

The Year of Celebrations of Cyril and Methodius will be Opened by a Conference on Beginnings of Evangelization

In the year dedicated to the legacy of the 1150th anniversary of the arrival of missionaries to Great Moravia, the theme of this year's Czech-German conference of the Czech Association "Sdružení Ackermann-Gemeinde" (SAG), which takes place on 25th - 27th January 2013, is "Beginnings of Evangelization: Dialogue of Spirituality and Society at that Time and Nowadays".

Ing. Jaromír Talíř, the SAG president said, "The point of the conference is not the past. On the contrary, we would like to talk about the presence and the future, which is supported also by the selection of high-quality speakers." The conference, which will take place at EXE Iris Hotel at Vršovice in Prague and in the Archbishop's Palace in Prague, will be held under the auspices of the Archbishop of Prague, Cardinal Dominik Duka OP, who welcomed the plan of the organizer.

On Friday, the program will be opened by the SAG President, ing. Jaromír Talíř with the secretary of the Ackermann-Gemeinde association, Matthias Dörr. The opening lecture titled "Dialogue of Spirituality and Society: Do we Need New Cyril and Methodius?" will be delivered by a theologian and

pastoralist doc. Aleš Opatrný from the Catholic Theological Faculty of Charles University. Apart from the speaker and the moderator P. Josef Hurt, who is a chaplain for university students in Ústí nad Labem, the discussion that will follow the contribution will be attended by P. Dr. Martin Leitgöb CSsR, who is a spiritual leader of the German Catholic Association in Prague. He will offer not only his perspective based on his experience in the Czech Republic, but also from Germany and Austria.

On Saturday afternoon, we will welcome an important Czech sociologist, teacher, priest and author of spiritual literature, Prof. Tomáš Halík, and a German theologian and a former director of the Institute for World Religions and Missions that belongs to Sankt Georgen university in Frankfurt am Main, Prof. Albert-Peter Rethmann. Prof. Halík will open the second day of the conference by his lecture titled "Inculturation of Christianity into Society" and Prof. Rethmann will follow with his contribution titled "Testimony, Invitation and Conversion - Missions and Inculturation in Christianity and Islam". Thus, he will offer to participants experience of the two strongest European religions. Both lecturers will then discuss that topic. Mgr. Daniel Hermann, Director of the Institute for the Study of Totalitarian Regimes will be a moderator of that discussion.

The closing day of the conference will be opened by a holy mass in the Church of John of Nepomuk at Hradčany in Prague. After the mass, the main celebrant, Dominik Cardinal Duka OP, is inviting those who participated in the conference to the hall of Cardinal Beran at the Prague Archbishopric. There, Prof. Ludvík Armbruster SJ and Dr. Václav Cílek will meet at the round table to discuss the theme "From a Pilgrim to a Missionary: Quo Vadis, Domine?" The closing discussion will be moderated by a historian Dr. Jan Stříbrný from the Czech Christian Academy. Together with the two discussants, he will try to bring to mind the meaning of human pilgrimaging, spirituality and perhaps also foundations for the present and the future.

The ecumenical association "Sdružení Ackermann-Gemeinde" was founded in the Czech Republic at the beginning of 1999. The role of the association is to contribute to the constructive formation of the future in Europe while acknowledging the common history of Czechs and Germans lasting for centuries. In its activities the association proceeds from Christian principles. Its name is derived from a work of literature from the 14th century "Ackermann aus Böhmen"/"Plowman from Bohemia", which was written by John of Žatec, who was born in western Bohemia. Further information available at

www.ackermannngemeinde.cz. (Jan Heinzl)

Source: Prague Archbishopric, 24th January 2013