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APOSTOLIC PROCESS ON JOHN NEPOMUCENE
NEUMANN IN THE DIOCESE OF BUDWEIS 1897-1901*

INTRODUCTION

The Bishop of Philadelphia and the first male American saint, John Nepomucene Neumann (1811-1860), is one of the most important figures in nineteenth-century church history. His legacy is still alive mainly in the United States, in the Czech environment where he came from, and within the Congregation of Redemptorists, of which he was a member. This is evidenced, among other things, by the considerable attention paid to his life and his spiritual legacy in professional literature.¹

One topic that was also addressed in connection with Neumann is the process leading to his beatification and canonization. It as a whole was described by Nicola Ferrante (1976), the general postulator of Neumann's cause of beatification and canonization.² The whole process officially began in 1886, when the diocesan ordinary informative processes began in the

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¹ Key literature on the life and legacy of John Nepomucene Neumann is presented in another study by Rudolf Svoboda, see Svoboda 2021, 61-69. Almost complete older inventories of the Neumann bibliography can be found in the journal *Spicilegium Historicum Cogregationis SSmi Redemptoris* [hereinafter: SHCSR]. See Sampers 1963, 261-72 and 1976, 512-20. For the latest updated list, see Owczarski 2022.

² See Ferrante 1976, 485-511; 1977a, 348-74; 1977b, 33-66.

Archdiocese of Philadelphia and the Diocese of Budweis. It should be emphasized that the Diocese of Budweis was Neumann's native diocese,³ where he lived until his departure for missions to the United States in 1836.⁴ Both informative diocesan processes took place in parallel – in Philadelphia from 5th May 1886 to 24th October 1888 and Budweis from 15th October to 8th March 1888. Materials from both diocesan processes were then sent to Rome, where the so-called apostolic process began on 15th December 1896. Within its framework, two more subprocesses began to run in the dioceses: in Philadelphia from 25th October 1897 to 13th June 1902 and in Budweis from 17th November 1897 to 2nd April 1901. Another milestone in the whole process of beatification and canonization of Neumann was the issuing of a decree on heroic virtues on 11th December 1921, followed by the beatification on 13th October 1963.⁵ The process ended with the canonization of John Nepomucene Neumann on 19th June 1977 by Pope Paul VI.

In his excellent study, Nicola Ferrante provides details only from the processes in the Archdiocese of Philadelphia and Rome. He mentions only marginally the ordinary and apostolic processes in the Diocese of Budweis. Therefore, the ordinary process in the Diocese of Budweis was elaborated in detail in the study “*Philadelphiensis seu Budvicensis Causa Beatificationis et Canonizationis Servi Dei Joannis Nepomuceni Neumann*. The ordinary informative process in the Diocese of Budweis in 1886-1888 and examination of his written estate in 1891” [Svoboda 2022, 267-87].

This study aims to present another unprocessed phase of Neumann's beatification and canonization process, i.e., the apostolic process in the

³ The Diocese of Budweis (also called Czech-Budweis, Latin Bohemo-Budvicensis), with the city of Budweis at its centre, was founded during the reign of Emperor Joseph II in 1785. It is spread throughout southern Bohemia. It was mainly an agrarian region, poor in mineral wealth, which in the period of the 19th century was far from being affected by the changes associated with the advent of the Industrial Revolution. Around 1815, about 700,000 people lived in the diocese; after 1830, there were almost 850,000 inhabitants. After 1860 there were almost 1 million inhabitants. The Catholic Church had a dominant position in southern Bohemia. Almost all the inhabitants were Catholics. The diocese's history is most recently described in professional monographs: Svoboda 2014; Novotný, Svoboda, Martínková, et al. 2018; Novotný, et al. 2021.

⁴ An exception from the years 1811-1836 were two years spent studying in Prague in the years 1833-1835. However, even at this time, he would often return home. See Huber 1977; *Ibid* 2005, 555-86. Regarding the period of Neumann's study in the years 1823-1833, see Svoboda 2023, 67-117.

⁵ For an overview of this data, see SHCSR 24, 1976, no. 2:240.

Diocese of Budweis, which took place there in 1896-1901, mainly based on sources stored in the Czech and Roman archives.⁶

1. A BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF THE CANONIZATION PROCESS AND THE PLACE OF THE APOSTOLIC PROCESS IN THE DIOCESE OF BUDWEIS WITHIN IT

Pope Alexander III (1159-1181) began the reserving of cases of canonization to the Holy See. This reservation became general law under Gregory IX (1227-1241). Pope Sixtus V (1585-1590) assigned to the Sacred Congregation of Rites (*Sacra Rituum Congregatio*), one of the offices of the Roman Curia, the duty of conducting the processes of beatification and canonization. Pope Urban VIII (1623-1644) forbade the public cult of any person not yet beatified or canonized by the Church. An exception was made only for those who were in possession of a public cult from time immemorial or for at least 100 years.

⁶ The basic sources for this study are the so-called *Procesní akta k blahorečení a svatořečení filadelfského biskupa J. N. Neumanna* (Procedural Acts on the Beatification and Canonization of J. N. Neumann, Bishop of Philadelphia), which are part of the archive fonds *Biskupský archiv České Budějovice* (Episcopal Archive České Budějovice), which is stored in the National Regional Archive in Třeboň in South Bohemia. Cf. State Regional Archive Třeboň [hereinafter: SOA Třeboň], *Biskupský archiv České Budějovice* [hereinafter: BA CB], *Procesní akta k blahorečení a svatořečení filadelfského biskupa J. N. Neumanna*, card. 947. At the time of the Bishop of Budweis Josef Hlouch (1902-1972, episcopate 1947-1972), part of Neumann's correspondence was excluded from the above-mentioned archive fond *Procesní akta k blahorečení a svatořečení filadelfského biskupa J. N. Neumanna*. Along with other documents relating to the canonization of Neumann, another not-so-large archive fonds called *Neumanniana Budweis* was created, and stored in the so-called Budweis Diocesan Archive, which is located in the bishop's residence in Budweis [hereinafter: Budweis Diocesan Archive, *Neumanniana Budweis*]. Other interesting and valuable sources of knowledge are the priestly journal (the priestly bulletin) published in Czech and German as the *Ordinariátní listy Budějovické diecéze* or *Ordinariats-Blatt der Budweiser Diöcese* (Ordinariate Letter of Diocese of Budweis [hereinafter: OL]); *Acta curiae episcopalis Bohemo-Budvicensis* (ACEBB); and the official reports on the state of the Diocese of Budweis by Bishop Martin Josef Říha from 1888, 1892, 1896 and 1902, which he sent to Rome. See Archivio Apostolico Vaticano (AAV), Congregazione del Consilio, Relationes Dioecesium (fine sec. XVI – 1890 circa), Budvicen., Ceske Budejovice – Budweis (Bohemia), sign. 153, p. 40-116. Finally, it is necessary to mention the materials arising from the process conducted in Rome, which are stored in the the Archivium Generale Historicum Redemptoristarum [hereinafter: AGHR], Roma, Neumanniana.

It should be noted that the use of the words “process” or “trial” is appropriate because it is not a mere sequence of events over time leading to a result but, above all, a sequence of canonical investigations which are based on the authority of the resident bishop, on the authority of the Congregation of Rites and, last but not least, on the authority of the Pope himself. As part of this process, the candidate is incrementally declared Servant of God (*Servus Dei*), Venerable (*Venerabilis Servus Dei*), Blessed, and finally Saint. The legal basis of the whole process (within which partial subprocesses take place, for example, in the places where the candidate lived) is also evidenced by the fact that the word “case” (*causa*) is used as a synonym for the word “process” in the surviving documents.

It is clear, then, that the subject of this study is only a partial part of the apostolic process, which in turn has a firm place in the whole process leading to canonization. In order to make it completely clear which phase of the process this study deals with, we will briefly introduce the whole period of the process of canonization in individual steps:

When the process is begun, the person is called Servus Dei – Servant of God.

1. The ordinary (or diocesan) informative process:
 - a) process on virtues,
 - b) process on miracles,
 - c) the “little process of the diligences” (*processus diligentiarum*), i.e., on the writings of the Servant of God,
 - d) the “de non cultu” process.
2. Decree on the writings of the Servant of God (nothing contrary to faith or morals in any of the writings of the Servant of God.
3. “De non-cultu decree” (no public cult must be rendered before beatification). This decree can be issued after step 4.
4. Commission of the introduction of the cause. The Servant of God acquires the title of “Venerable” at this step. The cause is now under Rome’s control completely. Nothing is done without Rome’s permission. The virtues and miracles are again investigated.

Four main judgements of the Congregation of Rites in steps five to eight:

5. Decree on the validity of the process.
6. Decree on the heroicity of virtues.
7. Decree on the miracles after death.

8. The “de tuto decree” (whether or not it is safe to proceed to beatification).

9. Decree and ceremony of beatification. The person is now called “Blessed”.

Process on miracles after beatification:

10. Decree on the validity of the process.

11. Decree on the miracles.

12. The “de tuto decree”.

13. Decree and ceremony of canonization. The person is now called “Saint”.

The place of the apostolic process (more precisely, the subprocess) in the Diocese of Budweis is located within step 4, i.e., it took place after the beginning of the apostolic process by Pope Leo XIII on 15th December 1896. As already indicated, the main difference compared to the ordinary diocesan process is that the apostolic process is now not overseen by the diocesan bishop, but all events are under the control of the Congregation of Rites.

2. WHAT IMMEDIATELY PRECEDED THE COMMENCEMENT OF THE APOSTOLIC PROCESS

It should be mentioned that the course of every process leading to beatification and canonization has had to go through certain milestones as described above, but no timetable is given. As shown in a study devoted to the informative diocesan process in Budweis, Bishop Martin Josef Říha⁷

⁷ Martin Josef Říha was born in 1839 in Oslov (Woslaw) near Písek in southern Bohemia. He was ordained a priest in 1862 and went into pastoral practice. In 1869 he received a doctorate in moral theology from the University of Vienna. From 1871 he worked as a professor at the Episcopal Priestly Seminary in Budweis. In addition to moral theology, he also devoted himself to pedagogy. He was very gifted in linguistics, translating texts from French and Italian. He became the sixth bishop of Budweis in 1885. During his episcopal career, he travelled to Rome in 1888 and 1896 to visit *ad limina*. He conducted regular episcopal visitations and supported so-called folk missions and spiritual exercises, as well as the activities of religious associations, fraternities and religious congregations. He died in 1907. His life is most recently described by Rudolf Svoboda in the book *Novotný, et. al. 2021, 81-88*. Nicola Ferrante, who mentions Bishop Říha in his study in connection with the diocesan process in Budweis con-

was even tactfully requested by the Roman authorities not to remind the pope too often about initiating the apostolic process.

Nevertheless, the apostolic process began on Roman terms very soon after the end of the informative diocesan processes.

The first reason or impulse was the requests for the initiation of the apostolic process from important representatives of secular and ecclesiastical life. In 1892 and 1893, the support for the continuation of the process and the request and commencement of its apostolic phase was expressed by the Austrian emperor Franz Joseph I and other members of the imperial family: Archduke Franz Ferdinand, Archduke Ferdinand and Archduchess Sophia Maria Theresa. Separate requests were sent by the Archbishop of Vienna Anton Josef Cardinal Gruscha, the Archbishop of Prague Franz de Paula Cardinal Schönborn. The bishop of Budweis, Martin Josef Říha, wrote a request signed by another twelve bishops and archbishops from the Austrian Empire. From the United States, Archbishop of Baltimore James Cardinal Gibbons, Archbishop of Quebec Elzéar-Alexandre Cardinal Taschereau, Archbishop of Philadelphia Patrick Rayen, and 41 other bishops and archbishops wrote their signatures. The last people to send their requests were 14 bishops from a Congregation of Redemptorists worldwide. These requests were taken very seriously and became part of the official files, where they had their place as supporting material.⁸

The second reason was completing the examination of documents from informative diocesan processes. In 1894, Cajetan Cardinal Aloisi-Masella, prefect of the Congregation of Rites, issued the official *Positio Super Introductione Causae*, which summarized the results of the ordinariate processes and based on which he presented the life and virtues of John Nepomucene Neumann.⁹ Pope Leo XIII then issued a decree on 10th June

cerning Neumann, refers to his name inaccurately as “Martino Giuseppe Ria”. See Ferrante 1976, 487.

⁸ *Summarium Additionale Philadelphien. seu Budvicen. Beatificationis et Canonisationis Ven. Servi Dei Ioannis Nepomuceni Neumann e Congregatione SS. Redemptoris Episcopi Philadelphiensis*, AGHR Roma, Neumanniana, Book SN1.

⁹ *Sacra Rituum Congregatione. Philadelphien. seu Budvicen. Beatificationis et canonisationis Servi Dei Ioannis Nepomuceni Neumann e Congregatione Sanctissimi Redemptoris, Episcopi Philadelphiensis. Positio Super Introductione Causae*, Romae 1894. *Positio* contains the so-called *Informatio super dubio*, i.e., the most special summary of research into the life and virtues of John Nepomucene Neumann (71 printed pages, 136 paragraphs) and a much more extensive so-called *Summarium super dubio*, which forms an extensive thematically divided list of individual testimonies from the trials of

1895, ending part of Neumann's process concerning his written estate (*Decretum approbationis scriptorum*).¹⁰

The promoter of the faith (promotor fidei, in other words, the devil's advocate) Gustavo Persiani also did his work, commenting in 1896 on shortcomings in both the diocesan processes in Philadelphia and Budweis (1886-1888) but also in Rome (1891).¹¹ He found serious shortcomings of a formal and content nature in the acts of the processes conducted in Philadelphia and Rome. On the contrary, he did not find anything wrong with the ordinary process in Budweis but only asked for clarification of the circumstances of John Nepomucene Neumann's departure to the United States of America in 1836 and his ordination. The required documents and evidence were sent from Budweis to Rome by bishop Říha on 5th June 1896.¹² Similarly, he requested some clarification from the Archdiocese of Philadelphia. The general postulator then wrote an extensive response to the objections of the promoter of the faith.¹³ These were accepted by both the Congregation of the Rites and the promoter of the faith, so Neumann's process could be moved to the next stage.¹⁴

Budweis and Philadelphia from 1886-1888, as well as from the Roman *processiculum* from 1891. During the *processiculum*, i.e., "small process", a single witness was interrogated in Rome on 4th February, i.e., only one day, at the legal level of the ordinary process.

¹⁰ See SHCSR 24, 1976, no. 2:240; AGHR Roma, Neumanniana, Book SN1.

¹¹ See *Philadelphien. seu Budicen. Beatificationis et canonizationis Servi Dei Ioannis Nepomuceni Neumann e Congregatione Sanctissimi Redemptoris, Episcopipi Philadelphiensis. Animadversiones R. P. D. Promotoris Fidei Super Dubio*, Roma 1896, in: *Philadelph. seu Budvice. Ser. Dei Joann. Nepom. Neumann. Positio Super Introductione Causae*, AGHR Roma, Neumanniana, Book SN1.

¹² See the document of 5th June 1892, signed by the bishop of Budweis Říha and witnesses. SOA Třeboň, BA ČB, Procesní akta k blahorečení a svatořečení filadelfského biskupa J. N. Neumanna, fol. 379-84; the original of the letter sent to Rome can be found in AGHR Roma, Neumanniana, S. Neumann – Miscelanea.

¹³ *Philadelphien. seu Budicen. Beatificationis et canonizationis Servi Dei Ioannis Nepomuceni Neumann e Congregatione Sanctissimi Redemptoris, Episcopipi Philadelphiensis. Responsio ad Animadversiones R. P. D. Promotoris Fidei Super Dubio*. AGHR Roma, Neumanniana, Book SN1.

¹⁴ On 15th December 1896, the prefect of the Congregation of the Rites, Cajetan Aloisi-Masella, issued a decree confirming that all doubts expressed in the process so far had been settled and that it was recommended that the *Commissio Introductionis Causae* be established. Among other things, he mentions that the promoter of the faith, Gustavo Persiani, had also expressed his consent and that representatives of secular and spiritual life, primarily the Austrian Emperor Franz Joseph I, wanted the process to continue. See *Decretum Philadelphien. seu Budicen. Beatificationis et can-*

3. THE APOSTOLIC PROCESS IN THE DIOCESE OF BUDWEIS

The official opening of the apostolic process (*processus apostolicus*) was announced by Pope Leo XIII on 15th December 1896, when he issued the *Decretum introducendae causae*.¹⁵ As mentioned above, other subprocesses had started within the Archdiocese of Philadelphia and the Diocese of Budweis.¹⁶

The ordinariate of Budweis received an announcement from the Congregation of Rites on the proclamation of the apostolic process at the beginning of 1897, and the so-called Signatura Commissionis Introductionis Causae was announced, thus acknowledging that Neumann was entitled “Venerable” (*venerabilis*).¹⁷

The first part of the apostolic process, called the *Processus apostolicus super fama sanctitatis in genere*, was carried out with the permission of Rome only in America, i.e., in Philadelphia, because it was not considered necessary for it to take place in both dioceses. The decree on its proper termination of 9th July 1900 was published in the Ordinariate Letter of Diocese of Budweis.¹⁸

The other part of the apostolic process, *Processus apostolicus super virtutibus et miraculis in specie*, i.e., examining the virtues and miracles of the Venerable John Nepomucene Neumann, began in Budweis officially on

onizationis Ven. Servi Dei Ioannis Nepomuceni Neumann e Congregatione Sanctissimi Redemptoris Episcopi Philadelphiensis Super dubio, An sit signanda Commissio Introductionis Causae, in casu et ad effectum de quo agitur? AGHR Roma, Neumanniana, Book SN1.

¹⁵ *Decretum introducendae causae*, AGHR Roma, Neumanniana, Neumann – Documenti 1.

¹⁶ OL, 1900, no. 24:93-95; *Zpráva o stavu budějovické diecéze z roku 1902*, fol. 10; *Procesní akta k blahorečení a svatořečení filadelfského biskupa J. N. Neumanna*, fol. 388-617.

¹⁷ Copies of the papal proclamation of the apostolic process and instructions from the prefect of the Congregation Cajetan Masella and the secretary of the Congregation Panici are found bound in a book with red plates, which is part of the *Procesní akta k blahorečení a svatořečení filadelfského biskupa J. N. Neumanna*, unnumbered; other copies see *Copia Publica Transumpti Processus Apostolica auctoritate constructi In Curia Ecclesiastica Budvicensi Super virtutibus et miraculis in specie Ven. Servi Dei Joannis Nepomuceni Neumann e Congregatione SSmi Redemptoris Episcopi Philadelphiensis, Vol. unic., Anno 1904*, AGHR Roma, Neumanniana.

¹⁸ OL, 1900, no. 24:93; *Procesní akta k blahorečení a svatořečení filadelfského biskupa J. N. Neumanna*.

17th November 1897. It was to take place according to the decrees of Pope Innocent XI and according to instructions sent by the Congregation of Rites. For the trial's purposes, questions for witnesses' interrogations were prepared and sent by the general postulator Claudio Benedetti. These questions are the same as those used for the informative diocesan process, which was, among other things, very important for maintaining the internal continuity of the whole process.¹⁹

In contrast to the informative diocesan process, a much larger number of people took part in this part of the apostolic process in the Diocese of Budweis from 1897-1898. Bishop Martin Josef Říha, vicar-general František Janský and canons of the Cathedral Chapter Petr Špelina, František Dichtl, Adolf Rodler and Matthias Wonesch acted as judges (*judex delegatus*). Fiscalis promoter and notary of the Episcopal Curia Josef Hoffmann acted as the promoter of faith (respectively the sub promoter, because the promoter of the fidei of the apostolic process was in Rome), and Josef Antonín Hůlka also played the same role as the second promoter of faith.²⁰ Jaroslav Holeš was appointed a notary (*notarius actuarius*), and

¹⁹ These were 238 questions formulated and even printed before the informative diocesan processes began. See *Philadelphiensis Causa Beatificationis Servi Dei, Joannis Nepomuceni Neumann, Olim Episcopi Philadelphiensis, et Alumni Congregationis Ssmi Redemptoris, Baltimore, Typis Kreuzer Fratrum, 1885, 48 pp.* Questions 1-152 are untitled and focus on examining the facts about the life of John Nepomucene Neumann. In particular, the first 60 questions concern the period before leaving for the United States of America – these questions could be answered mainly in his native diocese. Other headings already refer to what has been examined for the candidate's beatification and canonization as a model of Christian life: *De Virtutibus Theologicalibus / De Fide heroica* (questions 153-168), *De Spe heroica* (question 169), *De Caritate in Deum heroica* (questions 170-173), *De Caritate in Proximum heroica* (questions 174-183), *De Virtutibus Cardinalibus earumque adnexis / De Prudentia herioca* (questions 184-188), *De Iustitia heroica* (questions 189-194), *De heroica Votorum Observantia / De Paupertate* (questions 195-196), *De Castitate* (questions 197-198), *De Obedientia* (questions 199-202), *De Fortitudine Heroica* (questions 203-205), *De Temperantia Heroica* (questions 206-214), *De Humilitate Heorica* (questions 215-221), *De Donis Supernaturalibus* (questions 222-225), *De fama in vita V. Dei Servi* (question 226), *De pretioso VDS obitu et de concursu ad Funus* (questions 227-229), *De Fama Sanctitatis VDS post obitum Eius* (questions 230-233), *De Miraculis post obitum V. Dei Servi* (questions 234-238). See *Procesní akta k blahorečení a svatořečení filadelfského biskupa J. N. Neumanna*, book with red plates, unnumbered.

²⁰ The existence of two fidei (sub)promoters was a necessity. Hoffmann had considerable experience but was old (he died in 1899). Josef Antonín Hůlka, therefore, acts as a fidei promoter in practically all protocols of individual sessions (*sessio*). Hoffmann is signed under the final protocols that were sent to Rome.

František Eliášek was cursor and nuncius. Priests Václav Švec and Matěj Lafata were called as witnesses. Notary Jakub Sponar had his tasks on the part of the consistory.²¹ The postulator was the Redemptorist from Budweis, František Blažák.²² The Redemptorist Martin Janů was commissioned to translate the testimony of witnesses from Czech into Latin, and Jan Schmiderer was commissioned to translate it from German to Latin.

Because canons František Dichtl and Petr Špelina had died at the end of 1897, Canon Alois Jirák and advisor to the episcopal consistory, Matěj Procházka, were appointed judges in June 1898.²³ Josef Pavlovic and Jan Valentin were appointed as cursos and nuncio after František Eliášek, and Jan Hradílek and Václav Smolík were called as witnesses.²⁴

During Říha's presidency, 11 witnesses, including 3 of Neumann's classmates, were heard in 18 sessions from 17th November 1897 to 19th October 1898. The oldest witnesses were the first to be heard because of their advanced age.²⁵ By order of the prefect Aloisi-Masella, materials from the ongoing negotiations – including originals and transcripts – were sent to the Congregation of Rites.²⁶ During 1898, sessions also began in Rome. In addition to the aforementioned prefect of the Congregation of Rites Aloisi-Masella, the meeting was attended by the secretary of the Congregation Diomedes Panici, the new promoter of faith Joannes Batista

²¹ *Procesní akta k blahorečení a svatořečení filadelfského biskupa J. N. Neumanna*, fol. 387-98, 405-10.

²² Appointment of the postulator Blažák from the general postulator Benedetti on 12th September 1887, *Procesní akta k blahorečení a svatořečení filadelfského biskupa J. N. Neumanna*, fol. 399; see also the letter from Johann Schwienbacher, superior of the Redemptorist Province of Vienna, of 18th September 1897, AGHR Roma, Neumanniana, card. 2.

²³ František Dichtl died on 22nd December 1897 and Petr Špelina on 16th December 1897. Alois Jirák and Matěj Procházka were appointed on 5th June 1898. See *Procesní akta k blahorečení a svatořečení filadelfského biskupa J. N. Neumanna*, fol. 460-61, 464-68.

²⁴ Pavlovic was appointed on 3rd June 1898, Valentin was appointed on 4th July 1898, Hradílek was appointed on 7th June 1898, and Smolík was appointed on 29th July 1898. See *ibid.* fol. 462-63, 470, 480, 488, 515.

²⁵ See *Procesní akta k blahorečení a svatořečení filadelfského biskupa J. N. Neumanna*, fol. 387-527. For a list of witnesses (Notula testium), see pages 416 and 469. Names of the witnesses: František Ritter, Leopold Wackařz, Antonín Celerin, Maria Malec, Leopoldina Leitnerová, Václav Zdiarský, Karolina Kandlová, Vojtěch Špinka, Jakub Miko, Jan Sagaster and Marie Smidtová.

²⁶ *Ibid.*, fol. 517.

Lugari, the sub promoter of faith Alexander Verde, and the general postulator of the Redemptorist cases Claudius Benedetti.²⁷

This was followed by a period of waiting, which Bishop Říha filled with a report on the current course of Neumann's process in a pastoral letter of 1st August 1900 addressed to his diocese. He reminded the believers that he had in 1888 presented the life of John Nepomucene Neumann in another of his pastoral letters. He also mentioned that he had personally handed over the documents of the informative diocesan process during a visit *ad limina apostolorum*. He further informed the diocesan that the Neumann process was currently taking place in Budweis, Philadelphia and Rome. He expressed the hope that the end of the apostolic process in the Diocese of Budweis could be later that year. He also expressed the great pleasure of participating in all the events from the beginning of the diocesan informative process and then the apostolic process. He was convinced that: "All the life of the Venerable Servant of God John Nep. Neumann testifies to the miraculous conduct of the Providence of God and to the mysterious performance of the Grace of God, which led the Venerable Servant of the Lord from one heroic virtue to another and made him great before God and before men."²⁸

The Congregation of the Rites and the Promoter of the Faith, Joannes Batista Lugari, did not send instructions for the continuation of the apostolic process and its completion until the summer of 1900.²⁹ From 12th September 1900 to 2nd April 1901, five witnesses were heard in Budweis "In progressu Apostolico confirmativo" during the subsequent 18 sessions.³⁰ Bishop Říha and the canons Adolf Rodler, Tomáš Pfauser and Jakub Sponar acted as judges (*iudex delegatus*).³¹ František Blaťák remained the subpostulator. Josef Antonín Hůlka again took on the role of subpromoter of the faith, and Matěj Procházka and notary Jaroslav Holeš

²⁷ See AGHR Roma, Neumanniana, Box 1, and Books SN2 and SN3.

²⁸ OL, 1900, no. 24:94-95, cit. 95.

²⁹ *Procesní akta k blahorečení a svatořečení filadelfského biskupa J. N. Neumanna*, fol. 537-611.

³⁰ For the minutes of these meetings, see *Procesní akta k blahorečení a svatořečení filadelfského biskupa J. N. Neumanna*, fol. 529-617; *Notula testium* see fol. 548 and 562. The witnesses heard were named: Jan Blach, Antonín Micko, Josef Záruba, Jan Švéda and Karel Lentes.

³¹ František Jánský, vicar-general and dean of the Budweis Cathedral Chapter, died on 6th July 1899. See *Procesní akta k blahorečení a svatořečení filadelfského biskupa J. N. Neumanna*, fol. 542.

were appointed second fidei subpromotors next to him. František Eliášek was appointed cursor and nuntio.³² Matěj Lafata and Josef Pavlovic acted as witnesses. Jan Raška and Jaroslav Holeš entered the process as notaries on the part of the diocese.³³ After the documentation was sent, every act connected with the apostolic process was definitively completed in the Diocese of Budweis.³⁴

Overall, it can be said that the course of the apostolic process was heavily formalized, after which only official protocols remained available. An exception that gives us an informal insight into the course of the apostolic process in Budweis is a collection of 20 letters from the subpostulator, the Redemptorist František Blaťák, which he addressed to the general postulator Benedetti in Rome between 18th September 1897 and 22nd November 1909.³⁵

Although we know very little about the life of František Blaťák (1868-1926),³⁶ his letters show that he contributed to the smooth running of the apostolic process in the Diocese of Budweis thanks to direct and somewhat informal contact with the general postulator, whom he wrote to as a Redemptorist to a Redemptorist. Claudio Benedetti (1841-1926) was not only the general postulator of the Redemptorist cases and therefore of the Neumann case but also the consultor of the Congregation of the Rites, which enabled him to obtain the necessary information quickly and accurately.³⁷ Blaťák was also in contact with the general superior of the Re-

³² Ibid., fol. 543

³³ Ibid., fol. 541.

³⁴ Bishop Říha did not hesitate to commemorate the end of the apostolic process in the diocese in the report on the state of the diocese of 1902 sent to Rome. See *Zpráva o stavu budějovické diecéze z roku 1902*, fol. 108. All documents sent from the apostolic process in Budweis in 1898-1901, see also *Copia Publica Transumpti Processus Apostolica auctoritate constructi In Curia Ecclesiastica Budvicensi Super virtutibus et miraculis in specie Ven. Servi Dei Joannis Nepomuceni Neumann e Congregatione SSmi Redemptoris Episcopi Philadelphiensis, Vol. unic., Anno 1904*, AGHR Roma, Neumanniana.

³⁵ See AGHR Roma, Neumanniana, Neumann – Documenti, Lettere relative al diocesso Budweis 1888-1900, card. 2.

³⁶ He was born on 1st September 1868 in Čekyne, Přerov district, and died in 1926 in Prostějov. In addition to his priestly work, this Czech Redemptorist was known as the author of religious literature focused on education and spirituality.

³⁷ Claudio Benedetti was born in Falvaterra in the diocese of Veroli on 30th August 1841. He was ordained a priest on 2nd April 1865 and, after studying in the Sapienza, Rome, gained a doctorate in utroque jure. He taught moral theology in the seminary of

demptorists, based in Rome, Matthias Raus (1829-1917), who was also one of the consultors of this congregation from 1896.³⁸

In letters from shortly before the official start of the apostolic process in Budweis, he asked for instructions from the Congregation of Rites to be sent, according to which witnesses should be questioned. It was unclear whether they should occur in the same way as in the ordinary process. He also needed to know how to proceed in the event of the death of a witness who was to be heard by order of the Congregation of Rites and also whether new witnesses whom the congregation did not yet know about should be heard. He also consulted on the frequency with which minutes of sessions are to be sent to Rome, as well as on a number of formal matters: whether witness statements should be recorded in the language in which they were given, whether the abbreviations introduced in the documents can be used, or whether each page in the sitting acts must be dated.³⁹

Blafák then wrote to Benedetti about the course of the individual sessions and advised how to proceed in disputed cases. Questions of a more formal nature still prevailed,⁴⁰ but a few questions still reveal something more.

Veroli until he joined the Redemptorists. He made his profession in Rome on 27th July 1878. He taught dogmatic theology to the students of the Roman province and was for a time novice master. From 1890 until 1922, he was postulator general of the Congregation. He was much respected by authorities of the Holy See and served as consultor to more than one Sacred Congregation. Among the Pontifical Commissions to which he was appointed, the most important was that for the preparation of the Code of Canon Law. He died in Rome on 29th February 1926. See Boland 1987, 33-34.

³⁸ Matthias Raus was born in Aspelt in Luxemburg on 9th August 1829. He took his vows as a Redemptorist in Saint-Nicolas-du-Port on 1st November 1853 and was ordained priest in Teterchen on 8th August 1858. After filling the positions of rector and prefect of students in the province of France and Switzerland in 1882, he was sent to make an extraordinary visitation of the houses in Spain. He governed the Congregation from 1893 until the general chapter of the following year. Elected Superior General in 1894, his resignation was accepted by the subsequent chapter in 1909. He died in Bertigny on 9th May 1917. See *Raus Matthias*, in Boland 1987, 309.

³⁹ See the letters of František Blafák from 19th and 28th October 1897.

⁴⁰ For example, on 20th January 1898, he asked how translations of witness statements were to be handled – when some spoke Czech and others German. Proof that the information reached the right ears very quickly was a letter from the prefect of the Congregation of the Rites Masella dated 11th February 1898, in which he allowed Bishop Říha to appoint translators from German and Czech into Latin – one or more as needed. See the letters of František Blafák from 20th January and a letter of prefect Alosi-Masella from 11th February 1898, AGHR Roma, Neumanniana, Neumann Documenti, Documenti Ufficiali, card. 2.

First of all, it can be read from Blaťák's letters that all members of Neumann's family and classmates, who knew John Nepomucene very well and were interrogated in the ordinary diocesan process, were not alive – except one, who died a few weeks after the beginning of the apostolic process. Witnesses questioned in the apostolic process mainly testified from other people's narrations or knew very little of Neumann. Nevertheless, Blaťák asked whether he should hear as witnesses those who were willing to testify about the narration of Neumann's sister Katharina Berger.⁴¹ In the end, he states that the witnesses know very little about the life and virtues of John Nepomucene Neumann and say nothing new, so there is nothing new to examine. This view was confirmed to him by one of the trial judges, Adolf Rodler, and Bishop Říha agreed.⁴²

Once, the process in Budweis almost stopped. At the end of 1897, the judges František Dichtl and Petr Špelina died. Blaťák did not see a threat to the formal course of the trial as long as the remaining appointed judges were always present at the sessions – i.e., the other two canons and the vicar-general. However, at the end of June, a problem arose: the vicar-general was outside the diocese, and Bishop Říha wanted to continue questioning the witnesses. Blaťák thought this was not possible – and proposed a solution that would consist of appointing new judges. He, therefore, asked for advice on this issue. Although we do not know Benedetti's answer, it is clear from the above facts that Bishop Říha eventually appointed new judges and the planned interrogation sessions could take place.⁴³

IN CONCLUSION: WAITING FOR A NEW SHIFT IN THE CASE

After the end of the apostolic process, Neumann was commemorated only sparingly in the Diocese of Budweis. A brief reflection of Neumann's person and the process with him in the diocese can be found in Ladislav Dvořák's book devoted to the history of the Diocesan Priestly Seminary in Budweis (1905). The author praises Neumann as a learned, educated and

⁴¹ See the letter of František Blaťák from 1st December 1897.

⁴² See the letter of František Blaťák from 26th November 1900.

⁴³ See letters of František Blaťák from 30th December 1897, 20th and 24th January 1898, and 28th June and 11th July 1898.

holy priest. In his short biography, he emphasizes that after philosophical studies, Neumann spent two years in the seminary in Budweis, where he studied theology, longed to become a missionary, and went to America, where he became Bishop of Philadelphia and died in the reputation of holiness in 1860 [Dvořák 1905, 67].

Bishop Martin Josef Říha did not see another continuation of the Neumann case. He died in 1907. It can be stated that the process of the canonization of Neumann was intensively supported throughout his episcopate. Under his leadership, all investigations were conducted concerning Neumann's life in Bohemia. He also showed his commitment in Rome, where he still reminded them of Neumann.⁴⁴ It is clear from the pastoral letters that, as a man born in the Diocese of Budweis, he became enthusiastic about the idea that a man from the same diocese could be declared a saint. As a bishop of a bilingual diocese, where inhabitants of Czech and German origin (and language) did not always live in harmonious relations, he was convinced that Neumann – the son of a Czech mother and a German father – would be an ideal patron and as well as unifying spiritual model for them.

After Říha's death, Josef Antonín Hůlka (1907-1920) became the new bishop of Budweis. On the occasion of the centenary of the birth of John Nepomucene Neumann, a celebration was held in his native Prachatice on 28th March 1911, in which the bishop took part. He first visited Neumann's birthplace, where a silent Holy Mass was held, and later, he also served a solemn Pontifical Mass in the parish church. In the invitation to the celebration, it was emphasized to the faithful that it was in this church that John Nepomucene Neumann was baptized. People were called to pray that God "would make His servant worthy of our respect on the altars."⁴⁵

Bishop Hůlka used – like his predecessor – the opportunity of his visit *ad limina* to personally mention the veneration to Neumann in the diocese. During a private audience on 24th November 1913, Bishop Hůlka told Pope Pius X that next year he intended to begin construction of a new

⁴⁴ He repeatedly expressed his pleas to the Pope for the continuation of Neumann's process, both in reports on the state of the diocese and during *ad limina* visits. For Říha's first and second visit *ad limina*, see AAV, Congregazione del Consiglio, Relationes Dioecesium (fine sec. XVI – 1890 circa), Budvicen., Ceske Budejovice – Budweis (Bohemia), sign. 153, fol. 40-58, 81-94.

⁴⁵ Printed invitation to the celebration. See *Procesní akta k blahorečení a svatořečení filadelfského biskupa J. N. Neumanna*, fol. 5.

church to be consecrated to St John Nepomucene, a native and patron of the Diocese of Budweis, and also that the building was entrusted under the special protection of the Venerable Servant of God John Neumann of Prachatice.⁴⁶ The pope was said to be very pleased and, among other things, said: “You have done well to place the construction of this new church under the special protection of the Venerable Servant of God John Neumann, who was also born in your diocese and whose canonization was discussed and postponed for a while. His powerful intercession will prove itself here.”⁴⁷

A description of his entire *ad limina* visit and this conversation can be found in the pastoral letter, which, according to Hůlka’s order, was read at services throughout the diocese.⁴⁸

However, even Hůlka was not allowed to experience a shift in the entire case. Pope Benedict XV issued the Decree on the Heroic Virtues of John Nepomucene Neumann only in 1921, i.e., after Hůlka’s death. The decree was also published in *Acta curiae episcopalis Bohemo-Budvicensis*.⁴⁹ Nothing else stood in the way of the next milestone in the process – beatification.

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⁴⁶ This audience was part of a traditional mandatory visit *ad limina apostolorum*. Confirmation of the visit is dated 17th November 1913. The bishop also submitted in Rome a written report on the state of his diocese. See AAV, Congregatione Consistoriale, Relationes Dioecesium, fasc. 147 (České Budějovice).

⁴⁷ Report on the visit of bishop Josef Antonín Hůlka to Rome on 15th December 1913. OL, 1913, no. 37-38:149; Cf. SOA Třeboň, BA ČB, card. 951, sign. I-C-2, biskup Josef Antonín Hůlka 1907-1920 (1924).

⁴⁸ Report on the visit of Bishop Josef Antonín Hůlka to Rome on 15th December 1913. OL, 1913, no. 37-38:150.

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Apostolic Process on John Nepomucene Neumann in the Diocese of Budweis 1897-1901

Summary

The process of the beatification and canonization of John Nepomucene Neumann began in 1886 in the Archdiocese of Philadelphia and the Diocese of Budweis, ending in his canonization in 1977. The study presents an as yet uncharted topic of the apostolic process in the Diocese of Budweis in 1897-1901 and other activities and events related to Neumann's process of beatification and canonization in the Diocese Budweis until the decree on Neuman's heroic virtues was issued in 1921.

Keywords: St. John Nepomucene Neumann; process; beatification; canonization; Budweis

**Proces apostolski Jana Nepomucena Neumanna
w diecezji budziejowickiej 1897-1901**

Streszczenie

Proces prowadzący do beatyfikacji i kanonizacji Jana Nepomuckiego Neumanna rozpoczął się w 1886 r. zarówno w archidiecezji filadelfijskiej, jak i w diecezji budziejowickiej. Proces zakończył się uroczystą kanonizacją w 1977 r. W opracowaniu przedstawiono niezbadany dotąd temat procesu apostolskiego w diecezji budziejowickiej w latach 1897-1901 oraz inne działania i wydarzenia związane z procesem beatyfikacyjnym i kanonizacyjnym Neumanna w diecezji budziejowickiej do czasu wydania dekretu o heroicznosci cnót Neumanna w 1921 r.

Słowa kluczowe: Jan Nepomucen Neumann; proces; beatyfikacja; kanonizacja; Czeskie Budziejowice

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