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## **Apostolic visitation to the Catholic Church in Bosnia and Herzegovina 1910-1914**

First part: Causes, beginning and significance of the apostolic visit in the light of contemporary sources 1908-1910

### **Summary**

The three-year confrontations, conflicts and struggles in the Catholic Church in Bosnia and Herzegovina (BiH) (1908-1910) bore ecclesiastical, moral, political and ethnic characteristics typical of the Catholic BiH environment. The main actors were the Bosnian Franciscans, Archbishop of Vrhbosna Stadler, a young Croatian lay intelligentsia, gathered in the political organization HNZ, hungry and thirsty for political and social success, and Stadler's organization HKU, also hungry and thirsty for political affirmation. For centuries, the main ecclesiastical, cultural and political factor among Catholics - with the exception of the Diocese of Trebinje - within the borders of today's BiH, which no one should have ignored, were the Franciscans. After the definitive removal of the Dominicans with the help of Pope John XXII of Avignon in 1330, the Franciscans took over de facto pastoral care for Catholics in the Banate of Bosnia, the Kingdom of Bosnia and later in the Bosnian Sandjak, Pashaluq and Vilayet. In 1878, the new occupying state of Austro-Hungary found them in such a role. Through their 600 years of spiritual service, but also spiritual rule, the Franciscans first founded the Bosnian Vicariate (*Vicaria Bosnensis*) round 1340 and the Bosnian Province (*Provincia Bosna Argentina*) 1517, which they will in their historical consciousness call in Croatian *Redodržava Bosna Srebrena* (*Orderstate of Bosna Srebrena*). They will call their provincial minister an Orderstatesman, following the example of some Orders of Knights in Europe or many other ecclesiastical orders or states with archbishops, bishops and abbots as secular and ecclesiastical princes. Thanks to the Ahd-name of Sultan Mehmed the Conqueror in 1463, which was unfortunately rarely respected by both local administrators and the central Ottoman authorities, the Franciscans gained the right to reside, a guarantee of pastoral service and absolute influence on the Catholic faithful in Bosnia. In almost 350 years, the *Orderstate of Bosna Srebrena* had no real spiritual or secular Catholic competitor, except themselves and their monastic districtisms, and politically conditioned regionalisms. From 1735 the Franciscans were not always happy about coexisting with the Apostolic Vicars.

Diocesan priests, Glagolitic, who had had their roots in the mission of the holy brothers Cyril and Methodius, operated in Croatia and Bosnia for centuries before the arrival of the Turks and before the founding and arrival of the Dominicans and Franciscans. They were the first Catholic, Croatian and Bosnian, national and domestic priests, whom the Franciscans upon their arrival mostly ignored, marginalized and finally extinguished at the beginning of the second half of the 19<sup>th</sup> century.

With the arrival of Austro-Hungary and the reorganization of political, administrative and ecclesiastical-religious life, the Franciscans still retained almost all parishes and absolute spiritual control over the Catholic population. In 1881, a regular hierarchy was established. In addition to the already existing Diocese of Trebinje, the dioceses of Mostar-Duvno and Banja Luka and the archdiocese with a metropolitan rank in Sarajevo were established. The

Herzegovinian Franciscan Paškal Buconjić immediately took the Mostar episcopal see, and the Bosnian Franciscan Marijan Marković as administrator in Banja Luka, after a three-year temporary solution with Archbishop Stadler.

However, the Franciscans did not manage to obtain the highest rank in ruling the Catholic Church in BiH: the metropolitan chair in Vrhbosna. It was occupied by Josip Stadler from Brod on Sava River (Slavonski Brod), whose family from father's side had distant Jewish roots. He was an ardent Croat, Austrophile and monarchist, Jesuit pupil and student, distinguished university professor in Zagreb, a prolific philosophical and theological writer, spiritual leader, charitable worker, great organizer, entrepreneur, builder, financial genius and *homo politicus*. When he arrived in Sarajevo in January 1882 and took over the Archdiocese, he moved as a tenant to a Muslim, and later to a Jewish house, where he would remain until 1895. In Stadler's time (1882-1918) "Catholic Sarajevo" flourished ecclesiastically, culturally and politically, which, in the history of the city no other religious denomination has experienced before.

As great, successful, even unattainable as Stadler was in many fields, not only in Bosnia but throughout the Monarchy, he was at the same time in the eyes of his many opponents a proselyte, a symbol of intolerance, tactlessness, discord, a "suitcase porter" (immigrant), a financial genius (speculator), and a foreigner both in the archdiocese and in BiH society. For many, he was - partly due to jealousy, fear, hatred and ideology, partly due to objective or subjective assessment of his life and work - incompatible with the religious and political reality of BiH.

Most Bosnian Franciscans saw and perceived Stadler as a constant challenge, danger and partial insult for the alleged permanent disparagement, attempts to secularize, take over or split their greatest material and spiritual wealth, parishes and believers. The Muslims of BiH, frightened by the constant Serbian propaganda about their impending baptism by Austria, perceived Stadler and the Jesuits ("jezuiti") with fear as representatives of that militant Catholic Austria and always, when there was a quiet conversion, there were strong Muslim reactions and protest. Orthodox Serbs regarded Stadler and his right-wing ideology as a representation of trialism and as a spread of Starčević's and Frank's "political program" of unifying BiH with Croatia. Consequently, Stadler posed a political threat to Greater Serbia's own propaganda and policy of joining BiH to Serbia. For the Provincial Government, Stadler was both an important ally and an uncontrolled opponent. In the last decade of Austro-Hungarian rule, the Provincial Government saw him as an opponent, a real "Störenfried" (troublemaker) of its "artificial", mostly supranational political goals, which were to strengthen civil, religious and national harmony in the spirit of the ruling dual Monarchy. Literally, in the eyes of the Government, Stadler, with his trialist political ideas and immoderate daily press, was a slanderer and opponent of Government policy, an ungrateful and multiple beneficiary of numerous privileges, services, facilities, financial support even in moments of his financial speculation, high annual appanage, which he enjoyed to death.

Stadler gained serious opponents in the intellectual Croatian and Catholic ranks of BiH with the emergence of a thin layer of young Croatian intelligentsia, led by lawyer Nikola Mandić, brought up and educated mostly in progressive universities in Zagreb, Graz, Vienna, Prague and Paris, and imbued, no doubt, with the spirit of the then progressive, anti-church, anticlerical and South Slav ideology which circulated throughout the Monarchy, to a large extent in Ban's Croatia. He did not know or did not want to understand their political and national goals in time, he did not try to follow them benevolently and fatherly, occasionally moderate and win them over, because in his unilateral political vision he saw and perceived them as a religious danger and political competition. It is this young intelligentsia, which will find its main political and national stronghold in the Franciscans through the HNZ, that will become not only a statistical, but also a political and moral

winner over Stadler and his political creation HKU. The conflict between Stadler and the Croatian intelligentsia was not tactical or opportunistic, as some thought, but political, ideological, cultural and partly ecclesiastical. The Croatian intelligentsia severely accused Stadler of allegedly equating Croats and Catholics, of alienating Croat Catholics in BiH from Muslims and Orthodox Serbs, of being the sole culprit in a long-term and devastating dispute with "beloved" BiH Franciscans, of uncanonical treatment of church property for destructive and anti-national writing of his press and the like.

The accusations from the HNZ, thanks to the precision and knowledge of Stadler's former lawyer Mandić, will turn the scale of the Holy See for sending the Apostolic Visitor to the Catholic Church in BiH, in other words, for introducing church monitoring for the person and the "Josip Stadler system".

The Apostolic Visitor arrived and investigated the situation in the Catholic Church in BiH, predominantly in the Archdiocese of Vrhbosna. This task required great patience on the Visitor's part, above-average diplomatic skills, and the talent to read between the lines; since each side of the conflicting parties served and defended only "its own truth" and none could boast of objective truthfulness, both morally and politically.

The documents attached here were mostly available to the Apostolic Visitor in Italian, Latin or German at the beginning of the Apostolic Visit. During the visit, other important documents appeared in Croatian, Latin, Italian, German and French and today contain extensive original archival material which is stored in three different funds of the Vatican Apostolic Archives. An important archival source for the preparation, opening and course of the Apostolic Visit in the Church of BiH is contained in the archives of the Provincial Government in Sarajevo, the Joint Ministry of Finance in Vienna and Sarajevo, and the Joint Ministry of Foreign Affairs in the Political Archives of Haus-, Hof- und Staatsarchiv in Vienna, which are quoted several times in this text. The religious institutions of the Archdiocese of Vrhbosna, the Dioceses of Banja Luka and Mostar, the two Franciscan Provinces, the Jesuits, and the Congregation of sisters Servants of Infant Jesus have not yet made the materials in their archives sufficiently accessible.

*Keywords:* Archbishop Stadler; Bishop Buconjić; Bishop Marković; Bishop Šarić; Cardinal State secretary Merry del Val; Apostolic delegate Bastien; Emperor Franz Joseph; minister Burián; president Dr. Mandić; provincial Mišić; pope Pio X.; Holy Sea; Diocesan clergy; Franciscans; Jesuits; annexation; lay intelligence; parliamentary elections; Parliament; *Zemaljska vlada* (Provincial Government); *Hrvatska narodna zajednica*; *Hrvatska katolička udruga*; *Hrvatski dnevnik*; catholics; muslims; orthodox; Croats; Muslims; Serbs; Franciscan clericalism; Stadler's clericalism; Stadler's financial operations.