

INTRODUCTION

Under the title THE LAITY AS CHRISTIANS BY PROFESSION I have tried to present Christians who consider their whole life as their vocation from God. Their private, public, family, working, physical, spiritual and social life is in line with their faith. I was encouraged to write a book with such a title by my more than fifty-year experience in the „lay apostolate" - being worker, student, political and religious prisoner, physician, and scientist in the field of clinical research and for 28 years chairman of a national organization of Catholic Intellectuals.

This experience has convinced me, that till today a non-Christian dualistic attitude towards life persists among non-clerical Christians (laity).

Many Christians - lay people split their lives into two parts: the worldly (physical, material, professional, secular), and the spiritual (sacred, church, religious).

A large number of Christians - lay people consider their secular life and their secular profession as less spiritual, second class compared with the profession of priests and monks. From their „religious" point of view they underestimate their own secular profession. They do not sufficiently take into account, that the secular sphere of life is the primary, the dominant sphere, in which they should implement their Christian conviction.

Drawing on the ideas of the Second Vatican Council, I am focusing on three problem areas:

1. *The role of Christians - lay people (laity) in the current pluralistic, and secularized world.,*
2. *The unity of the secular and the spiritual sphere in life, and*
3. *The Christianization of the secular professions.*

In connection with the Christianization of the secular sphere of life I repeatedly underline the necessity for the formation of committed Christians. Christians by profession, who at the moment represent only some per thousand (‰) of the total number of the People of God.

From the formal point of view I have divided the book into three parts:

In the first part - THE AUTHENTIC CHRISTIAN IN TODAY'S WORLD - I describe the term .. committed Christian", his position in the Church and his mission in today's world.

In the second part - THE CHRISTIANIZATION OF THE SECULAR WORLD - I highlight the importance of the Christianization of the secular professions and describe specific Christian features of different secular professions.

In the third part - BRIEF INFORMATION ABOUT THE FEDERATION OF SLOVAK CHRISTIAN INTELLECTUALS (USKI) - I present the national organization of Christian Intellectuals from the position of its chairman, as well as the efforts of this organization to form committed Christians in the spirit of the Second Vatican Council.

I address my position and opinion particularly to Christians – non-clerics (laity), who feel co-responsibility for the tasks and mission of the Church in today's world, and who are deliberately engaged as Christ's missionaries in the secular sphere of social life. Reaction to this common topic is expected from them.

At the beginning I would like to take the opportunity to express my thankfulness to all who helped me in my endeavour.

In the first place I offer heartfelt thanks to my wife Olga for all her dedication, inspiration and her contribution as co-author. Not a single chapter was worked out without her ideas, comments and tough criticism.

Special thanks go to all respondents to the question: „Where do you see the Christianity of your profession?"

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