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Regulation of Catholic education under canonic, state, and concordat law

Thesis notes

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I. justification of topic choice

Educating future generations is an increasing challenge for parents, teachers, educators and society today, in a situation where children's attention is easily distracted from true values, thereby risking the integrity of the child and the health of the developing society.

Parents face old and new difficulties in raising their children, as they are less able to deal with their children due to lack of time, as a result of which the child allocates his or her own time at will, taking advantage of advanced technology, which significantly reduces communicating with other people, and with this, children form their own closed world from which they cannot exit to the other person.

We know that man is a social being and can only live a truly happy life through interactive relationships with other people, through the realization of love, acceptance and cooperation. Norms have been born for this coexistence that help one to live a communal life. These initial but very important and life-based unwritten norms are found in the family. That is why it is the parents who start the child on the path of his life so that he will prosper in society and then achieve the purpose of his life for which God has ordained man.

I would like to reflect on the importance of Catholic education and the special tools of the Church in my dissertation, highlighting religious education among these tools. In addition to the legal regulations of the Church, I present the laws and constitutions of certain European countries and their concordats with the Holy See, which emphasize freedom of religion and ensure the smooth running of religious education.

In addition to the legal regulation of Catholic education of all genders, I would like to draw attention in this dissertation to the primacy of religious education in the family, which must accompany one's life and find one's worldly purpose in joining the parish community. , and as a witness of Christ he himself will be a messenger of the gospel. This is the only purpose of family education, school religion, concordats, state constitutions, laws, church regulations. The Church has always considered education important, evangelism. Therefore, regarding the aspects and always the current depth of my chosen topic, I thought I would gather the sources of law that typically support my chosen thoughts.

II. Issues examined

1. Today, we are no longer talking so much about the right to education in Europe, as it is mostly provided, but rather about an education that serves the full development of the personality. And Christian education permeates even more the physical, spiritual, spiritual nature of man, the fulfillment of which is realized in the attainment of the communion of love of the Trinity. That is why the Church of the Assumption has a very serious task in getting the educated person to the fulfillment mentioned above.

The task of the teachers of the Church is primarily a Christian mission, which must be fulfilled by all people of good will. It is primarily the parents who are obliged to bring up their children, as the role of parent is almost irreplaceable. The child has the right to live in a family where, prepared for the love of a father and a mother, he can prepare to enter the vast courtyard of society. In addition to parents, the family, society, the school, teachers and, last but not least, the Church are other actors in the educational work. In order for the Church of Our Lady to carry out this task properly, it is necessary to establish a relationship with the other actors in the vocation of education, in which educators themselves devote their entire lives to listening to Christ, the Good Shepherd, who educates the nations himself. This means that the Church, as the guardian of the true teaching, passes on this salvation-giving teaching to the parents, the educators, through Christian pedagogy, so that they can pass it on. By striving for harmony, purposefulness, one can only achieve what Christ has entrusted to His disciples.

In my dissertation I would like to find answers to the following questions in connection with these:

- How can the harmony in Catholic education that is necessary for a Christian to reach full physical-spiritual development, join the life of the local church, and bear witness to his or her faith through this education be realized?

- How can this harmony be achieved and the legal norms arising from the basic mission of the Church enforced in a case where not only the Church but also the various states regulate and often impede Catholic education?

It is interesting to observe in this research the implementation or non-implementation of the principles enshrined in the concordats and agreements between the Holy See and the states.

I would like to reflect on the difficulties that have arisen as a result of secularization and the educational crisis in the family, which is the main obstacle to education for the faith.

2. Important questions arise today, when values have faded and changed, and a significant proportion of parents no longer consider Christian education important; in Catholic schools, although the teaching of theology is mandatory, many children still have a negative

attitude towards the teaching of the faith; in many cases there are no teachers representing Christian values, it is difficult to establish harmony between teachers and students, between teachers and parents, and even between the local parish priest and the head of the school in his or her area.

One of the very important questions that arose in 2012, namely, whether compulsory religion should be compulsory in all schools, placed the Church of the Assumption in a very awkward position and at the same time made it difficult to choose the plausible paths of Catholic education. These are the questions I would like to reflect on in my dissertation, that is, how to create harmony between the actors of education, the possible methods and means of Catholic education in order to develop an appropriate itinerary.

One of the most burning responsible aspects of achieving the common and eternal shore goal mentioned above is cooperation. In the hierarchy of the Church, the county bishop plays a prominent role in educating the peoples. However, we know that in this noble task, other persons with considerable responsibilities must also take a very considerable part in shaping people into Christ. The county bishop mediates the teaching of the world church and helps keep the true teaching; however, the family, parents, school, society, and the educated in pastoral care have an excellent opportunity to personally shape the personalities of the children entrusted to them.

The question is what happens when the world is undergoing tremendous change, and this task of the Church cannot be steadfastly fulfilled, even though it has always played a leading role in the field of education over public institutions.

3. As we can see, in good times, but also during social transformations, the Church has paid great attention to the above-mentioned aspects in order to convey the teaching of Christ in an appropriate manner and in a quality that regulates this mission adequately. However, this has not always been the case, due to the fact that states have also tried to regulate education by their own laws, often ignoring church regulations or even the opposite.

That is why I would like to discuss separately the education regulations of some European countries over the last two centuries, comparing them with church regulations, looking for ways to reconcile the two pieces of legislation, and last but not least, how Catholic education can achieve its real goal, which is fulfilled in the teaching of the faith in the parish and in the active life of the given community. I do all this by processing the relevant foreign

language sources¹ and Hungarian literature, looking for an answer to the following question: how can harmony be established between state and church regulations in order for education to culminate in the strengthening of the parish community?

III. Working method

In the beginning chapter of the dissertation I used the historical method to present the formation of ecclesiastical and state religious education, because in order to understand the current situation, we need to know the development history of legal institutions. For education, on the other hand, this is how I wanted to deduce and emphasize that the Church has an inalienable right to education.

I used the descriptive method in presenting the most important papal documents and examining their rules of religious education, and I used a critical-analytical method to analyze both my own and others' religious experience.

Using the comparative method, I presented the regulation of religious education and the education policy of each state, and the concordats concluded with them. My main goal in the dissertation is to outline an ideal model of religious education based on the results of ecclesiastical legislation, documents, concordats and the practical experience of religious education as a result of the above.

IV. Research results

In the introductory part of my dissertation, I formulated questions to which I sought answers in the course of my work. I have tried to find an answer to the question of how to achieve the harmony in Catholic education that is necessary for the Christian man to reach full physical-spiritual development, to join the life of the local church, and to bear witness to this education himself.

On the other hand, as a result of religious education and Christian upbringing, how could the parish community be enriched and parents included in this parish community? Furthermore, how to achieve this harmony and enforce the legal norms arising from the fundamental mission of the Church in a case where not only the Church but also various states regulate and often

¹ SZUROMI SZ. A., *Egyházi jogi metodológia*, Budapest 2011, 88.

impede Catholic education. How can the Church fulfill the mission entrusted to him by Christ, the Supreme Teacher, in today's circumstances?

Due to the ever-changing social structures and the diversity of values they carry, we may not find an optimal, exclusive answer to these questions, yet it is worth risking answering them in the light of experience and experiments with solutions, as well as a wide range of opinions. This possibility, although it poses a very serious task for the interviewer, also gives a very large and complex task to those looking for answers.

1. The current religious education is defined by the Public Education Act of 2011, according to which, from September 2013, the teaching of faith and morals will be included in the curriculum of the state and local government schools. The law offers an alternative solution for parents who can choose between faith and morality for their children. From then on, faith and morality are part of the compulsory lessons.

The content of religious and moral classes and occupations is determined by the ecclesiastical legal entity. It is the task of the ecclesiastical legal entity to determine the content of education, to employ and control the faith teacher, to organize the application for education, and to control the occupations. The given educational institution must provide the necessary material conditions.

The Public Education Act of 2011 has made a positive difference, but there are also negative experiences, as many parents do not really insist that their child follow a religious and moral standard after the child expresses a desire to choose the moral standard. All this is due to the fact that in the new situation it was necessary to provide the personal conditions for the organization of ethics in educational institutions, which was solved by the candidates taking a three-month course. As a result, they were not really prepared for the new task, which resulted more quality reduction in moral class lessons than in faith classes. Thus, children attending these latter classes, experiencing those other children are freer to “get through” this compulsory lesson, often indicate to their parents that they, too, want to go to moral class rather than religion classes. The new regulation would have a really positive effect if students as well as their parents were involved in the parish community in some form.

2. Faith education is one of the main methods and means of transmitting the good news, of Christian education, by which the Church fulfills her divine mission through the apostles of the Church.

And this mission has a purpose. Preacher János Répássy formulates a double goal in the 19th century. At the end of the twentieth century in relation to religious education: the closer goal of religious education is for children to be living members of the Church.²

Its further goal is the religious, spiritual, intellectual development, perfection, and preparation of the human soul for eternal life. This dual purpose is to achieve and develop the Christ-centeredness of man, to perfect the man who has become religious, and to gain eternal life, the fruits of which are most manifested in deeds in the course of development.

Pope Paul the IV. writes in his apostolic exhortation of the Evangelium that³ "the real purpose of catechesis is not simply to impart knowledge, but to lead it into the Christian life." The primary examples of this are the parents themselves, who are obliged to bear witness to their lives, examples, and words. And with that, we come to the next important topic, which is about the person, behavior and task of the faith teacher, who must also teach children with his life.

As for the person of the faith teacher, it can be stated that he must radiate Christ and His good news with his whole person, life, behavior, have the necessary qualifications, pedagogical sense, and in addition to all this, which in many cases is missing or less manifested today.

The parish priest presents the person suitable for religious education to the chief pastor and asks the *Missio canonica* to do so on the basis of the following main criteria: diploma in religious education from a higher education institution, qualification as a teacher of religion or religion, appropriate pedagogical and moral qualities.⁴

The content of faith education is another topic I have briefly reflected on, the main purpose of which is to be Christ-centered. Because we teach people the teaching of Christ and Christ Himself through faith teaching, its content can be nothing but the Good News, the Word of God, the foundation of our faith, and all that Jesus taught primarily in the Scriptures is celebrated in the liturgy and the Church Teaching Office declares.

The teacher of the faith must therefore avoid any kind of self-demonstration, compulsion to perform (which, unfortunately, can be experienced in many cases), and most importantly, to bind the disciples to ourselves rather than to Christ.

² Lásd: RÉPÁSSY J., *A népiskolai hitoktatás módszertana*, Eger 1873. 7.

³ Paulus VI., adh. ap. *Evangelii nuntiandi* 44, in: AAS 68 (1976) 34.

⁴ Lásd: ERDŐ P., *Egyházjog*, Budapest 2005. 405.

3. Religious education should be a community-building activity, which I reflected on in more detail in the dissertation. God has called man to salvation, that is, to place him in the communion of love of the Trinity.

Gaining salvation, however, presupposes taking a certain path in which man, step by step, beginning with baptism, through other sacraments, connected more and more closely to the Mystical Body of Christ, says yes to the divine invitation. And you cannot do this alone, but only in community, as a member of God's people. And one cannot do it passively, but must participate in this community-building work with full devotion, with the Church and with all the people of God.

The community dimension in the narrower sense is experienced experimentally in the parish community. Here, only in connection with parish life and communion can he experience belonging to the mysterious body of Christ, whether through the gracious effects of encounters, gatherings, common goals, joys, sorrows, but especially of the sacraments, especially the Eucharist (communio). through which we all unite and connect to the one community of the World Church.

The Church was constantly looking for solutions in the face of emerging difficulties, responding actively with word and deed to achieve a better outcome. This happened in connection with the teachings of the II. Vatican Council, the Catechism, the papal statements and the the CIC.

As a result, a process of work was initiated, mainly due to the closer ties established by the religious education committees and later between the Holy See and certain states, which took the form of a written concordat.

4. Focusing on the research of solutions, I would also like to reflect on the possible arenas of religious education, of which I will mark family education first. It is not so much a matter of imparting doctrine or knowledge, but rather of the child taking on the religious spirit from an early age by the example of his parents, by the spirit of prayer by which he understands the love of Jesus.

Béla Csanád states, together with the Church and science, that for thousands of years, human communities have entrusted education to families. There is no other community today that can provide education in a natural way, under appropriate human conditions, than the family. Church documents, the papal exhortations, rightly emphasize the extraordinary responsibility of parents for Christian upbringing, as the child will take over and embrace in all respects what he sees in his parents. This basic education can hardly be replaced in the future.

In the spirit of the family upbringing mentioned here, I mention a favorable family model where parents, as true pastors of the family, bear witness to their faith with their lives and raise their children to the true faith almost from the birth of the child.

Next, I highlighted school religion education, because there will come a moment in a child's life when he or she becomes a member of another community, where he or she encounters novelties that will affect his or her human formation, when society may have negative effects. which, however, can be overcome by a belief in faith formed through upbringing in the family.⁵

In order for a child to continue what he or she has received from his or her family and parents, the Church recommends that parents strive to choose a good school and a Catholic school. This is because the short-term goal of school-based faith education would also be to lead children to the parish community, where the unity desired by Christ and the visible Church must be made present.⁶

I also wanted to describe a favorable Catholic school model as a possible and optimal system of education in which the school's board is imbued with the spirit of Good News, where everyone wants and serves the same purpose in full agreement. In this so-called utopian school, there is cooperation between teachers, between leadership and teachers, between teachers and parents, between the class teacher and the teachers of the faith, and everyone wants children to be educated as good Christians. This system of relationships must be consistent, continuous, solid, and primary.

There are many examples of a non-religious child meeting such a school, community, an excellent teacher, a real class community, loving and practicing their religion, whether attending a ministry or simply attending various parish events, reading in church, taking part in shepherd's games...

5. Finally, we come to the last topic of the dissertation, which is also the starting point explained in the historical part, the teaching of the faith in the parish, because here one is connected with the circulation of the Church. For the teaching of faith alone is merely teaching or giving moral support, but one can become a member of the mysterious body of Christ only if one becomes a living member of that body.

In the historical part, I wanted to emphasize that the Church is the ancestor of education, as rudimentary educational institutions have developed around parishes and chapters, which

⁵ Lásd: CSANÁD B., *Neveléstan*, Budapest 1995. 26.

⁶ Lásd: HEIMERL, H., *Az új egyházi házasságjog*, Budapest 1985. 50.

have developed nicely over time, and this indicates that the Church has always considered it important to fulfill. on the one hand, and the fact that the parish itself has always been a community-building force, and that the parish can continue to shape a true Christian, religious community, in connection with the comprehensive mission of the Church.

In addition to what has been explained above, I would like to answer this question briefly and concisely: how could people be involved in the parish community, or how can faith education serve the growth of the parish community?

I think parents should be evangelized first and foremost! Parents who have not received a Christian upbringing and who approach the church community with reservations. When this is done, simply, in a human way, through the love of the Christian community, parents experience the love of God, and thus the importance of faith teaching, community life, and parent-educated faith makes sense. And since the parent is the one who has the greatest influence on his child, he will be the one who, after experiencing the love of the Christian community and the beauty of communal life, will make his child part of that community and at the same time raise his child to the love of Christ.

If parents are successfully involved in this evangelistic work in this way, faith education itself can only be a “momentum” that strengthens the faith and affection of the parent, the child, and the Christian community. This strong belief in the family, and Christian belief, overrides all laws, constitutions, concordats, declared freedom of religion, human rights conventions.