

Exhibition: Dictatorship vs. Hope.
Persecution of the Roman Catholic Church in Czechoslovakia 1948–1989

The exhibition maps persecution of the Roman Catholic Church by the communist regime in Czechoslovakia. In twenty four panels, authors of the exhibition try to show ways and methods used to destroy spiritual life of Czech and Slovak society, as well as the attempt of the Church to face the pressures on the part of the representatives of the regime with dignity.

A festive opening of the exhibition “Dictatorship vs. Hope” will take place at the Pontifical University of the Holy Cross in Rome on Monday **26th November 2012**. The exhibition will be open for the public from **27th November 2012** to **31st January 2013**.

Basic information about the exhibition:

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- Place: Rome

The basic intention of the exhibition (24 panels altogether), which is organized by the Embassy of the Czech Republic at the Holy See, the Archive of the Office of the President of the Czech Republic, and the Institute for the Study of Totalitarian Regimes, is to map the breadth of the persecution of the Roman Catholic Church by the totalitarian regime in Czechoslovakia, describing the instruments of power as well as concrete methods used for the destruction of the Church or spiritual life of society and also ways by means of which the Church faced those pressures.

Historical connections are presented in a supranational context with the Czechoslovak-Vatican aspects emphasized, including the fates of persons working in exile (e.g. Josef Cardinal Beran, Tomáš Cardinal Špidlík). Last but not least, the exhibition brings so far unpublished documents (e.g. a personal letter of John Paul II to G. Husák) and photographs (e.g. from the spying on church representatives and the Catholic dissent by the communist secret police).

At the same time, the exhibition stresses spiritual traditions connected with reverence for our national saints and the context of the development of our catholic environment within its relation to papacy, which will commemorate the 50th anniversary of the II Vatican Council. The emphasis on the spiritual legacy that came up from the legacy of missionaries, Saints Cyril and Methodius, is one of the contributions of the Czech archivists and historians to the upcoming 1150th anniversary of the arrival of their mission in 2013.

The exhibition was supported by the Czech Bishops' Conference. Among partners of this project there are important scientific institutions of the Czech Republic – apart from others the National Archive and the Institute of History, Academy of Sciences of the Czech Republic. It is held under the honorary auspices of **Tarcisio Cardinal Bertone**, the State Secretary of the Holy See, **Miroslava Němcová**, the Speaker of the Chamber of Deputies of the Parliament of the Czech Republic, **Dominik Cardinal Duka**, the Archbishop of Prague and Primate of Bohemia, and Prof. **Jiří Drahoš**, the President of the Academy of Sciences of the Czech Republic.