



SUMMARY

On the occasion of the Day of Remembrance for the victims of Vukovar 1991, the Institute of Social Sciences Ivo Pilar, in cooperation with the Catholic Faculty of Theology in Đakovo and the Croatian Franciscan Province of Saints Cyril and Methodius, on 15 November 2010 prepared the 13th Scientific Symposium “Vukovar ‘91 – nineteen years later” on the theme *Victor quia victima – hope for Croatia*. The aim of the symposium was to highlight the sacrifice and martyrdom of Vukovar in 1991 through various aspects – religious, sociological, psychological, victimological, anthropological, humanitarian..., and to gather distinguished participants who recognise the importance and relevance of this theme for contemporary life in Vukovar as well as Croatia. After months of preparation, a collection with most of the presented papers at the symposium has been published for the academic and general public. They represent a valuable contribution to the scientific, empirical and experiential evaluation of Vukovar ‘91 and its contributions to the creation, defence and construction of the Croatian state. This anthology is also a contribution of its publisher to mark the 20th anniversary of Vukovar ‘91, martyrdom, sacrifice, and the victory of the town’s inhabitants over the forces of evil and darkness.

In the text *Vukovar’s victims in light of the sacrifice of Jesus Christ. Profiles of theology victims* Ivica Raguž presents a brief theology of victims. The New Testament understands Christ’s death on the cross as a sacrifice. His sacrifice is viewed in two ways, as a victim and as a sacrificium. Christ’s death on the cross reveals the mechanism of victim creation and the senselessness of violence (R. Girard). It also expresses humankind’s dedication and commitment to truth and justice. However, more importantly God Himself announces the sacrifice of Christ as God’s love for the human race. Since God identifies Jesus Christ with all the innocent victims of history, he and the

dead victims, including those of Vukovar, provides hope. The sacrifice of Christ is victory over evil and violence; it is God's victory, the victory of truth and justice.

Željko Tanjić in his presentation *The meaning of suffering in senseless violence – an example of suffering in Vukovar* notes that violence occurred in Vukovar and that this caused suffering among everyone and created victims. However, it is necessary to meaningfully approach suffering and victims so that this is not turned into a new cycle of violence. Therefore, the author asks - whether Christianity can offer a solution that would be a challenge to humankind and society in reflection of the meaning of suffering in senseless violence?

In the text *Forgiveness of ignorance* Father Ivan Šarčević says that on the cross, Jesus prays to God to forgive his enemies and murderers because they did not know what they are doing. This ultimately incomprehensible sentence reflects the radicalism of Jesus's faith. Unaware that he will rise but in full trust of the merciful Father, without any human and divine support, Jesus saves victims and offenders through forgiveness, and invites them to a new life. A radical faith in a God who forgives the murders of innocent persons, returns trust in humankind and in victims and in offenders.

Based on ancient Franciscan sources, especially the writings of St. Francis of Assisi and his oldest biography, Father Nikola Vukoja in the text *The victim in the life and teachings of St. Francis of Assisi* contributes and elaborates some important elements that can help to enrich the understanding, acceptance and the life of victim and sacrifices in their lives, especially in situations that they have experienced and are still experiencing as inhabitants of Vukovar and many others who are Homeland War victims. St. Francis's understanding, acceptance and the life of the victim can be only understood if it proceeds from the perspective of Christian faith whereby the main goal is to live and conform to the life of Christ. The victim cannot understand, accept and live, if they are not associated with true forgiveness and reconciliation, especially in relation to those who have inflicted injustice and caused the victim. In particular, for St. Francis a person shows to what degree they are true precisely by what he/she wants and how calmly they can endure all the hardships and their capacity to forgive everyone. Only in this way, can people have a life filled with peace and joy.

Father Darko Tepert in his text *Old Testament theology of sacrifice and the idea of martyrdom*, based on the main descriptive and prescriptive Old Testament texts that

deal with sacrifice and sacrificial rites, and built on texts that connect the concept of martyrdom with sacrificial language, concludes that the Old Testament righteous offer their life for three main reasons: 1) so that their loyalty to God is not abandoned, 2) to give younger generations a good example, 3) to present an offering, which, like the offerings on the altar, raised on the Day of atonement, liberates both individuals and a people from sin. Personal sacrifice does not remain senseless for other people or for later generations. The sacrifice of the righteous in Old Testament readings accomplishes a close relationship with God. Therefore, it cannot be said that the sacrifice of some person or group of persons is meaningless as this gives meaning to justice and personal commitment to God.

The spiritual identity of biblical morality is unthinkable without the work of the Holy Spirit. This is importantly directed to God the Father and God the Son. This is referred to in the text *Spiritual identity. Ambiguity of emulation/discipleship of Christ* by Father Mario Cifrak. In the relationship towards God the Father and God the Son there is man. Moreover, that relationship is, of course, filial, that is, the only possible one. The relationship is established so that we emulate and follow the Son. Emulation, or discipleship, can be found in the first Christian writings, frequently the writings of the first Christian community, and listeners of the word of God, who have a responsibility to be like Christ. They really need to let the Spirit of Christ shape them. Hence we find some ambiguity in the emulation or following of Christ. The danger comes from the desire to emulate as this existed among the first humans, that is to be like God. Violence caused by the desire to imitate is shown in a hostile attitude towards Jesus. So that the following of Christ does not go in the wrong direction, the identity transformation of Christians should be left through the work of the Holy Spirit. To emulate Christ as the image of God is not then reproduction, but a response to an invitation that it is possible in the Holy Spirit to transform into the same image. The relationship of love towards others is created from this.

In the paper *Some empirical indicators of religiosity in the Vukovar population during the Serbian siege of the town (25th August until 18th November 1991)* Vine Mihaljević and Ivana Bendre question the cognitive and emotional religiosity within beliefs, religiosity in the narrow sense and personal religious experience. They sought to determine whether there is a significant change in the level of religiosity during crisis situations and social vulnerability of human life that the inhabitants of Vukovar during the

Serbian siege of the town in 1991 faced. The obtained results show that religion and religiosity are a meaningful way of dealing with social crisis situations that are hazardous to human life. Further, the meaning of religion and religiosity at a personal and collective level relatively increase as the level of suffering increases. Moreover, personal focus on the supernatural intensifies and in the absence and irregularity of institutional religious rituals, the relevance of religious symbols at a personal and community level increases.

Father Ante Perković in the text *The experience of sacrifice and martyrdom*, as a close observer of the events in Vukovar in Serbian concentration camps during 1991, points out that he often thought that he has no right to talk about his own experience, because, in comparison to others, he was not abused. However, as a witness of others' sacrifice and martyrdom, he shared their experiences as he watched, sympathised and understood other people's suffering!

Father Gordan Propadalo in the text *Veneration for the victims of Vukovar* briefly highlighted the undeniable fact of veneration in the town of Vukovar. He points out the causes of its occurrence and certain forms of its manifestation. Vukovar, as a result of its resistance, through its sacrifice and suffering of death has become a unique place of pilgrimage among the Croatian people.

Sanja Špoljar Vržina in her text *Anthropology of Vukovar: strategically revealing the 'civilizing missions' and practices of the culture of death* stresses that the truth about the Croatian War of Independence and about Vukovar have not been properly presented in the International (scientific) community. In fact, according to a number of more thorough international scientists there has been a serious misrepresentation, as well as a severe relativistic portrayal of all happenings, leading to a dangerous negation stance in International politics. The anthropology of Vukovar is part of a dedicated long-term approach of the author towards re-inverting the manipulatively inverted facts for which it is easily observable that they represent a false construction towards practices of shaming.

Society, interest, power – relations towards victims is a text by Renato Matić. It discusses the relation of Croatian society towards victims of war, that is, towards persons who directly or indirectly were affected by war circumstances during and after the aggression. In addition, this text questions whether war victims were further victimised in social relationships after the war. To answer these questions, the first section of the text analyses the overall

attitude of society towards the victim, with special emphasis on the social context, transected by lines of force and power. Further, the paper discusses whether and to what extent a humane and disinterested relationship to the victim disappeared in view of political or economic profit that comes through the systematic instrumentalisation of victims, and in the sociological tradition can be linked with the concept of moral entrepreneurship. The final section presents the neglected social resources that would prevent the confiscation of the victim's personality and its multiple victimisation. At the same time, this would provide disinterested respect for victims and the idea that members of society through appropriate education can reject the possibility of repeating the circumstances that lead to other victims.

From April to November 1992, the Society of Croatian female intellectuals collected and analysed documentation on the suffering of the Croatian people in the Serbian aggression against the Republic of Croatia. *Hundreds of witnesses* is the theme of the text by Rea Fulgosi-Masnjak and Vlasta Vince-Ribarić. The Society collected numerous testimonies of displaced persons, concentration camp prisoners and other victims of the Vukovar area, which were published in 1993 so that the beginning and course of the war as well as the crimes against Croatian and other non-Serb peoples would not be forgotten. These testimonies clearly and unambiguously show that the crime was planned in advance, that it was systematically implemented and that they violated human rights and international conventions of protection.

*Translated by
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