

The Church Online: the Roman Catholic Church and Social Media in the Czech Republic¹

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Abstract:

The article deals with how the Catholic Church is presented on the Internet, especially on social networks. It summarises the official opinions of the Church about the Internet and focuses on the state of the use of social networks by the Church, with an emphasis on the Czech environment. It solves the question of interpreting the issue from the point of view of the socially scientific study of religion. Methodologically, it is based on a qualitative descriptive analysis of primary sources and on a quantitative analysis of pages on social networks. From an emic point of view, the presentation on social networks carries out the informational, evangelistic, and pastoral functions for the Church. The use of social networks is associated with the new evangelisation. From the ethical point of view, the text examines the issue in relation to the concept of secularisation at individual, societal, and organisational levels. Through being presented on social networking the Church responds to the individualisation and privatisation of religions. Being present on social media also helps to establish a media and public agenda of the Church, and to form, maintain, and spread religious memory. Changes in the organisational structure of the Church administration can also be observed by which the Church has responded to socio-cultural changes in modern societies.

Keywords: Roman Catholic Church, the Internet, social media, Facebook, new evangelisation, secularisation, agenda development, religious memory

Introduction

The Internet is becoming a part of religious life and gives rise to *online religion*, that is, religious experience and religious practice on the Internet² in a number of forms where their diversity is likely to grow in the future.³ However, this study focuses rather on *religion online*, understood in a broad sense as information about religion that is mediated by the Internet.⁴ Churches and

1 The preparation and publication of the work was possible thanks to financial support from the Faculty of Philosophy of the Palacký University in Olomouc in 2018 from the Fund for the Support of Scientific Activities (grant FPVČ 2015/03: Re-production of the Knowledge of Religion and Educational System in the Modern Czech Society).

2 Rosalind I. J. HACKETT, Religion and the Internet, *Diogenes* 3/2006, p. 68.

3 Cf. Brenda E. BRASHER, *Give me that online religion*, San Francisco: Jossey-Bass Inc., Wiley, 2001, p. 11.

4 HACKETT, Religion..., p. 68.

religious societies react and adapt to the new conditions of the 'digital communication revolution'⁵ which lead them towards the need to communicate in new ways using new technologies. I will focus especially on internet social media used by churches with the example of the Roman Catholic Church,⁶ paying special regard to the Czech environment.

The Internet and online social networks or social media⁷ have become a common part of life in today's society. According to the Czech Statistical Office data for 2016, the internet was used by 76.5% of individuals over 16, with 60.3% of individuals using it daily.⁸ At the same time, according to the same survey, 41.4% of individuals older than 16 used Internet social networks. In the 16–24 age group, it was as high as 91.4% of individuals.⁹ For public-sector agents, including churches and religious societies with their representatives, having a presence on the Internet and social networking is becoming a necessity. Moreover, data on the use of Internet social networks by young people show that if churches want to reach this age group, they cannot ignore having such presentations through online social media.

The basic aim of this article is to answer the question about how the Church is presenting itself through the Internet, especially through online social networks. I will first focus briefly on the Internet presentation of the Holy See, with an emphasis on social media and attitudes to the Internet and social networking that the Holy See and the curial institutions take. Next, I will focus on attitudes and opinions on social networking, which the Czech Catholic Church itself and its representatives publicly present. However, the main aim is to provide the present state overview¹⁰ of the presentation of the Czech ecclesiastical administration and its highest institutions and representatives on online social networks, whose outlines are the core of this study. In the final part I will look for the concepts of religious science as a social-scientific study of religion that can be applied to today's situation of how the Catholic Church is presented on social networks.

Theoretical-Methodological Framework

Methodologically, I use a combination of qualitative and quantitative methods. The section devoted to the opinions of the Church and its representatives on the issue of the presentation on the Internet and especially on online social networks is based on a qualitative descriptive analysis of primary sources (in particular, the official website of the institutions of the Catholic Church abroad and in the Czech Republic) as well as on the analysis of secondary literature about this issue. I will primarily use the statements and documents that the Church presents on the issue

5 Christian SMITH, *Soul Searching. The Religious and Spiritual Lives of American Teenagers*, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2005, p. 180. As shown by research on the use of Internet social networks in the Czech environment (see footnotes 8 and 9), these kinds of media are especially popular among youth – this is a challenge for the churches and also a space for addressing this group of Internet users. As illustrated by an overview of the websites that the Catholic Church has on Facebook, many of them focus on youth (see below).

6 In the text, I will continue to use the terms Catholic Church or the Church specifically for the Roman Catholic Church.

7 The concepts of 'online / internet social networking' and 'online / internet social media' are often used freely in the area of everyday and professional discourse as well. I consider it appropriate to draw attention to the possibility of distinguishing their meaningful content. The concept of an 'internet social network' can be derived from the sociological understanding of the social network as a set of relations or mutual influences between the elements of the set (individuals or groups of individuals) that exist in the Internet environment. 'Internet Social Media' can be understood as an interactive Internet platform that allows the existence of an online social network (such as Facebook, Twitter, LinkedIn, etc.) and it is basically a social networking medium in the Internet environment, that is, a platform enabling relations between the network elements and their mutual communication. However, in this text I do not deviate from common practice and I use both terms as synonymous giving them the meaning of the Internet platform, social media, and social networks in the internet environment.

8 © Český statistický úřad, Informační společnost v číslech. Česká republika a EU. 2017 (online), p. 42, available at: <https://www.czso.cz/documents/10180/46014808/061004-17.pdf/26e123e0-1dde-49c3-89ce-85f7fb85c7d4?version=1.1>, cited 19th January 2018.

9 *Ibid.*, p. 50.

10 This is an overview of the status as set out below in January 2018, when the main part of this study was created. See footnote 75.

through the internet media themselves, especially on their official web platforms. An overview of the state of the Church's presentation on social networks in the Czech environment is based on a quantitative analysis of the pages available on the social networks Facebook and Twitter. To determine the range of pages I include in my report, I have used published statistical data about the use of the Internet and social networks. The last part, providing the perspective of religious science on the Church's presentation on social networks, is based on approaches from the fields of religion, sociology, and media studies.

From a conceptual perspective, I look at two fundamental aspects: emic and ethical.¹¹ I try to sum up the attitudes of the Church and its representatives towards online presentation on social networks and I also try to summarise the possibilities of conceptualising this issue from the point of view of religious science. I will not deal in detail with the theological aspects of the issue, although these contexts cannot be completely avoided, especially if one of my themes is an emic perspective on the use of Internet social networks. Some theological concepts, such as the new evangelisation, will therefore be part of the answer to questions concerning the emic point of view. However, the theological level of the issue is not the theoretical framework of this study. Given the fact that this text is based on the paradigm of religious science as a social science, which is interdisciplinary, non-theological, and value-neutral study of religion, I interpret the theological level simply as a means of theological legitimisation of the issue in the ecclesial environment without taking any assessment opinion on this issue. In the context of the religious science perspective, which represents the ethical level of exploring a particular issue, I will look for the theoretical and conceptualisation tools of religious science as a social science that can be used to interpret the use of new technologies by the Church, especially when it comes to Internet social networking presentation.

The basic objective of the article is, however, to present an overview of the presentation of the Catholic Church on Internet social networks in the Czech environment. It is impossible to achieve such a comprehensive goal within a single article, so I want to present this text as a first step towards its fulfilment. The sample which will be included in the overview must be first more precisely defined. Talking about the internet social networks in the Czech environment, the most significant share is that of the Facebook network, which, as shown by recent surveys, is significantly dominant in terms of the number of users. According to the data published in the Focus agency research report, in September 2016 there was 42% of the adult population of the Czech Republic which had a Facebook social network profile.¹² If one mentions the other platforms, including Google+, Youtube, or Instagram, there is a significant gap between them and Facebook. Between 8% and 12% of the population have an account on those other platforms while 4% of the adult population had a Twitter account.¹³ Other, newer market share data for individual months from December 2016 to December 2017¹⁴ confirm the fundamental position of Facebook by showing its market

11 In simple terms, the emic aspect represents the perspective of the agents, in this case the Church and its representatives, and the ethical point of view is based on the perspective of objectivising science, in this case religious science as an interdisciplinary social science about religion. The emic and ethical perspectives belong to the basic concepts in cultural anthropology. The terms are associated with the anthropologist and linguist Kenneth L. Pike, who defined them in 1967 (Alan BARNARD and Jonathan SPENCER, ed., *Encyclopedia of Social and Cultural Anthropology*, London: Routledge, 2002, pp. 180–183). The application of these concepts in my text is based on the use of a combination of qualitative and quantitative approaches to the subject under consideration. The aim is to integrate information obtained while using different methods to capture the multiple dimensions and contexts of the explored phenomenon. (cf. Sharlene HESSE-BIBER and R. Burke JOHNSON, ed., *The Oxford Handbook of Multimethod and Mixed Methods Research Inquiry*, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2010, p. 576).

12 © Focus, *Uživatelé sociálních sítí v ČR* (online), available at <http://www.focus-agency.cz/files/contentFiles/socialni-site-2016-cz.pdf>, cited 12th December 2017.

13 Ibid.

14 © StatCounter, *Social Media Stats Czech Republic* (online), available at: <http://gs.statcounter.com/social-media-stats/all/czech-republic/#monthly-201612-201712>, cited 18th January 2018.

share within the Czech Republic for individual months in the range of 53-74%, while the shares of other social networks are around 10% this year. There is a potential impact on up to 5,300,000 people if an advertising message is distributed through the Facebook social network in the Czech Republic (stated by Facebook itself in January 2018).¹⁵ For these reasons, I will focus on the presentation of the Church through the Facebook social network. For comparison purposes, I am listing the number of follow-ups on some sites on the Twitter social network, which provides the official presentation platform for the Holy See.

Not only on Facebook itself, but on the Czech Internet in general, there are a lot of pages that can be found in some way related to the Church or to Catholicism, so it is necessary to define more precisely the circle of the pages I will continue to deal with – an overview of the Church's presentation on this social network cannot be taken as complete. I will only focus on the social networking sites of Facebook, which are the official communication and presentation platforms of the Church, its institutions, organs, and their representatives in the Czech Republic. The report includes pages that are open communication platforms and are not, for example, closed discussion groups. My work will be based on the organisational structure of ecclesiastical administration and, due to the limitation of the scope, I will focus on the Archbishopric and Bishopric, their representatives and the organs of the Church at this highest administrative level whose activities are primarily directed towards the Czech environment, respectively their activities are based on the Czech environment. These also include the presentation of the Czech Bishops' Conference.¹⁶ Into the overview, I also include a presentation of Catholic Weekly (Katolický týdeník), because it is the official media platform of the Czech and Moravian Church provinces and undoubtedly an important communication medium of the Church, which is owned by ČBK and which has historical tradition.¹⁷ I will not devote more attention to other ecclesiastical institutions and organisations, orders, vicariates, deaneries, parishes, or websites that are not directly incorporated into those Church institutions at the level of Archbishopric and Bishopric. I do not include, for example, the webpages of Caritas Czech Republic and its individual components (diocesan or parish charities) as it is a separate non-profit organisation established by ČBK and is primarily active in the field of social services. I will not focus on the pages of the Church leaders that are administered by their fans, or websites which parody these leaders or the Church institutions.¹⁸ I will only deal with those webpages that are openly marked as the official pages of the Church institutions and their representatives in the Czech Republic on Facebook or Twitter, or webpages which are linked to the official web portals of the Church institutions and under which these webpages are organised.¹⁹ The final criteria are

15 © Facebook, Ads Manager – Audience (online), available at: <https://www.facebook.com/ads/manager/creation/creation/?act=44011442&pid=p1>, cited 18th January 2018.

16 Henceforth referred to as ČBK.

17 According to the Commercial Register, the publisher of Catholic Weekly (Katolický týdeník) is the limited liability company of the same name. The only shareholder is ČBK (© MSpČR, full listing from the Commercial Register [online], available at: <https://or.justice.cz/ias/ui/rejstrik-firma.vysledky?subjektId=663730&typ=UPLNY>, cited 19th January 2018).

18 An example of a fan page can be the Facebook page of Cardinal Dominik Duka, available at <https://www.facebook.com/Dominik.Duka/> – according to the information on this page, it is operated by the cardinal's fans and on 19th January 2018 was marked as 'liked' by 2,348 users. There are 2,277 users following the page. An example of a Catholic parody can be the Facebook page called Tisickráte at <https://www.facebook.com/tisickrate/>, which is marked as 'liked' by 5,895 users to the same date. There are 6,190 users following this page. Similar pages can give a possible direction for further research.

19 I will not include, for example, the Facebook page of the Emeritus Bishop of Pilsen František Radkovský, which is available at <https://www.facebook.com/Mons.Frantisek.Radkovsky/>. The page is not marked as a verified or official profile. Furthermore, for example, there is a Facebook page of the Papal Missionary Works in the Czech Republic (available at <https://www.facebook.com/PapezskaMisijniDila/>). This one, given the profile of this organisation, reaches the notional limit of meeting the criteria for listing. Papal missionary works are primarily focused on world missions, and their activities include international projects, but they also operate significantly in dioceses in the Czech Republic (for example, in the area of pastoralisation of children – cf. Ivana HAJIČOVÁ, *Analýza činnosti papežských misijních děl v České republice*), diploma thesis, Prague: Univerzita Karlova, Katolická teologická fakulta, Katedra teologické etiky a spirituální

the number of followers and activity on the web page: in my overview, I list websites that have at least 200 followers on 19th January 2018, and at least one post has been published during the one year period up to 19th January 2018.

The Church, the Internet, and Online Social Networks Today

What is the attitude of Holy See, as the highest ecclesiastical institution, towards the use of the Internet and online social networks, and what is the recent history of using new communication technologies and the Internet by the Church?

We can say that, officially, the Holy See and its institutions are in favour of presenting themselves on the Internet and social networks. From the emic point of view (in the ecclesial environment itself), the use of the Internet can be combined with the concept of ‘new evangelisation.’²⁰ The notion of ‘new evangelisation’ is not always used in a clearly unambiguous meaning – it may vary to a certain extent according to local conditions,²¹ but its basic meaning is given (in the ecclesial environment) by the context of its origin. The very concept appears in connection with Pope Paul VI and his apostolic exhortation *Evangelii nuntiandi* issued in 1975,²² where the pope writes about a ‘new period of evangelization’²³ after the Second Vatican Council. John Paul II significantly develops this concept in his encyclical letter *Redemptoris missio* in 1990,²⁴ in which the term is clearly defined as the ‘re-evangelization’ of those who ‘have already received the mission of Christ.’²⁵ The new evangelisation refers in particular to countries with ‘an ancient Christian tradition,’²⁶ where the faith is weakened, or people no longer feel to be members of the Church – in such cases, it is necessary to ‘re-evangelize,’²⁷ using also ‘audiovisual means’²⁸ especially among youth as the document recommends. Benedict XVI gives (in his Apostolic Letter *motu proprio*²⁹ in 2010) institutional patronage to the concept of a new evangelisation when he establishes the Pontifical Council for the New Evangelization as a new curial dicastery.³⁰

In the ecclesial environment itself, the new evangelisation is linked to the use of new technologies and modern means of communication, including the Internet and Internet social networks, as exemplified, for example, by Cardinal Claudio M. Celli, Chairman of the Pontifical Council for

teologie, 2013, p. 55) – due to the criteria selected, the page of Papal Missionary Works was not included in the overview.

20 Cf. © John P. FOLEY, Document: *Cirkev a internet* (online), last update on 22nd February 2002, available at: <http://www.pastorace.cz/tematicke-texty/dokument-cirkev-a-internet-papezska-rada-pro-hromadne-sdelovaci-prostredky-2222002>, cited 19th January 2018. To know more about the concept of new evangelisation and the use of new media by the Church, cf. Ineke de FEIJTER, *The Art of Dialogue. Religion, Communication and Global Media Culture*, Berlin: LIT Verlag, 2007, p. 187; cf. also Ian LINDEN, *Global Catholicism: Evangelization and a Networked Church*, in: *The New Evangelization: Faith, People, Context and Practice*, ed. Paul GROGAN and Kim KIRSTEEN, London: Bloomsbury, 2015, p. 124.

21 Paul GROGAN and Kim KIRSTEEN, ed., *The New Evangelization: Faith, People, Context and Practice*, London: Bloomsbury, 2015, p. vii.

22 © PAULUS PP. VI, *Evangelii nuntiandi*. Apostolic exhortation of His Holiness pope Paul VI to the episcopate, to the clergy and to all the faithful of the entire world, 1975 (online), available at: http://w2.vatican.va/content/paul-vi/en/apost_exhortations/documents/hf_p-vi_exh_19751208_evangelii-nuntiandi.html, cited 18th January 2018.

23 *Ibid.*, p. 2.

24 © IOANNES PAULUS PP. II, *Redemptoris missio*. On the permanent validity of the Church’s missionary mandate, 1990 (online), last update 27th June 2015, available at: http://w2.vatican.va/content/john-paul-ii/en/encyclicals/documents/hf_jp-ii_enc_07121990_redemptoris-missio.html, cited 1st January 2018.

25 *Ibid.*, p. 30.

26 *Ibid.*, p. 33.

27 *Ibid.*

28 *Ibid.*, p. 83.

29 This is a rescript issued by the pope’s ‘*motu proprio*’, without the initiative of a third party.

30 © BENEDICTUS PP. XVI, Apostolic letter in the form of *motu proprio* *Ubicumque et semper* of the supreme pontiff Benedict XVI establishing the pontifical council for promoting the new evangelization (online), available at: http://w2.vatican.va/content/benedict-xvi/en/apost_letters/documents/hf_ben-xvi_apl_20100921_ubicumque-et-semper.html, cited 19th January 2018.

the Media.³¹ Cardinal Celli in a 2014 interview explains the use of online social networks and new media in general as the Church's attempt to use the Internet not only as a mere means of evangelisation, but to evangelise the 'digital continent' literally 'from the inside.'³² Cardinal Claudio M. Celli visited Prague in 2013 and the report from his visit is published on the website of Cardinal Dominik Duka.³³ The report highlights the need for the active participation of the Church on social networks and quotes Archbishop Celli's speech: 'We have to go where people are. Today's society is ruled by the internet culture. For example, Facebook represents a huge continent with more than one billion inhabitants (...)'³⁴ The report also quotes Cardinal Celli's lecture on the use of modern media: 'Even in the Vatican, the presence of the Church on social networks is not ideal, and it is precisely why we must work on it more and work with catechists, priests and bishops in order to be seen on social networks.'³⁵

Similarly, in 2002, Cardinal John Patrick Foley (the former Chairman of the Pontifical Council for the Media),³⁶ in the documentary 'The Church and the Internet', described the Internet not only as an important means of communicating messages and information but also as a means of evangelising, 're-evangelisation' (respectively new evangelisation), and some pastoral and catechetical forms – he combines here the use of the Internet with the concept of new evangelisation.³⁷

The development of Internet usage by the Holy See is linked to the pontificate of John Paul II and Benedict XVI, and continues with the pontificate of Pope Francis. John Paul II published (in 2002, on the occasion of the 36th World Media Day) the message 'The Internet: a New Forum for Proclaiming the Gospel.'³⁸ According to John Paul II, the Church has stood many times on cultural interfaces that have required new forms of evangelisation, and the ongoing communication and information revolution is just such a threshold.³⁹ John Paul II notes that the Internet is a great means of evangelisation.⁴⁰

In the spirit of John Paul II, Pope Benedict XVI continues to talk about the use of the Internet as a pastoral means and a means of Gospel spreading in the 'Message to the 44th World Media Day'⁴¹ in 2010, and he even compares the Internet to the 'digital continent' which needs to be evangelised – this task is (according to Pope Benedict) assigned especially to the youth.⁴² At the beginning of December 2012, the official website of the pope was set up on the Twitter social network, and on 12th December of that year, Pope Benedict XVI published his first short message, a 'tweet'.⁴³ This

31 The Pontifical Council for the Media (Pontificium consilium de communicationibus socialibus) was the curial authority that, on the basis of Pope Francis' curial reform in 2015, became part of the new Secretariat for Communication. – viz © FRANCISCUS, Apostolic Letter Issued Motu Proprio by the Supreme Pontiff Francis for the Establishment of the Secretariat for Communication (online), last update 27th June 2015, available at: http://w2.vatican.va/content/francesco/en/motu_proprio/documents/papa-francesco-motu-proprio_20150627_segreteria-comunicazione.html, cited 12th December 2017.

32 Cf. © Alton J. PELOWSKI, Evangelization and the 'Digital Continent' (online), last update 12th September 2014, available at: <http://www.pccs.va/index.php/en/news2/attualita/item/2549-evangelization-and-the-digital-continent>, cited 19th January 2018.

33 © Dominikduka.cz, Arcibiskup Celli navštívil Dominika Duku (online), last update 22nd April 2013, available at: <http://www.dominikduka.cz/ze-zivota-dominika-dukyc/arcibiskup-celli-navstivil-dominika-dukuc/>, cited 18th January 2018.

34 Ibid.

35 Ibid.

36 See note no. 20. Regarding the Pontifical Council for the Media see note no. 31.

37 © FOLEY, Document...

38 © IOANNES PAULUS PP. II, Message of the Holy Father John Paul II for the 36th world communications day 'Internet: A New Forum for Proclaiming the Gospel' (online), last update 12th May 2002, available at: https://w2.vatican.va/content/john-paul-ii/en/messages/communications/documents/hf_jp-ii_mes_20020122_world-communications-day.html, cited 19th January 2018.

39 Ibid.

40 Ibid.

41 © BENEDICTUS PP. XVI, Poselství ke 44. světovému dni sdělovacích prostředků (online), last update 23rd January 2010, available at <https://www.cirkev.cz/archiv/100123-poselstvi-ke-44-svetovemu-dni-sdelovacich-prostredku>, cited 19th January 2018.

42 Ibid.

43 © Claire DÍAZ-ORTIZ, The Pope's first Tweets (online), last update 12th December 2012, available at: <https://blog.twitter.com/official/>

Twitter web page also serves the present pope Francis.

The pope's official Twitter profile on English-language Twitter was viewed by more than 16 million users to the date 19th January 2018.⁴⁴ The website has eight more language versions, including Latin, French, Arabic, or Polish. By the end of 2017, the pope's profile pages, in all nine world languages, had more than 60 million followers on Twitter.⁴⁵

The official Internet communication of the Church, which includes the official communication via Internet social networks as well, is currently managed by the Communications Secretariat. The Secretariat is a curial office, that is, a dicastery, which was created in the framework of the curial reform on the basis of the Apostolic Letter *motu proprio* by Pope Francis issued on 27th June 2015.⁴⁶ Pope Francis notes that in the current age of digital media, the communication and information platforms of the Apostolic See need to be reorganised.⁴⁷ All official Holy See media, therefore, are still managed by the newly created office, and Article 3 of the Apostolic Letter directly assigns to the authority of the new office the administration of the Pope's Twitter account '@pontifex' and the Vatican website www.vatican.va.⁴⁸

In addition to the 'papal' twitter account, the website Vatican News also provides the official communication channel on the social network for the Holy See. This is the information system of the Vatican, which was created in connection with the Pope's reform of the communication platform organisation for the Holy See in 2015⁴⁹ and which spreads information through its own websites to online social networks. Besides websites in various language versions, Vatican News also runs pages on Facebook and Twitter. The Facebook page is run in English and (as of 19th January 2018) has had over 3 million Facebook users view it.⁵⁰ The 'reposts' of tweets from the official twitter page often appear here. The Twitter page of Vatican News, also in English, had 246,000 followers on the same date.⁵¹

In the Czech ecclesial environment, among the highest representatives of the Church, one can find both helpful and reserved attitudes towards the use of the Internet and online social networks. As early as 2009, Cardinal Miloslav Vlk (who emphasises the importance of using modern means of communication by the Church) mentions the use of Youtube and Facebook by the Vatican, and he sees the usefulness of the Internet in particular in connection with the spread of the Gospel.⁵² The successor of Cardinal Vlk (in the office of the Archbishop of Prague), Cardinal Dominik Duka, speaks with some reservation about the new communication technologies, even though his presence on social networks is quite significant. In a 2011 interview, published on his official website, Cardinal Duka talks about the new evangelisation and stresses that the mere use of new technologies to spread 'propaganda and advertising'⁵³ does not fulfil the idea of this concept.

en_us/a/2012/the-pope-s-first-tweets.html, cited 12th December 2017; © Devin WATKINS, Pope's Twitter account marks 5 years: 'Useful for evangelization' (online), last update 11th December 2017, available at <http://www.vaticannews.va/en/vatican-city/news/2017-12/pope-s-twitter-account-marks-5-years.html>, cited 12th December 2017.

44 © Twitter, @pontifex (online), available at <https://twitter.com/Pontifex>, cited 19th January 2018.

45 © WATKINS, Pope's...

46 © FRANCISCUS, Apostolic...

47 Ibid.

48 Ibid.

49 © Vatican News, About Us (online), available at: <http://www.vaticannews.va/en/about-us.html>, cited 12th December 2017.

50 © Facebook, @vaticannews (online), available at: <https://www.facebook.com/vaticannews/>, cited 19th January 2018.

51 © Twitter, @VaticanNews (online), available at: <https://twitter.com/vaticannews>, cited 19th January 2018. In addition to Facebook and Twitter, Vatican News has both Youtube and Instagram websites.

52 © Miloslav VLK, Moderní komunikační technologie a největší „komunikátor“ (online), last update 25th May 2009, available at: <http://www.kardinal.cz/index.php?cmd=article&articleID=348>, cited 12th December 2017.

53 © Dominik DUKA and Jan UHLÍŘ, Současnému člověku nemůžeme nabízet recepty (online), last update 19th May 2011, available at: <http://www.dominikduka.cz/rozhovory-menu/soucasnemu-cloveku-nemuzeme-nabizet-recepty/>, cited 18th January 2018.

Despite a somewhat sceptical attitude, however, Cardinal Duka personally favours the usage of social networks – as witnessed, among other things, by the cardinal's own blog post 'Facebook Dialogue' in 2015 where Cardinal Duka presents his Facebook page as a forum for discussion about religion.⁵⁴ The main aim of the Facebook discussion, according to Duka, is: '(...) the majority of the population who does not speak about religion, even though it has an obvious relation to it (...). I will intentionally place the discussion on Facebook, a currently popular social network, which can be considered as a "continent" insufficiently explored by the churches.'⁵⁵ The webpages that informed in 2015 about Cardinal Duka's Facebook page (which is thought to be a platform for leading the dialogue on faith) included that of the Archbishopric of Prague.⁵⁶ Cardinal Duka conducts activity on this social network in order to use modern technologies as a way into a dialogue with the 'silent half of the nation,'⁵⁷ that is, those who, according to the 2011 census, did not comment on the issue of religious affiliation.⁵⁸

Cardinal Duka, in his blog post, uses the comparison given by Pope Benedict XVI (that is, the Internet as a continent).⁵⁹ Even though the written contribution of Cardinal Duka does not speak directly about this, given the way of how he formulates the goals of the Facebook discussion about faith, his expression can be perceived (in the Czech environment) in connection with the practical use of online social networks by the Church and their representatives as a means of new evangelisation.

Catholic Weekly, an official newspaper of the Czech and Moravian Church provinces, summarises the theme of using social networks by the Church in an interesting way. The newspaper reflects the use of Facebook by the Church in the article 'Without Facebook, the Church Cannot Work Anymore', published in February 2014 and available on the website of this newspaper.⁶⁰ It is clear from the title that the author considers the presentation of the Church via Internet social networks to be indispensable. The author mentions the pope's Twitter account and the existence of the Facebook presentation of the Vatican. 'In recent years, Facebook has become an indispensable helper of the Czech Church as well. It is used by believers, ecclesiastical institutions and priests. Cardinal Dominik Duka is not an exception,'⁶¹ says the author and takes a closer look at the cardinal's Facebook page. The author quotes Josef Nerušil,⁶² (a manager of the cardinal's Facebook profile): according to Nerušil, the cardinal's Facebook profile serves as a means of sharing information with representatives of other media, but also it is an important means of sharing information with the entire Facebook community.⁶³ Sharing information from the Church's life, as well as the attitudes of the Church to events in public life (that the Church is in touch with), is also reported by the author in connection with the Facebook page of the Czech Bishops' Con-

54 © Dominik DUKA, Facebookový dialog (online), last update 6th February 2015, available at: <http://blog.aktualne.cz/blogy/dominik-duka.php?itemid=24656>, cited 18th January 2018.

55 Ibid.

56 © Josef NERUŠIL, Facebookový dialog s kardinálem Dukou (online), last update 6th February 2015, available at: <http://www.apha.cz/facebookovy-dialog-s-kardinalem-dukou>, cited 19th January 2018.

57 Ibid.

58 Ibid.

59 © BENEDICTUS PP. XVI, Poselství...

60 © Jiří PRINZ, Bez Facebooku se církev už neobejde (online), last update on 5th February 2014, available at: <http://www.katyd.cz/clanky/bez-facebooku-se-cirkev-uz-neobejde.html>, cited 19th January 2018.

61 Ibid.

62 According to the web of Prague Archbishopric, Josef Nerušil is an employee of the Archbishop's Office of External Relations – the press centre which is responsible for electronic media – cf. © Arcibiskupství pražské, Kontakty (online), available at: <http://www.apha.cz/kontakty-na-zamestnance>, cited 18th January 2018. The existence of work positions specialised in electronic media, administration of social networking, etc., in the organisational structure of ecclesiastical institutions can be interpreted from a religious science point of view in connection with the concept of the organisational level of secularisation – see below in this article.

63 © PRINZ, Bez Facebooku...

ference.⁶⁴ In addition to sharing information about life inside the Church and about the attitudes of the Church and its representatives to events in the public sphere, the author mentions another important function of social networks. It is their use as tools of evangelisation. The author also quotes Josef Ptáček, who is presented as an information technology methodology specialist of the Prague Archbishopric.⁶⁵ Josef Ptáček states that Facebook can become an area for evangelisation in the form of a personal testimony of living faith and its meaning.⁶⁶

With regard to the quoted statements by representatives of the Catholic Church on the presentation of the Church on social networks, it can be said that this way of presentation has two basic functions in the emic sense,⁶⁷ which can be seen in mutual relation. The first is *informational* (informing the public about the various activities of the Church and presenting the attitudes of the Church to current events and problems). The latter function can be described as *evangelistic and pastoral* in which new technologies and new media serve as a means of presenting and promoting the Christian (Catholic) worldview. It is clear that both of these functions cannot be separated from each other unambiguously. The information about the life of the Church is also understood (in the emic sense) as a testimony of living one's faith.⁶⁸

In the Czech ecclesial environment, the use of the Internet and social networks is also associated with new evangelisation, respectively re-evangelisation. Cardinal Dominik Duka speaks about this concept in connection with the use of new technologies, even though he is somehow cautious regarding using the Internet as a tool for spreading the Gospel.⁶⁹ In any case, the Internet and online social networks are (in an emic sense) perceived mainly as a means and space for spreading the gospel,⁷⁰ even though there are also calls for caution when using the Internet and online social networks.⁷¹

An important context of the use of the Internet and online social networks by the Church (which results directly from the cited Church documents) is the focus on youth. In connection with the new evangelisation, official papal documents talk about this⁷² and the use of online social networks for evangelisation and pastoral work among the youth is also the subject of documents that can be found in the Czech ecclesial environment.⁷³

It is certainly not a surprising finding that the Church leaders' attitudes towards online social

64 Ibid. The Facebook page of the Czech Bishops' Conference Press Centre was renamed 'Církev.cz' in 2016, linked with (at that time) the newly created website of the same name – cf. © Biskupství brněnské, Katolická církev nabízí informace na novém webu Církev.cz (online), last update 18th March 2016, available at: <https://www.biskupstvi.cz/2016-03-18-katolicka-cirkev-nabizi-informace-na-novem-webu>, cited 18th January 2018.

65 © PRINZ, Bez Facebooku... The personnel database on the website of the Archbishopric of Prague also introduces Josef Ptáček as an information technology methodology specialist – cf. © Arcibiskupství pražské, Katalog (online), available at: <https://katalog.apha.cz/web/osoby/1440>, cited 18th January 2018.

66 © PRINZ, Bez Facebooku...

67 I primarily address the question of what functions of the Internet and online social networks can be useful for the Church – the general question of the function of religion in society is deliberately left out as a similar analysis in the context of the subject examined would require a separate study. In order to know more about the functions of religion in society from the social science point of view cf., for example, Dušan LUŽNÝ, *Náboženství a moderní společnost*, Brno: Masarykova univerzita, 1999. To find more about this topic from a general theoretical point of view, with specific empirical examples, cf. Daniel V. A. OLSON and Detlef POLLACK, ed., *The Role of Religion in Modern Societies*, New York: Routledge, 2008.

68 Cf. *ibid.*

69 Cf. © DUKA and UHLÍŘ, *Současnému...*

70 Cf. for example © Arcibiskupství pražské, *Pastorační plán Arcidiecéze pražské 2014–2019* (online), p. 18, available at: <http://www.apha.cz/file/22192/pastoracni-plan-arcidieceze-prazske-2014-2019.pdf>, cited 19th January 2018.

71 Cf., for example, Jan BALÍK, ed., *Na cestě k člověku – témata pro společenství mladých lidí*, the place of issue is not stated: Sekretariát Sekce pro mládež ČBK a AKSM, 2014, pp. 67–73; cf. *Direktář pro službu a život kněží*, Prague: Sekretariát České biskupské konference, 2016, p. 87.

72 Cf., for example, © Benedictus PP. XVI, *Poselství...*

73 BALÍK, *Na cestě...*, pp. 67–73.

networks in the Czech environment correspond to the approach taken by the Holy See and its institutions to online social networks and the Internet. What is the present state of the presence of the Czech Catholic Church on social networks?

Presentation of the Church's Highest Institutions and Their Representatives on Social Networks

For clarity, I divide the webpages of the Czech Catholic Church on the social network Facebook into three groups. The first is the websites of the Archbishopric and the Bishopric, while the second is the websites of the highest Church leaders at this level, the archbishops and bishops. In the third group I will list the other institutions of the Catholic Church at the level of Archbishopric and Bishopric and the ČBK, as well as the webpages of Catholic Weekly as the official media platform of the Czech and Moravian Church provinces, according to the criteria described above. Facebook's dominant position among the Internet social networks in the Czech environment is confirmed by the comparison of the webpages of individual Church institutions and representatives of the Catholic Church hierarchy on the Facebook and Twitter networks in terms of the number of users who follow these pages. I compare the Facebook webpages of ecclesiastical institutions with the Twitter accounts. The reason is the fact that Twitter is a platform which primarily carries out the presentation of the Holy See – here, one can find the official profile webpage of the supreme ecclesiastical institution.

On the Facebook social network, the impact of webpages on a network user can be derived from the two data that are usually available on each webpage – the number of users who tagged the page with the 'Like' option, and the number of users who tagged the webpage with the 'Follow' option.⁷⁴ Facebook's personal websites offer a possibility to become a 'friend' of a person who owns a page – although Facebook limits the number of friends so that users above this limit can only choose the 'Follow' option. Twitter shows the number of users who are following the webpage. An overview of the websites serving as the official platforms of the Church on the online social networks in the Czech environment and the number of followers show that Facebook's social network is the main communication platform for the Church institutions and its representatives. The webpages of the highest ecclesiastical institutions and their representatives in both ecclesiastical provinces show the following overview tables, which (at the same time) include the number of followers, the 'Like' option and other basic information about these websites in January 2018⁷⁵ on the Facebook and Twitter social networking websites.

74 By selecting 'Like' on Facebook, the user supports the webpage and by that he can see its updates. The 'Follow' option means that the user can see the updates of such a labelled webpage, without even expressing his or her opinion about it.

75 Unless it is noted otherwise, the data about the number of followers or the tagging by selecting 'Like' in the tables and throughout the text when speaking about social networking websites is listed as of the date 19th January 2018. All the webpages listed in the tables (as of the given date) met the criteria needed for inclusion in this report, although, in some cases, the numbers of followers and the 'Like' option are quoted at a later date.

An Overview of Webpages on Social Networks

Webpage name / username	No. of followers	No. of 'Like' choices	Category of the webpage according to Facebook
Archbishopric of Prague / @arcibiskupstvi ⁷⁶	4 646	4 701	Religious Organisation
Diocese of Pilsen / @bip.cz ⁷⁷	997	982	Religious Organisation
Diocese of Ostrava and Opava / @doo.cz ⁷⁸	815	795	Religious Organisation
Diocese of Hradec Králové / @diecezekralovehradecka ⁷⁹	788	789	Religious Organisation
Bishopric of Brno / @biskupstvi ⁸⁰	622	609	Religious Organisation
Bishopric of Litoměřice / @dltm.cz ⁸¹	587	589	Religious Organisation
Bishopric of České Budějovice – the official website ⁸²	538	531	Religious Organisation

Facebook – archbishops and bishops				
Webpage name / username	No. of followers	No. of 'Like' choices	Friends (personal profiles)	Category of the webpage according to Facebook
Dominik Duka (Archbishop of Prague) ⁸³	12,386	–	4,483	Personal Profile
Mons. Václav Malý / @biskup.maly ⁸⁴	4,968	4,760	–	Public Figure
Pavel Konzbul / @biskupPavel ⁸⁵	4,113	3,996	–	Public Figure

76 © Facebook, Arcibiskupství pražské (online), available at: <https://www.facebook.com/arcibiskupstvi/>, cited 19th January 2018.

77 © Facebook, Diecéze plzeňská (online), available at: <https://www.facebook.com/bip.cz/>, cited 19th January 2018.

78 © Facebook, Diecéze ostravsko-opavská (online), available at: <https://www.facebook.com/doo.cz/>, cited 19th January 2018.

79 © Facebook, Královéhradecká diecéze (online), available at: <https://www.facebook.com/diecezekralovehradecka/>, cited 19th January 2018.

80 © Facebook, Biskupství brněnské (online), available at: <https://www.facebook.com/biskupstvi/>, cited 19th January 2018.

81 © Facebook, Biskupství litoměřické (online), available at: <https://www.facebook.com/dltm.cz/>, cited 19th January 2018.

82 © Facebook, Biskupství českobudějovické – oficiální stránka (online), available at: <https://www.facebook.com/Biskupství-českobudějovické-oficiální-stránka-342657039165153>, cited 19th January 2018.

83 © Facebook, Dominik Duka (Arcibiskup pražský) (online), available at: <https://www.facebook.com/dominik.duka.3>, cited 19th January 2018.

84 © Facebook, Mons. Václav Malý (online), available at: <https://www.facebook.com/biskup.maly/>, cited 19th January 2018.

85 © Facebook, Pavel Konzbul (online), available at: <https://www.facebook.com/pg/biskupPavel>, cited 19th January 2018.

Facebook – other websites of archbishop and episcopal institutions				
Webpage name / username	No. of followers	No. of 'Like' choices	Friends (personal profiles)	Category of the webpage according to Facebook (note – operator)
Víra.cz / @Vira.cz ⁸⁶	9,230	9,342	–	Education Website (Pastoral Centre of the Archbishopric of Prague)
Manželství krok za krokem / @manzelstvikrokzakrokem ⁸⁷	4,337	4,322	–	Organisation (Pastoral Centre – Family Centre)
Církev.cz / @cirkev.cz ⁸⁸	3,820	3,812	–	Religious Organisation (Press Centre ČBK)
Catholic Weekly (Katolický týdeník) / @KaTyd.cz ⁸⁹	3,418	3,454	–	Publisher
Liturgie.cz / @Liturgie.cz ⁹⁰	2,121	2,134	–	Society and Culture Website (Pastoral Centre of the Archbishopric of Prague)
Děti.víra.cz / @deti.vira.cz ⁹¹	1,883	1,885	–	Teens and Kids Website (Pastoral Centre of the Archbishopric of Prague)
ADCM Olomouc / @ADCMOlomouc ⁹²	1,381	1,390	–	Religious Centre (Archdiocesan Youth Centre in Olomouc, Archdiocese of Olomouc)
Modlitba.cz / @cz.modlitba ⁹³	1,062	1,062	–	Education (Pastoral Centre of the Archbishopric of Prague)
ADCM Praha / @Praha.ADCM ⁹⁴	816	828	–	Religious Centre (Archdiocesan Youth Centre in Prague)
Pastorace.cz / @spiritualita01 ⁹⁵	770	745	–	Education (Pastoral Centre of the Archbishopric of Prague)
DCM Brno ⁹⁶	751	757	–	Religious Organisation
Diecézní centrum pro mládež Hradec Králové ⁹⁷	570	565	–	Religious Organisation – Religious Centre
Diecézní centrum mládeže České Budějovice / @dcmcb ⁹⁸	514	525	–	Religious Organisation

86 © Facebook, Víra.cz (online), available at: <https://www.facebook.com/vira.cz/>, cited 19th January 2018.

87 © Facebook, Manželství krok za krokem (online), available at: <https://www.facebook.com/manzelstvikrokzakrokem/>, cited 19th January 2018.

88 © Facebook, Církev.cz (online), available at: <https://www.facebook.com/Cirkev.cz/>, cited 19th January 2018.

89 © Facebook, Katolický týdeník (online), available at: <https://www.facebook.com/KaTyd.cz/>, cited 19th January 2018.

90 © Facebook, Liturgie.cz (online), available at: <https://www.facebook.com/Liturgie.cz/>, cited 19th January 2018.

91 © Facebook, Děti.víra.cz (online), available at: <https://www.facebook.com/deti.vira.cz/>, cited 19th January 2018.

92 © Facebook, ADCM Olomouc (online), available at: <https://www.facebook.com/pg/ADCMOlomouc/>, cited 19th January 2018.

93 © Facebook, Modlitba.cz (online), available at: <https://www.facebook.com/cz.modlitba/>, cited 19th January 2018.

94 © Facebook, ADCM Praha (online), available at: <https://www.facebook.com/Praha.ADCM/>, cited 19th January 2018.

95 © Facebook, Pastorace.cz (online), available at: <https://www.facebook.com/spiritualita01/>, cited 19th January 2018.

96 © Facebook, DCM Brno (online), available at: <https://www.facebook.com/DCM-Brno-335046847299/>, cited 19th January 2018.

97 © Facebook, Diecézní centrum pro mládež Hradec Králové (online), available at: <https://www.facebook.com/Diecézní-centrum-pro-mládež-Hradec-Králové-1479375009009788/>, cited 19th January 2018.

98 © Facebook, Diecézní centrum mládeže České Budějovice (online), available at: <https://www.facebook.com/dcmcb/>, cited 18th June 2018.

DCM Plzeň / @DCMPlzen ⁹⁹	297	291	–	Community
Diecézní Centrum pro Mládež Litoměřice / @dcmlit ¹⁰⁰	273	277	–	Community Centre – Community
Katechetické a pedagogické centrum Ostrava / @ostravakpc ¹⁰¹	217	221	–	Religious Organisation
Katechetické středisko AP / @Katecheticke.stredisko.AP ¹⁰²	213	223	–	Religious Centre – Religious Organisation (Archbishopric of Prague)

Twitter		
Webpage name / username	No. of followers	Note
Arcibiskupství / @apha_cz ¹⁰³	1,247	The Archbishopric of Prague webpage
Dominik Duka / @dominikduka ¹⁰⁴	3,869	The webpage of Dominik Duka
Tomáš Holub / @TomasHolubPB ¹⁰⁵	1,983	The webpage of Bishop Tomáš Holub
Víra.cz / @wwwViraCz ¹⁰⁶	702	The webpage of Víra.cz (Pastoral Centre of the Archbishopric of Prague)

Based on the overview presented in the tables, it is possible to answer questions about the present state of the presentation of the highest institutions in the Czech ecclesiastical administration and their representatives on social networks and how many social network users are viewing their websites.

Speaking of the highest institutions of the Czech Catholic Church at the Archbishopric and Bishopric level, each institution has an official website (the Prague Archdiocese and all the bishoprics) on Facebook except the Olomouc Archdiocese which has not officially been present on the Internet social network yet.¹⁰⁷ The Facebook page of the Prague Archdiocese has the most Facebook followers.¹⁰⁸ It also is present on Twitter.¹⁰⁹

Representatives of the high clergy of the Czech Catholic Church at the highest institutional levels of the Church administration have official pages on social networks. Among them is Cardinal

99 © Facebook, DCM Plzeň (online), available at: https://www.facebook.com/pg/DCMPlzen/about/?ref=page_internal, cited 18th June 2018.

100 © Facebook, Diecézní Centrum pro Mládež Litoměřice (online), available at: <https://www.facebook.com/pg/dcmlit/>, cited 19th January 2018.

101 © Facebook, Katechetické a pedagogické centrum Ostrava (online), available at: <https://www.facebook.com/pg/ostravakpc/>, cited 19th January 2018.

102 © Facebook, Katechetické středisko AP (online), available at: <https://www.facebook.com/pg/Katecheticke.stredisko.AP/>, cited 19th January 2018.

103 © Twitter, Arcibiskupství (online), available at: https://twitter.com/apha_cz, cited 19th January 2018.

104 © Twitter, Dominik Duka (online), available at: <https://twitter.com/dominikduka>, cited 19th January 2018.

105 © Twitter, Tomáš Holub (online), available at: <https://twitter.com/TomasHolubPB>, cited 19th January 2018.

106 © Twitter, Víra.cz, available at: <https://twitter.com/wwwViraCz>, cited 19th January 2018.

107 The Facebook webpage of the Archbishop of Olomouc, Jan Graubner, is available on Facebook at: <https://www.facebook.com/graubner.jan/>, but it is marked as an unofficial webpage and to the date 1st January 2018 it was followed by 1,504 users. A total of 1,497 users marked the webpage with the 'Like' choice to this date.

108 © Facebook, Arcibiskupství pražské...

109 © Twitter, Arcibiskupství From Bishoprics in both Church provinces, the Bishopric of Litoměřice is also presented on Twitter. To the date 19th January 2018 it has only 89 followers – cf. © Twitter, Biskupství LTM (online), available at: https://twitter.com/dlmtm_cz, cited 19th January 2018.

Dominik Duka (Archbishop of Prague), Václav Malý (Auxiliary Bishop of Prague), Tomáš Holub (Bishop of Pilsen), and Pavel Konzbul (Auxiliary Bishop of Brno).¹¹⁰ The archbishop Dominik Duka has Facebook¹¹¹ and Twitter¹¹² webpages. Václav Malý and Pavel Konzbul have webpages only on Facebook,¹¹³ and Tomáš Holub has his webpage only on Twitter.¹¹⁴ Cardinal Duka's Facebook webpage is also the most viewed presence officially associated with the Catholic Church on Czech social networks. The other bishops do not have official webpages on social networks.¹¹⁵ The Czech Bishops' Conference, respectively its press centre, has a Facebook webpage that is linked to *Církev.cz*.¹¹⁶ Although the *Církev.cz* website also contains a link to its own Twitter webpage, the Twitter webpage of this website did not exist on 19th January 2018, and the link led to the Twitter profile webpage of Stanislav Příbyl, General Secretary of ČBK whose profile webpage is marked as personal.¹¹⁷ *Katolický týdeník*, the official periodical of the ČBK, has its own webpage on Facebook.¹¹⁸

A special element is the web projects of the Pastoral Centre of the Archbishopric of Prague and their profiles on social networks. If one follows the Church's presence on social networks, the Pastoral Centre's projects have none similar (considering their conceptual structure and scope) in the Czech environment.¹¹⁹ In terms of the number of Facebook users who follows the websites operated by the Pastoral Centre, *Víra.cz*¹²⁰ is the most popular. It is linked to the internet website of the same name. We can also find the presentation of this website on Twitter,¹²¹ but it has considerably fewer followers. Other webpages which are presented through Facebook and are run by the Pastoral Centre include the webpages *Liturgie.cz*,¹²² *Manželství krok za krokem – Manželství.cz*,¹²³

110 On Facebook, there still is the webpage of Cardinal Miloslav Vlk (who died in March 2017). It is available at <https://www.facebook.com/MiloslavKardinalVlk/>. The webpage had 3,024 followers to the date 19th January 2018. It was marked by 3,003 users with the 'Like' choice. The website can be considered official as the link to it is located on the cardinal's official website <http://www.kardinal.cz/>.

111 © Facebook, Dominik Duka...

112 © Twitter, Dominik Duka ... Cardinal Dominik Duka also has its own YouTube channel that was followed by 93 users as of 19th January 2018 and has had a total of 15,609 views of the channel since 28th June 2013 (the date of its startup) – cf. © Youtube, Dominik kardinál Duka (online), available at: <https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCSRtwE5pdi75zbz9MgkZ-6w>, cited 19th January 2018; cf. also © Josef NERUŠIL, Kardinál Duka na Youtubu (online), last update on 1st December 2013, available at: <http://www.apha.cz/kardinal-duka-na-youtubu>, cited 19th January 2018.

113 © Facebook, Mons. Václav Malý...; © Facebook, Pavel Konzbul...

114 © Twitter, Tomáš Holub...

115 In addition to the unofficial website of Archbishop Graubner (see note 107), there is the webpage of Jan Baxant (Bishop of Litoměřice) with 476 followers and 481 'Like' choices. The webpage is not marked as official and the last post on the webpage was on 14th March 2013. The website has therefore been inactive for a long time – cf. © Facebook, Jan Baxant (online), available at: <https://www.facebook.com/Jan-Baxant-115968705395/>, cited 19th January 2018. Bishop František Lobkowitz has only a private personal webpage on Facebook – it can be considered as an authentic personal webpage only by indirect signs. It could be based on a publicly available list of personal profiles on this personal webpage. The page itself is not publicly available – cf. © Facebook, František Lobkowitz (online), available at: <https://www.facebook.com/people/František-Lobkowitz/100021840347710>, cited 19th January 2018.

116 © Facebook, *Církev.cz*...

117 © Twitter, Stanislav Příbyl (online), available at: <https://twitter.com/pribylst>, cited 19th January 2018.

118 © Facebook, *Katolický týdeník* ... *Katolický týdeník* has a Twitter webpage, but only 192 users follow it – cf. Twitter, *Katolický týdeník* (online), available online at <https://twitter.com/katydcz>, cited 19th January 2018.

119 Pastoral Centre of the Archbishopric of Prague runs its own Facebook webpage under the name 'Pastoral Centre' at <https://www.facebook.com/Pastorační-středisko-162072743930515>. However, (as of 19th January 2018) the last post was placed on 15th January 2014 – the webpage can therefore be considered to have been inactive for a long time.

120 © Facebook, *Víra.cz*...

121 © Twitter, *Víra.cz*...

122 © Facebook, *Liturgie.cz*... The website of *Liturgie.cz* is also presented on Twitter, but it is followed by only 110 users – © Twitter, *Liturgie.cz*, available at: https://twitter.com/liturgie_cz, cited 19th January 2018.

123 © Facebook, *Manželství krok za krokem*... This webpage, along with the *Manželství.cz* website, is run by the Centre for the Family of the Pastoral Centre of the Prague Archbishopric – cf. © Ludmila PIVOŇKOVÁ, *Centrum pro rodinu* (online), last update 4th April 2017, available at: <http://www.apha.cz/cpr>, cited 19th January 2018.

Modlitba.cz,¹²⁴ Pastorce.cz,¹²⁵ and Děti.Víra.cz.¹²⁶ All of these websites on Facebook are linked to internet websites with the same name. Similar websites focusing on youth work are run by relevant centres also in other dioceses, although they have fewer users compared to the webpages of the Prague Archdiocese.

Data on the number of followers shows that the visibility of these websites is rather low. However, it is clear that institutions at the highest levels of ecclesiastical administration strive for a systematic presence on social networks. The absence of an official presentation of the Archbishopric of Olomouc on social networks, though, suggests that the Catholic Church does not fully exploit the potential offered by social networks. When giving the number of users, the most viewed webpage (at the level of archbishopric and bishopric) is that offered by the Archbishopric of Prague. Organisational units of this archbishopric on Facebook also develop the most significant activities among the mentioned ecclesiastical institutions. To have one's own profile on social networks is less common among the supreme representatives of the Church (bishops and archbishops). In January 2018, the Czech Catholic Church (including the Apostolic Exarchate) had a total of 22 bishops,¹²⁷ along with the archbishops Cardinal Dominik Duka and Jan Graubner. Cardinal Dominik Duka's website, as an open official personal profile, can be regarded as the most important official website associated with the highest institutions of ecclesiastical administration in the Czech Republic.

From the thematic orientation of the webpages, it is clear that in addition to the webpages of the bishopric as institutions, there are webpages especially dedicated to the areas of evangelisation, pastoral care, and catechesis on social networks. Some of them are explicitly aimed at working with children and youth.¹²⁸

The Church and Online Social Media from the Point of View of Religious Science

From the point of view of religious science, understood as the social science study of religion in a socio-cultural context in a diachronic and synchronic perspective,¹²⁹ it is necessary to relate the question of the presentation of the Church on online social networks to specific socio-cultural contexts. However, the starting point is always the emic level of the issue, that is, in our case, the way in which the subject is interpreted within the Church itself. If we want to provide an ethical view – a view of objectivising science – on the subject under consideration, we must necessarily base it on the context in which it appears in the ecclesial environment itself.

The issue of the Church using the Internet and the related use of online social networks are put into concrete context in religious documents, such as the aforementioned statement by Pope John

124 © Facebook, Modlitba.cz...

125 © Facebook, Pastorce.cz...

126 © Facebook, Děti.víra.cz...

127 © Cirkev.cz, Biskupové (online), available at: <https://www.cirkev.cz/cs/biskupove>, cited 23rd January 2018. Bishops Emeritus and also the auxiliary bishop of Prague Zdeněk Wasserbauer, who was named by Pope Francis on 23rd January 2018 (and has not yet received episcopal consecration by January 2018) are counted. – cf. © František JEMELKA, Pražská arcidiecéze má nového pomocného biskupa (online), last update 23rd January 2018, available at: <https://www.cirkev.cz/cs/aktuality/180123prazska-arcidieceze-ma-noveho-pomocneho-biskupa>, cited 29th January 2018.

128 Analysis of the website content (for example, from the positions of media studies) represents another possible direction of the research work.

129 The theoretical basis of religious science is summed up in this respect by William E. PADEN, *Bádání o posvátnu. Náboženství ve spektru interpretací*, Brno: Masarykova univerzita, 2002.

Paul II in 2002,¹³⁰ in which the pope talks about cultural changes and changes in communication. These bring the Church to a new threshold that needs to be crossed.¹³¹ It can be said that the Church uses the internet in response to the changing socio-cultural situation. Using the language of the economic model of religion,¹³² churches and religious societies are guided by the new marketing strategies on the 'religious market'¹³³ both globally and locally. In this context, the speech given by Pope John Paul II at the 36th World Media Day can be recalled. The pope compares the Internet to former forums of the ancient world, and recalls that these forums, as a place of social interaction in the widest perspective, served both as a marketplace and as a place of fulfilment of religious duties.¹³⁴ The presence of the Church leaders and institutions on online social networks is therefore an example of the Church's attempt to respond to socio-cultural changes, accompanied, among other things, by changes in communication strategies, the expansion of the Internet and the associated new media (such as Internet social networks).

The use of the Internet for evangelisation is also linked to the concept of new evangelisation,¹³⁵ in the ecclesial environment itself (understood as re-evangelisation where the population is diverted from a previously accepted faith). In religious science, the ethical perspective, therefore, the use of the Internet and online social networks by the Church can be interpreted in the context of secularisation in modern society. Secularisation is defined in older sociological literature as a situation in which religious thinking, practices, and institutions lose their social significance.¹³⁶ This concept of secularisation, however, is today considered to be considerably simplifying and, in fact, is based on the ideology of the enlightenment-rationalist secularisation thesis, which simply expects the 'decline' of religion in modern societies.¹³⁷ Newer social science research abandons the ideologically tinged diction of the 'disappearance' or even 'decay' of religion and attempts to grasp the issue of secularisation as a sum of processes at different levels of society and culture that (in the context of functional differentiation) accompany the transformation of the roles of religion in modern societies (respectively in some types of modern societies).¹³⁸

The theorist of secularisation Karel Dobbelaere distinguishes three basic levels in which different processes of change can be observed in the context of secularisation while using different theoretical and conceptualisation tools to describe and analyse them: individual, organisational, and societal.¹³⁹ These levels, on which the secularisation processes can be examined, are not, of course, strictly separated. However, they theoretically allow us to grasp the complex matter of the changes that religion is undergoing in modern societies.

At the individual level of secularisation, the degree of openly declared membership of a certain religious worldview (represented by a certain ecclesial community) is decreasing in society. Howev-

130 © IOANNES PAULUS PP. II, Message...

131 Ibid.

132 This perspective in terms of benefits and weaknesses is summed up by Dušan LUŽNÝ, *Teorie racionální volby v současné sociologii náboženství*, *Sociológia* 2/2015, pp. 151–170.

133 The metaphor of the religious 'market' at the theoretical level is dealt with by Larry WITHAM, *Marketplace of the Gods: How Economics Explains Religion*, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2010.

134 © IOANNES PAULUS PP. II, Message...

135 The combination of the concept of new evangelisation and the usage of the Internet is proved by the statements of the Church leaders quoted above – cf., for example, © PELOWSKI, *Evangelization...* Cf. also © FOLEY, *Dokument...*

136 Bryan WILSON, *Religion in Secular Society: A Sociological Comment*, London: C. A. Watts, 1966, p. xiv.

137 An excellent critical review of the literature on the secularisation paradigm in the social sciences is provided by Roman VIDO, *Konec velkého vyprávění? Sekularizace v sociologické perspektivě*, Brno: CDK, 2011.

138 A critical re-evaluation of the secularisation models in this respect is provided by Steve BRUCE, *Secularization. In Defence of an Unfashionable Theory*, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2011.

139 The three-level model of secularisation processes is the conceptual basis of the publication by Karel DOBBELAERE, *Secularization: An Analysis on Three Levels*, Brussels: Peter Lang, 2002.

er, we must not allow ourselves to come to the misleading conclusion that religion is disappearing in society. In connection with this, privatisation and individualisation of religion is taking place, the importance of religious ‘bricolage’ is growing at the individual level,¹⁴⁰ and religion becomes more of a private matter of individuals.¹⁴¹ In a secularised society that shows a declining rate of declared religious affiliation to established churches and religious societies at an individual level, the Catholic Church must seek appropriate forms of spreading and keeping the religious worldview. The Internet and online social networks are an appropriate means and medium for this. Therefore, they are referred to as a means and purpose of evangelistic and pastoral activity by the Church. The new evangelisation thus becomes, among other things, evangelisation through new technological means,¹⁴² for example, with the use of new media. Such evangelisation can, of course, have an impact or manifests itself at more than one level: not only the individual, but also social and organisational.

With regards to the rate of declared individual religious affiliation to churches and religious societies, Czech society can be considered highly secularised.¹⁴³ Today’s Czech society is also characterised by frequent use of the Internet and online social networks. In the Czech environment, therefore, the use of social media to keep and spread the religious worldview at an individual level is (for the Church) a way of coping with the decreasing religious affiliation in relation to the individual level of secularisation processes.

Changes in individual religious affiliation, however, are only one aspect of the issue of secularisation in modern societies – the low or declining rate of individually declared religious affiliation does not necessarily mean that religion is also largely disappearing from the public sphere.¹⁴⁴ At the societal level, established religious views and churches can maintain a significant degree of presence in the public sphere, for example, when religion-related topics are the subject of debate in the public space. For instance, this is when these topics enter the political area. This may happen when religious themes are combined with the concepts of national history or national identity and patriotism (taking into account particular historical circumstances). Examples of such phenomena in the Czech environment include the St. Wenceslas legend, the Cyrillo-Methodian tradition, or the tradition of the Hussite Reformation.¹⁴⁵ It is not only for this reason that we can find a number of examples where the themes associated with the Church appear in the public space – the statements of ecclesiastical representatives on various events are discussed,¹⁴⁶ the presence of state officials at Church events is reflected upon,¹⁴⁷ ecclesiastical representatives par-

140 Karel DOBBELAERE, *Secularization*, in: *Encyclopedia of Religion and Society*, ed. William H. SWATOS and Peter KIVISTO, London: Sage, AltaMira Press, 1998, pp. 455–456.

141 This is primarily concerned with the use of the Internet and online social networks in connection with institutionalised religion – the forms of religious life on the network in terms of individualised religiosity are the subject of further study.

142 Cf. LINDEN, *Global...*, p. 124; cf. Christopher HELLAND, *Popular Religion and the World Wide Web: A Match Made in (Cyber) Heaven*, in: *Religion Online. Finding Faith on the Internet*, ed. Lorne L. DAWSON and Douglas E. COWAN, London: Routledge, 2004, p. 25.

143 To know more about the religious situation in Czech society, cf. Dana HAMPLOVÁ, *Náboženství v české společnosti na prahu 3. tisíciletí*, Prague: Karolinum, 2013; to know more about the individual level of secularisation in connection with the Czech society, cf. Jakub HAVLÍČEK and Dušan LUŽNÝ, *Religion and Politics in the Czech Republic: The Roman Catholic Church and the State*, *International Journal of Social Science Studies* 1/2013, pp. 193–195. Cf. David VÁCLAVÍK, *Katolická církev očima současných Čechů a současní Češi očima Katolické církve. Mezi nedůvěrou a očekáváním*, *Caritas et veritas* 1/2016, pp. 150–156.

144 DOBBELAERE, *Secularization: An Analysis...*, p. 49; cf. HAVLÍČEK and LUŽNÝ, *Religion...*

145 Cf. Miloš ŘEZNÍK, *Formování moderního národa. (Evropské „dlouhé“ 19. století)*, Prague: Triton, 2003, pp. 146–148.

146 Around the time immediately preceding the completion of this text, the example of Cardinal Dominik Duka’s statement regarding the advertising campaign of Lidl (where the crosses were deleted from the domes of Greek churches) can be mentioned – cf., for example, © Novinky.cz, *Bezprecedentní a nekulturní akt, píše Duka ke kauze vyretušovaných křížů* (online), last update 3rd September, 2017, available at: <https://www.novinky.cz/domaci/448050-bezprecedentni-a-nekulturni-akt-pise-duka-ke-kauze-vyretusovanych-krizu.html>, cited 19th January 2018.

147 Cf., for example, © iDnes.cz, *Jubilant Zeman vyzval po mši k návratu ke křesťanským kořenům* (online), last update on 28th September

ticipate in state events,¹⁴⁸ etc.

In connection with the societal level of secularisation and the entry of religious themes into the public space, social internet networks can become part of the process of establishing the Church agenda.¹⁴⁹ The online networks operated by the Church can become a platform for public discussion on topics that are important to the Church. The role of the new media belonging to Internet social networks are becoming the subject of a keen interest of a number of researchers.¹⁵⁰ Although there is no consensus among scholars, for example, on the extent to which Internet social networks themselves affect the processes of public agenda establishing and how they disrupt existing models of agenda establishing through classical or traditional media,¹⁵¹ some research confirms the importance of Internet social networks for spreading topics in public space.¹⁵²

The Church uses the Internet in at least two basic types or areas of agenda establishing: media and public. The Church's web platforms, including social networking websites, are used by the Church as a source of information for journalists as a representative of the classical media that can further promote the themes presented by the Church.¹⁵³ The Church also uses the web platform as a means of spreading the public agenda associated with a number of topics that are important to the Church.¹⁵⁴ Even a simple overview of the official social networks of the Czech Catholic Church shows that one of these is, for example, the area of marriage (respectively family policies), which is directly addressed by one of the thematically-specialised Facebook websites.

Online social networks, in connection with both individual and societal levels, can also become a means of establishing, maintaining, or spreading religious memory.¹⁵⁵ Collective memory, including religious memory, can be understood as a social construct that arises from the interaction of social network elements, that is, between communicating individuals and their groups.¹⁵⁶ From this point of view, there is an obvious connection between social media and religious memory as a collective memory.¹⁵⁷ Technological developments in Internet social networks lead some re-

2016, available at: https://zpravy.idnes.cz/prezident-zeman-vyzval-k-navratu-ke-krestanstvi-f6s-/domaci.aspx?c=A160928_130550_domaci_pku, cited 19th January 2018.

148 © Ondřej MLÉČKA, Kardinál Dominik Duka obdržel Řád bílého lva (online), last update 28th October 2016, available at: <https://www.cirkev.cz/cs/aktuality/161028kardinal-dominik-duka-obdrzel-rad-bileho-lva>, cited 19th January 2018.

149 To know more about the Church agenda establishment in the Czech Republic, cf. Jan VÁNĚ and František KALVAS, Catholic Church in the Czech Republic and Public Agenda Setting: Czech Catholic Church Representatives Interviews Content Analysis, *Working Papers Series 01 – 10*, Plzeň: Katedra sociologie, Fakulta filozofická Západočeské univerzity, 2010; cf. Jan VÁNĚ and František KALVAS, The Agenda-Setting Effect of Focusing Events: A Case Study of the Church Restitutions Issue, *Sociológia* 3/2013, pp. 290–315. Cf. Jan VÁNĚ, Jak/co jim říci, aby naslouchali? Aneb nastolování témat ve veřejném prostoru českou katolickou církví, *Studia theologica* 3/2015, pp. 203–229.

150 A critical overview of the issue can be found in Jakub MACEK, *Poznámky ke studiu nových médií*, Brno: Masarykova univerzita, 2013.

151 Natalia ARUGUETE, The agenda setting hypothesis in the new media environment, *Comunicación y sociedad* 28/2017, p. 51.

152 Cf., for example, Bethany A. CONWAY, Kate KENSKI and Di WANG, The Rise of Twitter in the Political Campaign: Searching for Intermedia Agenda-Setting Effects in the Presidential Primary, *Journal of Computer Mediated Communication* 4/2015, pp. 363–380; cf. Jessica T. FEEZELL, Agenda Setting through Social Media: The Importance of Incidental News Exposure and Social Filtering in the Digital Era, *Political Research Quarterly* 1/2018, pp. 1–13.

153 Cf., for example, © Biskupství brněnské, Katolická církev nabízí; © PRINZ, Bez Facebooku... Jan Váňe and František Kalvas find out that the Internet is perceived as the perspective tool for the establishment of the agenda even by the Church leaders themselves – cf. VÁNĚ and KALVAS, Catholic Church..., pp. 13, 15, 21. Cf. VÁNĚ, Jak/co jim říci..., pp. 214, 223.

154 Cf. © Ondřej MLÉČKA, Představujeme nový web [cirkev.cz](http://www.cirkev.cz) (online), last update 14th March 2016, available at: <https://www.cirkev.cz/cs/aktuality/160311predstavujeme-novy-web-cirkev-cz>, cited 19th January 2018.

155 The concept of religious memory is dealt with by Danièle HERVIEU-LÉGER, *Religion as a Chain of Memory*, Cambridge: Polity Press, 2000.

156 The collective memory concept is introduced by Maurice HALBWACHS, *Kolektivní paměť*, 2009, Prague: Sociologické nakladatelství. Approaches to the concept of cultural memory are critically summarised by Dušan LUŽNÝ, Kulturní paměť jako koncept sociálních věd, *Studia philosophica* 2/2014, pp. 3–18.

157 Cf. Joyce van de BILDT, The Uses of Facebook for Examining Collective Memory. The Emergence of Nasser Facebook Pages in Egypt, in: *Memory Unbound: Tracing the Dynamics of Memory Studies*, ed. Lucy BOND, Stef CRAPS and Pieter VERMEULEN, New York: Berghahn Books, 2017, p. 133.

searchers to overcome the classical concept of collective memory that is shaped, maintained, and spread between individuals and their groups: in social networking, it is spoken more as 'connective memory', where digital technology does not serve as a mere medium or memory spreading medium. It serves rather as a 'connective memory' which is formed and structured in a complex interaction of human and technological factors.¹⁵⁸ For the Church, online social networks are the ideal means of entering this Internet environment in which connective memory is formed, maintained, and spread.

Karel Dobbelaere speaks about the third level or area of secularisation which is the organisational level: in the context of socio-cultural changes linked to the structural and functional differentiation in modern societies, the churches themselves have to change and adapt as organisations. This changes not only their organisational structure but also doctrinal principles.¹⁵⁹ The use of the Internet and online social networks in this sense is accompanied by changes in the Church that can be observed at all levels of the Church administration. The papal Curia is undergoing organisational changes that allow it to manage the field of communication more effectively. This includes the use of the Internet and social networks where new official Church platforms are being created. At the same time, ecclesiastical authorities issue documents that put this area into doctrinal contexts – these are documents of various types, from papal letters to documents issued by relevant curial authorities and their representatives. Organisational changes related to the use of the Internet and online social networks also manifest themselves at lower levels of ecclesiastical administration, for example, there are special departments with employees who are in charge of this area of communication at the bishoprics and archbishoprics.¹⁶⁰

Conclusion

The Czech Catholic Church is represented at the highest levels of ecclesiastical administration on social networks by the official webpages of all bishoprics and the Archbishopric of Prague. Only the Olomouc Archbishopric does not have an official social networking website. The activities of the Archbishopric of Prague, especially of its Pastoral Centre, are significant in comparison with the activities of other bishoprics on social networks and are diversified in thematic focus. In terms of thematic focus, these webpages focus on youth work, evangelisation, and pastoral work, especially in connection with topics that are important to the Church – for example, in connection with the subject of marriage. The representation of senior clergy on social networks is rare. On the whole, the ratings of official Church websites are rather lower. It can be assumed that online social networks represent a space not fully utilised for the Czech Catholic Church. Nevertheless, the Church is attempting to systematically penetrate this space as evidenced, for example, by the activities of the Archbishopric of Prague.

From an emic point of view, the Church declares two basic functions of web presentations and presentations on social networks. The informational function is characterised by informing the public about the various activities of the Church and by presenting the attitudes of the Church to current events and problems. Evangelistic and pastoral functions are characterised by the use of

158 Cf. José van DIJCK, Flickr and the culture of connectivity: Sharing views, experiences, memories, *Memory Studies* 4/2010, pp. 401–415; Andrew HOSKINS, Digital Network Memory, in: *Mediation, Remediation, and the Dynamics of Cultural Memory*, ed. Astrid ERLI and Ann RIGNEY, Berlin: de Gruyter, 2009, pp. 91–106; Andrew HOSKINS, 7/7 and connective memory: Interactional trajectories of remembering in post-scarcity culture, *Memory Studies* 3/2011, pp. 269–280.

159 Cf. DOBBELAERE, *Secularization: An Analysis...*, p. 105.

160 Cf., for example, © Arcibiskupství pražské, Organizační řád Arcibiskupství pražského (online), pp. 14–15, 17, available at: <http://www.apha.cz/file/74649/organizacni-rad-17296-r-2016-elekr.pdf>, 19th January 2018.

social media as a means of presenting and promoting the Christian (Catholic) worldview. One can meet the opinion that the Internet and social networks are not just a tool but also the very purpose of evangelistic activity. At this level, the use of social networks is related to the concept of new evangelisation, which is understood not only in the classical meaning of re-evangelisation but also as evangelisation with the usage of new technological means.

In an ethical perspective, from the point of view of religious science, the use of online social networks can be brought into connection with the concept of secularisation. From the conceptual point of view, this issue should be divided into three basic levels: individual, societal, and organisational, without the individual components of the secularisation processes at these levels being described and analysed as mutually unrelated. At the individual level, social networks (for the Church) are a means and environment in which the Church can carry out the spread of the religious worldview in the broadest context. The use of new communication platforms joined by individuals – members of online social networks – becomes a way for the Church to cope with secularisation on an individual level, and is the reaction of the Church to the processes of the privatisation and individualisation of religion.

At the societal level, the Church engages in social networks in agenda-building processes, especially at the media and social public levels. At the same time, social networks are (for the Church) a means of creating, maintaining, and spreading religious memory in a specific form of ‘connective memory’ associated with online social networks, which can apply to both the social and the individual level of secularisation. Finally, at the organisational level, the Church does not adapt only its own organisational structure to the changing socio-cultural situation but, along with new ways of communicating and spreading information through new technologies, it also adapts its doctrinal area.

The basic purpose of this study is not the definitive evaluation of the theme of the Church presentation on the Internet and social networks. The conclusions brought by this study are in many ways only a hint of the direction of further research or the impetus for potential critical reassessment. It can be assumed that in the future presentations through the Internet and online social networks will be of increasing importance to public officials including the Catholic Church and its representatives. It is a stimulating topic for social sciences that will undoubtedly require new approaches, both theoretical and methodological.

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