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## **Educating to the beauty of the encounter with the Lord Jesus**

European Conference of Vocations, Warsaw, Poland, July 3-6, 2014

**Title:** Christ-centered education in the service of vocations today: "Have among yourselves the same attitude that is also yours in Christ Jesus" (Phil 2:5)

**Organizer:** CCEE Commission for Vocations together with the European Vocation Service (EVS)

**Participants:** The bishops responsible or their delegates for the pastoral care of vocations, the delegates of the Catholic Bishops' Conferences and the religious congregations from 18 European countries (Albania, Austria, Belgium, Croatia, France, Germany, England and Wales, Ireland, Italy, Lithuania, Poland, Portugal, Czech Republic, Romania, Slovakia, Slovenia, Spain, Hungary), and a delegate from the United States of America. The participants' list included 5 bishops and over 30 priests.

***Educating to the beauty of the encounter with the Lord Jesus is the true "vocational pedagogy of holiness" (Pope Francis). This is the summary of the proceedings of the European Conference on Vocation, which was held in Warsaw (Poland), July 3-6, 2014.***

The Annual European Conference of pastoral care of vocations was held at the Seminary Major of the Diocese of Warsaw-Praga (Poland), organized by the CCEE Commission for Vocations together with the European Vocations Service (EVS), and chaired by H. Ex. Mgr. Oscar Cantoni, with co-ordination of Mgr. Nico Dal Molin. The meeting was attended also by H. Ex. Mgr. Jorge Carlos Patron Wong, Secretary for Seminars at the Congregation for the Clergy.

The theme chosen for the conference was Christ-centered education in the service of vocations, in the cultural and social context of the European continent.

In the opening prayer of the Conference H. Ex. Mgr. Oscar Cantoni, president of the CCEE Commission for Vocations, said: "We have the audacious task of helping young

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***The Council of the Bishops' Conferences of Europe (CCEE) encompasses the current 33 European Bishops' Conferences, represented by their Presidents, the Archbishop of Luxembourg, of the Principality of Monaco, the Maronite Archbishop of Cyprus and the Bishop of Chişinău (Moldova Rep.), the Eparchial Bishop of Mukachevo and the Apostolic Administrator of Estonia. The current President is Cardinal Péter Erdő, Archbishop of Esztergom-Budapest, Primate of Hungary; the Vice-Presidents are Cardinal Angelo Bagnasco, Archbishop of Genoa, and Mgr Józef Michalik, Archbishop of Przemyśl (Poland). The General Secretary is Mgr Duarte da Cunha. The Secretariat is based at St Gallen (Switzerland). [www.ccee.eu](http://www.ccee.eu)***

people create a listening atmosphere where the voice of the Lord may 'resonate', without being stifled by many other voices."

The Conference works have been introduced and concluded by H. Ex. Mgr. Oscar Cantoni, Fr. Michel Remery, Deputy Secretary General of CCEE, and the coordinator Mgr. Nico Dal Molin, who recalled that "amazement, gratitude and contemplation are the essential dimensions of a 'vocational pedagogy of holiness', oriented to experience the charm of the encounter with Christ."

H. Ex. Mgr. Jorge Carlos Patron Wong, Secretary for Seminars at the Congregation for the Clergy, emphasised a major theme of Christian life: "We daily lose sight of Christ in the multitude of things we do. This tells us the importance of continually recover His centrality."

H. Ex. Archbishop Marek Solarczyk, delegate of the Catholic Bishops' Conference of Poland for the pastoral care of vocations, gave a description of the formation of seminarians in Poland under the communist regime, from 1946 to 1989, in the light of the documents of the Polish Institute of National Remembrance, referring to the time of the open struggle of the atheist regime against the Church. Fr. Tadeusz Rucinski, pastoral care expert and director of a Catholic school, described the situation of young people today who are struggling to perceive the voice of God, because distracted by the dominant subculture of vacuum and noise. To bring young people to God, we must first of all listen to them and then accompany them in silence, for in silence God speaks to the human heart.

Fr. Stephen Langridge, director of pastoral care of vocations to the priesthood in England and Wales, presented Christ-centered education in the socio-cultural context of today. We must overcome an outdated model of recruitment and definitely switch to the new evangelization targeting young people, that they may know the love of God as revealed in Jesus Christ.

Much room was given to the participants to present the vocational initiatives which are being implemented in their own countries. In particular, some experiences of pastoral care of vocations have been proposed, through the testimony of the delegates from Poland, France, and Portugal.

Being aware of the central presence of Jesus in our everyday life, the Conference program gave much importance to very significant moments such as the Eucharist, the Liturgy of the Hours, personal prayer, and adoration of Jesus in the Blessed Sacrament. In the same spirit of prayer, the participants made a pilgrimage to the tomb of Blessed Father Jerzy Popieluszko, a catholic priest of Warsaw who died in proclaiming his faith, as chaplain to the Solidarity movement in the time of communism in Poland. The pilgrimage concluded with a Eucharistic celebration in the Cathedral of Warsaw.

The next European Vocation Conference will take place in Prague (Czech Republic) on July 6-9, 2015.