of CST.

Conferences, seminars, research projects that deal with particular social issues

In Croatia, especially at CUC, a few years ago there were several conferences and research projects that dealt with social issues and which are connected with the topic of the CST-CEE summer school. The first I would point out is: *„Hope in the future: The Experiences of Youth under Communism, the Transition to Democracy, and the Present.“* The conference was held in Zagreb, May 12-13, 2017. It was an international scientific conference of which the main goal was to bring together scholars from the leading Catholic universities of post-communist Poland, Slovakia, Hungary, Ukraine and Georgia in partnership with the University of Notre Dame (USA) and the Nanovic Institute for European Studies. The benefit of this Conference has been better networking among all from Catholic universities, especially Catholic universities from Central and East Europe who have shared a common history.³

The other conference that was held at CUC in 2015. was *„Political Rights and Religion“* Conference of the International Research Project *„Religion and Human Rights.“*⁴

This year, the main topic in the domain of CST has been Sunday as a rest day; the name of the conference was: *„Social and Economic Aspects of a Free Sunday.“*⁵ The conference, and the whole project, were held in collaboration with the Konrad Adenauer Stiftung⁶ and the Franciscan Institute for the Culture of Peace.⁷

Other topics that are in the domain of CST and that have been part of the conferences or seminars held at CUC, include reconciliation, memories, and the reconciliation of memories.

In the last few years there have been several workshops or conferences on the topic of reconciliation and confronting the past, just like the one in 2015; the title of the seminar was *„Coping with the Legacy of Totalitarian Regimes – Experiences of Germany and Croatia“*, held in collaboration between the CUC and the Konrad Adenauer Stiftung in Germany.⁸

Volunteer Group

Another aspect of action through the CST at the CUC is a volunteer group operating at the University, whose work includes students and professors. Through various volunteer actions, we try to help the poor and needy in Croatian society. Each action is in the spirit of helping, but also in raising awareness of the social situation around us. Some of the most promising actions in that direction have been held in the Christmas season or in Lent; for example, collecting and carrying food to social supermarkets, volunteering in the soup kitchen, visiting and volunteering in a home for homeless children, attending various associations and civil society organizations to get acquainted with their work, organizing lectures for students, most notably on Social Entrepreneurship, with the example of the social cooperative Sveti Martin. The main goal of this volunteer group is not only to help students empathize with those in difficulty in the society in which they live, but also to help them be aware of the dignity and value of every human being.⁹

Besides all the abovementioned activities related to learning CST, it is also important to note that CUC also cooperates with the Center for the Promotion of CST in Croatia.

NOTE

¹Hrvatsko katoličko sveučilište,

<http://www.unicath.hr/eng/chair-of-theology> 24.05.2018.

²Izvedbeni plan za Socijalni nauk Crkve,

<http://unicath.hr/izvedbeni-planovi-17-18/detaljni-izvedbeni-plan/2017-2018-obvezni/socijalni-nauk-crkve-povijest/> – 24.05.2018.

³In this footnote is link to the official page of the project, giving the project background and results nanstvena konferencija: Hope in the Future, unicath.hr, (HKS) 20.05.2018. Zagreb

<http://www.unicath.hr/international-scientific-conference-hope-in-the-future/participants>

⁴Political Rights and Religion, unicath.hr (HKS) 18.05.2018.

<http://www.unicath.hr/hks2015/wp-content/uploads/2015/12/political-rights-religion-program-abstracts.pdf>

⁵Konferencija „Društveni i gospodarski aspekti slobodne nedjelje“ unicath.hr, (HKS) 19.05.2018.

<http://www.unicath.hr/odrzana-konferencija-drustveni-i-gospodarski-aspekti-slobodne-nedjelje>

⁶Konrad Adenauer Stiftung; 22.05.2018.

<http://www.kas.de/wf/en/>

⁷Franjevački institut mira, Split

<http://franjevacki-institut.hr/eng>

⁸Održan okrugli stol „Suočavanje s nasljeđem totalitarnih režima – iskustva Hrvatske i Njemačke“ unicath.hr, (HKS) 24.05.2018.

<http://www.unicath.hr/odrzan-okrugli-stol-suocavanje-s-nasljedem-totalitarnih-rezima-iskustva-hrvatske-i-njemacke>

⁹Održan prvi susret Volonterske skupine u novoj akademskoj godini, unicath.hr (HKS) 10.05.2018.

<http://www.unicath.hr/odrzan-prvi-susret-volonterske-skupine-u-novoj-akademskoj-godini> ■