

VĚSTNÍK

IN ENGLISH

Czech Mission

www.czechchurch.org

sv. Jakuba v San Diegu – sv. Františka v San Francisku - sv. Cyrila a Metoděje v Los Angeles



OUR LADY OF LIDICE
In garments of gold with red background

CALIFORNIA / FEBRUARY 2015

You are invited



**TO OUR CZECH
LITURGY!**

In SAN Diego our Czech Mass will be held on **Saturday, February 14 at 4:00 pm** in the hall of the Church of St John the Evangelist (corner of Normal and Lincoln). Refreshments will follow.

In LOS ANGELES our Czech Mass will be held on **Sunday, February 15, at 1:15 pm** in the Polish Center, 3999 Rose Drive, Yorba Linda CA 92886. After Mass a meal will be served. A donation of \$10.00 is requested, \$5.00 for parky.

In SAN FRANCISCO our Czech Mass will be held on **Sunday, February 22, at 11:00 am** in the auditorium of STAR OF THE SEA Church, 4420 Geary Blvd., San Francisco, CA, 94118. Refreshments will follow.

MARK YOUR CALENDAR: March 2015 Masses: SD 14, LA 15, SF. 22.

Feast of St Josephina, February 8

Pope Francis reminds us that the Feast of Saint Josephina, is a world day of prayer, reflection and action against human trafficking. The Pope refers to trafficking for the most widespread form of slavery in the 21st century, a crime against humanity. Various forms of modern slavery, such as trafficking in human beings, forced labor and prostitution, trafficking in human organs and any practice of denying the basic concepts of equality, freedom and equal dignity of every human being, must be regarded as a crime against humanity.

We pray for those who commit crimes against humanity: May God turn their hearts to treat others as fellow human beings. Let us invoke the sincere love of God, themselves and others that we do not lack in creative attention and service to the needy.

FROM THE DESK OF BISHOP ESTERKA
Dear Friends of our Czech Mission in California



In this issue of the Vestník I want to focus on the history of the extermination of Lidice. A reason for looking again at the fate of Lidice is the interesting article on the origin and meaning of the painting of the Virgin Mary called LIDICKÁ, by painter Zdirad JK Cech. Many of us, especially us older members of the mission certainly remember the tragedy of Lidice. This reading may help the younger people take and interest and understand the whole situation much better .

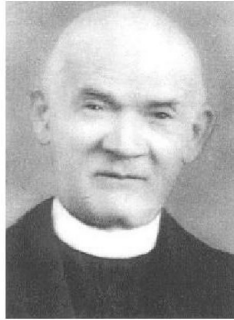
The name Josef Stemberk will remain forever associated with the parish in Lidice where he served for thirty-three years. Although he could have avoided a violent death, he remained among his own people. In 1992, he was posthumously awarded the Order of Tomas Garrigue Masaryk, First Class, and he was assigned a major role in the book about the Lidice tragedy, *Everyone's Burden*, by Francis Krelina.

He came from very humble beginnings. The Štemberk family lived in a cottage by the river Brodek. His father was a weaver. Joseph was born on February 2, 1869. He had six other siblings and his seriously - ill mother died when he was eleven years old. Like his brother Henry, who became a lawyer and writer, Josef was very talented. Through the intercession of his teacher, he studied at the high school in Jičina. He lived in a Jesuit college, and worked for his education. From home he could expect to receive nothing.

After high school he chose to prepare for the priesthood. He was ordained a priest after finishing seminary in 1894 and sent in 1909 to do parish work. The parish was Lidice.

He devoted himself to his ministry conscientiously and faithfully: conducting marriages, baptizing, confessing, preaching and burying people. The residents of Lidice often turned to him for advice with their neighborly disputes, and usually he helped with sensible words and respected decisions. He attended to the parish church, elevated the church singing, both folk and choral. He was himself a musician and played the accordion. He had an especially beautiful relationship with the children, who loved him. Still living eyewitnesses remember the large parish garden, where they were invited to gather fruits and nuts. To religion classes he brought loaves of homemade bread with honey. Beekeeping and tree care were among his hobbies.

Father Joseph lived very modestly, washing daily with cold water; he did not smoke, ate meat only occasionally for dinner, and usually had a cup of milk and a slice of dry bread for meals.



He liked his vegetables laced with honey. The parish housekeeper remembers that when the Second World War began, he bought lots of children's clothing, because he guessed that during the war everything would come in handy. The last organist at the church of Lidice, Dr Guido Jerabek, shortly after the war, recalled the priest as a sincere patriot, who during the war went with friends to listen to foreign radio and discuss the events of the war.

In early 1942, the construction of the church building was coming to an end, and Father Joseph was preparing for the move, which was scheduled for May. His successor was not yet ready to take over the priestly ministry in Lidice, so his departure dates were pushed back a few days. However these were to become fatal for his parish.

The tragedy of 1942

The tragedy that struck Lidice changed the lives of many. We learn details about it from the writings of the parish housekeeper, Antonie Škrdlová. She survived several concentration camps in 1945 and returned to live the rest of her life in Pece, since Lidice had been burned, leveled and plowed over.

"On Corpus Christi in 1942, several cars came to Lidice, and in them the Gestapo. The village was in a big commotion. They went to the house of Mrs. Silver and then to Horák's farm. Both families and their relatives were taken to the end of the village, and kept under guard. Meanwhile other Gestapo soldiers went from house to house checking everything. At the rectory they threw linen and clothes from the closet and stomped on it, shouting about what we have hidden. When they found nothing, they left. We sighed with relief, but our joy did not last long.

On Tuesday 9 June a dignified gentleman was in Kladno for exams in German. He returned home in the evening. Suddenly, about half past ten gunfire could be heard, as well as banging on the front door at the rectory. I went to open it. Six SS men immediately demanded all the keys. They asked where the pastor was and I showed them to his room. He was advised to dress immediately and go downstairs. I had two soldiers in the kitchen. While we were at the parish house, we saw how the SS carried away the church's golden objects as well as clothing, linens and carpets.

Then they ordered us to go into church. I took the keys and went with them. The pastor had to give them the keys to the tabernacle. They opened it and threw everything out of on the floor. As they did so, we were not allowed to move. They stood with rifles pointed at us ready to shoot. Then they brought us out and took us to the Horák's barn, where we stood until 3 in the morning. Then came the order: women go to the school, men remain here. "

Unjust death

"I had a bundle of laundry to give to the priest," recalled the housekeeper. "When I tried to hand it to him, the SS man grabbed him by the shoulder and knocked him to the ground. I wanted to help him get up, but the enraged soldier started to strangle me. I fell down, and he kicked me. Then I had to go to the school. After that we never saw the men or the boys over fifteen again. "

There is no single witness who would dare to look at the last hour spent in the barn of the Horak farm, where Josef P. Štemberk was locked with the other men of Lidice. It is very likely that in this hopeless moment he supplied his parishioners strength, courage and faith and blessed them. The fact is, and it was confirmed later by the SS themselves, that the men of Lidice went before a firing squad mainly calm, upright and bravely. They were handcuffed and not blindfolded. The seventy-three-year-old, white-haired shepherd stood as one of the last at the wall of the Horak farm. Although the gestapo offered him free exit from the village, the priest, thirty-three years pastor in Lidice, chose to remain with the condemned men.

www.lidice.cz

OUR LADY OF LIDICE

On Saturday, February 1, 2014, at a meeting with men and women, including ordained persons in St Vitus Cathedral of Prague, Cardinal Dominik Duka OP was presented with a new "Czech painting of Mary: Our Lady of Lidice." This work of Zdirad JR Cech (b. 1949) was inspired by the heroism of the pastor of Lidice, Josef Stemberk. We asked the artist for an interview in which we would, among other things, reflect upon the spiritual message of events in 1942 in Lidice, as he sees them.

First, I would, Zdirad, ask you to briefly introduce yourself to our readers.

That's easy, I'm just an ordinary peasant and everything that interests me or what I do, is connected with the past. Heraldry, medieval art, icons, monographs, saints: every branch is always connected to every other. I have published heraldic drawings and texts, already for 46 years, religious-themed graphics for 38 years, drawing saints with shorter or longer texts for 25 years. How many years have I painted the images? About 50 years. For how many years have my illustrations been printed and distributed for Sunday liturgical reading? Not even I myself know, but the number of those images of saints soon reached six hundred and biblical illustrations are up to four hundred. And I also illustrated a few books, did reliefs and some little things, when I had the opportunity. It has been a great pleasure.

How did you get the idea to create an image of the Virgin Mary Lidické?

I do not know how to interpret that. Simplest one. When I have over the years tried to wrap my head around what happened in Lidice, I tried to understand. The question: How is it possible that Father Joseph did what he did? We have two martyred saints of the confessional secret and there is a priest killed with his parishioners! Many people have problems with confession, not understanding its meaning, and yet we have a priest who says: Look, what a treasure! He gave his life for it to be allowed. See my parishioners. They are literally my life. For them to pay reconciliation with God.

Favorably intentioned articles miss the point. They write that the pastor prayed with the Lidice men. One strange guy supposedly somewhere reported: "In such a situation, I would pray the Lord's Prayer, too."

The pastor prayed with them; they needed courage, seeing, reconciliation with God and the Church, and preparation for the penitent death. I do not know how many of them were baptized, but those younger than thirty-three years were certainly baptized mostly by him, himself. Imagine this: one night, one seventy-three year old priest with his bare hands, beaten and bloody, the only and last chance to fight for the salvation of their souls. At the cost of his own life. The gift for a lifetime of service, paid in full.

I do not want this to become too drawn out, just that it seems to me inconceivable that such an example lies in the dust. So I put together all sorts of things, tossed them in my head and once I got the question, Why, in our homeland is there not an image of the Virgin Mary particular to us, as for example, when the Poles have the beautiful image of Our Lady of Katyn? I told him I will make one. So I quickly painted it and sought an audience with Archbishop Duka, asking him for approval. It was not easy, but I succeeded, and then just painted the final version, which was exhibited in the cathedral.

Later small scraps in my head were putting together a slightly different image and my interest began to grow at the turn of the seventies and eighties, when I started to print images for Lidice pilgrimages for the Franciscan tertiaries.

Where did you get the inspiration for the theme of the image?

I can not answer this factually. I wondered about the issue for some time, yes, but one like it by itself appeared in the imagination as it is: Our Lady of Sorrows without the Child Jesus.

It was only necessary that the veil succeed in bringing out her empty hands. At first I was a little scared, if the picture is not very strong. The baby Jesus is indeed human, but also God. Is it permissible to take such license? Is it not heretical, to deny or diminish the divinity of Christ? I had had a full head for weeks and then it dawned on me. What did the soldiers do when they stole the ciborium? The Body of Christ spilled out on the ground and they ravaged and looted the church...

Outside the people had no idea what was going on. And they were all innocent.

The Madonna without a child may also wake up the idea of murdered children. That image could also be understood to say that the Czech country had lost her children, but there is the Mother of God, consoling family and giving hope for the future.

Sure. I confessed to you that I have said before that painting itself is a little bit helpless, alone it is perceived rather as an undeserved gift than as a result of our intellectual efforts. Even though I thought mainly about Fr. Joseph, and what was going on there, it leaves me cold. I am glad that the image appeals to other people, and when they will stand behind their own interpretation, it's just as good.

How long does it take to paint a picture of that?

Have I worked for years of work on such a complicated and lengthy piece? More like, about a month

Where will the image be installed and when? Where can it be seen?

Now the picture is, I believe, in the chapel at the Prague Archbishopric. It is to be submitted in Lidice around the time of the anniversary, farther than that I do not know.

What does it mean that it is an officially recognized painting of Mary?

Formally, let's say, or perhaps from an artistic point of view it is a confirmation of the new? It is a type of Marian image, such as the example of Our Lady of Perpetual Help or Mary of the Snows, or by location - Lourdes, Czestochowa ... That image of Panna Maria Lidice could also accompany any diocesan beatification process for Fr. Joseph.

And what does it mean for you personally?

I'm a little breathless, excited. I am happy that the years of work and all sorts of worries and unpleasantness might not be in vain, on the path to the picture. I feel gifted. No? Otherwise: I'm glad I could be a hand with a brush between the idea and the image. What is important is just the picture.

Thank you for the interview and we invoke God's blessings and inspiration of the Spirit. Thanks for creating various artistic spiritual treasures that bring your good fruit.

- Original by Daniel Dehmer Light 10/2014, courtesy of Hlasy Národa, Condensed and paraphrased.



Liz Oberreiter and Daniel Sputa assist the bishop at the altar during Mass. Christmas 2014

ANNUAL REPORT 2014

DONATIONS

COLLECTIONS	35,338
MAIL	15,320
GRANTS for Jubilee	6,262

TOTAL INCOME **56,920**

EXPENSES

Rent for churches	3,475
Salary/medical for bishop	12,000
Velehrad household	13,216
Office	2,200
Jubilee celebration	6,392
Car and California air travel	6,200
Vestnik printing and mailing	4,533

TOTAL EXPENSES **48,016**
BALANCE **8,904**

ASSETS

RC Czech Mission checking	14,209
share	2,321

TOTAL ASSETS **16,530**

VELEHRAD CALIFORNIA CZECH CATHOLIC MISSION, INC.

DONATIONS Building Fund **2,835**

EXPENSES

County assessments	857.00
Loan payments	12,000.00
Insurance	853.00

13,710
Balance **(10,875)**

ASSETS

Building Fund checking	8,271.92
Savings	5,717.36
Balance	13,989.28
Market value 344 Koch Ave 2015	670,588

LIABILITY Remaining balance on loan (1.1.15) **(361,034)**

ÚMYSLY NA MŠE SVATÉ:

ÚNOR • FEBRUARY

1. +Franka a Mirku Miksovy - přátelé
2. +Annu a Josefa Nečasovy - přátelé
3. +Karla Nováka - manželka Inka a dcera Irenka
4. za živé a zemřelé členy české síně Karlín - Joe Kocáb
- 9.+Josefa Hrobaře - manželka Anna

- 10.+Ing. Karla a Marii Škrobovy - ing. Ivo a Eva Plachých
- 11.+Connie Belsan—manžel Louis
- 12.+Petra Pohorského - přátelé
- 13.+Jaroslava Kytýka - dcera Milena
- 14.+Roberta Maříka - manželka Anna
- 15.+Boženu Balounovou - přátelé

- 16.+Dr. Lud'ka Kozlíka - manželka Brigitte
- 17.+syna Jaromíra a dceru Marii Hrobařovy - maminka Anna
- 18.+Raymunda Dvorského - manželka Marie
- 19.+Alberta Misíka - Helena Misiková
- 20.+ rodiče Annu a Jana Vadúrovy-dcera Anna Hrobařová
- 21.+Miloslava Maříka - manželka Edith

- 22.+Franka Miksu - přátelé (Memorial Mass)
- 23.+bratra Josefa a Martu Vadúrovy – sestra Anna Hrobařová
- 24.+Marii a Josefa Šimkovy - přátelé
- 25.+Marii a Jana Hrobařovy—Anna Hrobařová
- 26.+J.V. Reicherta - manželka Jane
- 27.+sestru Marii a Antonína Šoklovy - Anna Hrobařová
- 28.+Petra Vranu - manželka Jarka

FRANK MIKSA, a faithful member of our San Francisco community passed away during the month of January, 2015. We will have a full obituary in our March issue of Vestnik. A memorial Mass will be said for him in San Francisco on February 22.

May he rest in peace. Please pray for him.

JANUARY - 2015

Income from Mission collections: \$1,864.00

SD collection: \$257.00, *building fund \$.00*; LA collection: \$770.00, meal \$158.00, *building fund \$.00*; SF collection: \$679, building fund \$204.00.

Regular Expenses: \$1,994.00

\$1,000.00 Bishop's salary; \$375 rent for churches; \$180.00 (gas, car maintenance); Věstník printing: \$194.00 +\$245.00 (postage).

May God reward you for your generosity.

Please take care to make out your checks so that they will match the names on our accounts: RC Czech Mission, or Czech Center Building Fund, or if you wish it to go to the Bishop or to North American Pastoral Center for Czech Catholics: Bishop Peter Esterka, or NAPCCC

OUR MISSION WILL CONTINUE TO EXIST ONLY AS LONG AS WE SUPPORT IT FINANCIALLY.

YOUR TRUST OR WILL: Please remember Czech ministry in your trust or will. Our legal title is: North American Pastoral Center for Czech Catholics, 344 KOCH Avenue, Placentia, CA 92870. For information call Bishop Esterka, 714 524 0092.

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