

DIRECTED BY EDITORIAL BOARD
Published weekly by "Our Voice"
Publishing Co., 1255 Queen St. W.,
Toronto, L.L. 6-2175. Printed by
L. J. P. Printing Co., Toronto.
Subscription: Canada \$ 4.00, all
other countries: \$ 5.00

NAŠE HLASY

INDEPENDENT CZECHOSLOVAK WEEKLY

NEZÁVISLÝ ČESKOSLOVENSKÝ TYDENÍK

No. 25-26 (421-422) Vol. XI

AUTHORIZED AS SECOND CLASS MAIL BY THE POST OFFICE DEPARTMENT
OTTAWA, AND FOR PAYMENT OF POSTAGE IN CASH.

SPECIAL ISSUE FOR JOHN HUS
DAY, JULY 6, 1965.

THE HERITAGE OF JOHN HUS.

S. H. THOMSON,
University of Colorado,
Boulder, Colo.

The professor-priest John Hus who was burned at the stake on July 6, 1415 on the shore of Lake Constance by the great Church council meeting in the town of Constance, has since that time occupied a unique place in the hearts and minds of the Czech people. All Czechs, whether at home in Bohemia or abroad in the emigration, honor and revere his memory. Indeed it is probably true that no other people in our Western family of nations has as its hero and model a person of a like character. Other nations may have great military heroes, powerful statesmen, great lawgivers or successful administrators, but to find a whole people admiring and revering a gentle priest and teacher is indeed a striking fact. It has been that way since the close of the trial by the church. His followers accepted the challenge of his condemnation and martyrdom and took up arms against the forces of the Empire, led by Emperor Sigismund. For almost two decades these Hussites met and repulsed the might of the Empire, organized in crusade after crusade, blessed by the pope and supported by the German nobles and townsmen. The "heretical" Czechs outfought, outprayed, outsang and outlasted the best the Empire could send against them, buoyed by their conviction that Hus was no heretic, but was rather a true and truthful man, living and witnessing to the truth of the Gospel as he read it.

At the last the Czech "warriors of God" could only be defeated by other Czechs. There had arisen a sad split among the followers of Hus: the townsfolk of Prague and those who were willing to compromise with the papal party on the one hand, and, on the other, the Taborites, mostly if not all from the peasantry and the "simple" folk who would accept no such compromise. Both parties called themselves Hussites. For almost a century the people of Bohemia continued to follow the teachings of Hus, even when they were ruled by a Polish prince who was a devout Catholic. The rest of Europe looked askance at this people who preferred the spirit of heresy to the comfort and security of the established Roman church. Even Luther in his earlier pronouncements on the subject, relying on the accepted German opinion of the Hussite faith, condemned Hus and his teaching. But when at the Leipzig debates with Dr. Eck, he was obliged to examine what Hus had actually thought and said, he changed his opinion, remarking "We have all been Hussites without knowing it. St. Paul and St. Augustine were also Hussites. It is about time we Germans and the Czechs should forget our ancient animosities and join in furthering the truth of the Gospel".

Within a few years many Czechs who were followers of Hus were driven out of the kingdom, their property confiscated and the movement subjected to marked repression. Early in the next century the leadership of the Hussites, including many Germans of the nobility, born in the country and considering themselves Bohemians, felt they had to resist drastically the Habsburg policies of overt antagonism to the Hussite and reformed faith of the great majority of the people of Bohemia. The Thirty Years War was the result. The Habsburg cause was finally successful and the followers of Hus were either driven out or forced to accept Roman

continued on page 4

1415 - 1965



JAN HUS

SEEK THE TRUTH, HEAR THE TRUTH, LEARN THE TRUTH.
DEFEND THE TRUTH TO DEATH FOR THE TRUTH WILL LIBERATE YOU.

JEAN HUSS A L'HEURE DE VATICAN II

DOM PAUL de VOGHIT,
Saint-Germain-en-Laye, France

En cette époque où toutes les valeurs établies sont passées au crible, la question de la réhabilitation de Jean Huss a parfois été soulevée dans l'Eglise catholique. D'aucuns même, si mes renseignements sont exacts, s'en occupent plus ou moins activement. Ont-ils une chance d'aboutir? Je n'oserais le croire. Au risque de paraître paradoxal, je dirais même qu'une réhabilitation juridique ne me semble pas avoir un très grand intérêt, au moins à l'heure actuelle. La question n'est pas mûre et les esprits, dans l'Eglise catholique, ne sont pas suffisamment préparés à accueillir une aussi étonnante volte-face.

Plus importante qu'une éventuelle et peu probable reprise d'un procès vieux de plus de cinq siècles, me paraît la lente mais sûre progression de l'esprit catholique vers une reconsidération totale du problème hussien et de tous les problèmes du même genre. Je ne pense pas en premier lieu ici au fait que l'Eglise romaine, et cela par la bouche même du pape régnant Paul VI, n'a pas hésité à reconnaître ses torts et ses péchés dans l'origine et la poursuite des grands schismes historiques. C'est là, certes, un grand pas en avant dans le sens de la réconciliation. Ce n'est pas le principal. De plus de poids me paraît le fait que l'Eglise catholique est en train de découvrir les valeurs positives, chrétiennes, évangéliques de confessions séparées d'elle et de personnages exemplaires de ces confessions. Même là où elle ne s'est pas directement intéressée à eux, elle s'est engagée, sans toujours s'en rendre compte, sur la voie de la réhabilitation sinon juridique, du moins humaine et chrétienne. C'est certainement le cas pour Jean Huss. Les catholiques, trop rares hélas! qui ont eu l'occasion de se familiariser avec sa pensée et avec celle des réformateurs de Bohême, lorsqu'ils suivent le déroulement de Vatican II, ne peuvent s'empêcher de faire une constatation qui, au premier abord, les surprend. Les tendances profondes de Vatican II rejoignent sur un large front les grands thèmes de la pensée hussienne.

Le concile s'est engagé résolument pour une conception spirituelle et évangélique de l'Eglise. Il ne la présente plus, conformément à de vieilles habitudes, sous le seul aspect d'une société, au sens juridique du terme. Cet aspect de l'Eglise, sans être abandonné, est tombé dans une sorte de désaffection générale. Des protestations ont été élevées dans la basilique vaticane, certaines avec une très grande véhémence, contre tout ce qui ressemblerait, au niveau de la direction de l'Eglise, à une tyrannie arbitraire. Des voix protestèrent contre le "triomphalisme" et l'ostentation. La constitution sur l'Eglise élaborée au Concile s'est largement inspirée de l'esprit nouveau. Elle parle en des termes, non pas scolastiques mais bibliques, de la soumission de l'Eglise au Christ, de l'action de l'Esprit saint, du Royaume de Dieu et du corps mystique. Elle a accordé une place considérable à la notion de peuple de Dieu, considère dans son ensemble, à l'exposé de son sacerdoce commun et de ses charismes. Aux évêques est rappelé leur devoir pastoral d'enseigner, de sanctifier, de diriger. A tous, la constitution adresse un vibrant appel à la sainteté et elle offre, au delà des contingences de l'Eglise terrestre, l'image radieuse de l'Eglise définitive du ciel.

N'est-ce pas de cette manière que Huss envisageait l'Eglise? Il enseignait la prééminence de l'Eglise des prédestinés et des justes, c'est-à-dire du peuple de Dieu régi par l'Esprit saint, sur le corps juridique dans son apparence extérieure et ses cadres hiérarchiques livrés, à son époque, aux pires désordres. Il exigeait d'un évêque qu'il vive en pasteur et non en seigneur laïc. Il plaçait la conversion du cœur par-dessus tout et il luttait contre le simonie et le culte de l'argent, pour plus d'intégrité, de véritable vertu chrétienne, d'amour authentique de Jésus-Christ.

suite à la page 4

JOHN HUS AND MARTIN LUTHER

ALLAN L. FARRIS, Knox College, Toronto

"John Hus was burned but not vanquished," wrote David Schaff in his biography of Hus. Hus's power to inform, inspire and instruct can be documented at many points in Czech history. That this power is still operative is most effectively demonstrated by the publication of this special issue of NASE HLASY commemorating the 550th anniversary of the martyrdom of John Hus. But his influence is not limited to his own countrymen.

One crucial point at which Hus's unvanquished spirit made a great impact was at the Disputation of Leipsig held in 1519 in which John Eck, the powerful defender of Roman orthodoxy, faced Martin Luther, the reforming monk who was just beginning to challenge the old order from the standpoint of his scriptural and historical studies.

Luther, apparently, had first become acquainted with some of Hus's sermons while still a student at the University of Erfurt. He was drawn to these writings out of curiosity to discover what kind of doctrine a heretic would set forth. To his amazement, however, he found the sermons attractive and scriptural and wondered why a man would have been burned for such teachings. He came to the conclusion that he was probably reading sermons preached by Hus before becoming a heretic.

Luther's subsequent posting of the 95 theses on the door of the Castle Church at Wittenburg, Oct. 31, 1517, as we all know, raised an unprecedented furor. The times were propitious for such a protest against the indulgence traffic and other abuses in the Church. As a result of this action Luther was called to account by the Pope and severely criticized by a variety of defenders of Roman orthodoxy and supporters of the status quo. The most worthy and formidable of these critics was the brilliant John Eck of Ingolstadt. He was most anxious to enter the lists with Luther and in consequence was able to arrange a debate at the University of Leipsig. However because of a temporary truce in the theological debate, which Luther had inaugurated with the posting of his 95 theses, arranged by the papal representative, Charles von Miltitz, Eck was forced to agree to a debate between himself and Andreas von Carlstadt, Luther's colleague at the University of Wittenberg. Eck however had no intention of fencing with the second and after a few days of preliminary skirmishing with Carlstadt on the subject of free will, Luther was permitted to enter the debate. The point at issue between Luther and Eck was the primacy of the pope: whether it was of divine or human origin. Luther at this point in his life was prepared to give place to the pope but only for reasons of convenience and administration. Eck asserted that

primacy of the Roman pope was of divine origin and went back to apostolic times. Luther contended it was of more recent origin and pointed out that the Greek Church and some of the greatest Greek theologians had never acknowledged the primacy of the Roman see.

It was at this point in the dispute that Eck charged Luther with teaching the "pestilent errors" of John Hus and began to taunt him with the epithets, Hussite and Bohemian. Luther hotly denied the charge declaring that he had never approved of Hussite schism and that they ought not to have withdrawn from the Church.

Eck's taunts were particularly barbed not only because of Hus's reputation as an arch-heretic but also because of the setting of the debate.

The University of Leipsig, under whose auspices the debate was being held, had been founded in 1409 in opposition to the University of Prague in which Hus was extremely influential. More recently the Bohemian Hussites had actually waged war against the Saxon territories. In addition the University of Leipsig was the banner University of Ducal Saxony presided over by Duke George whereas the University of Wittenberg, where Luther taught, was the pride and joy of Electoral Saxony presided over by Elector Frederick, Luther's friend and protector, and there was considerable rivalry between the two territories and Universities.

At the lunch hour, following this exchange Luther undertook to read the Acts of the Council of Constance. He was amazed to discover that at least one article of Hus's which was condemned was taken from the writings of the great church father, Augustine, and others could be supported from Holy Scripture. When the gathering reassembled, Luther electrified every one by announcing, "Among the Articles of John Hus, I find some which are plainly Christian and evangelical, which the Universal Church cannot condemn."

John Eck had made his point! Luther's name henceforth was to be irretrievably linked with that of the heretic Hus. Now the condemnation of Luther could proceed with this most incriminating evidence to justify it.

However, a great deal had transpired in 104 years and the results which John Eck expected from his use of Luther's Hussite sympathies were not forthcoming. On one hand, Luther became the champion of Hus and did as much as any man to force a re-evaluation of Hus's teaching and a questioning of the validity of his condemnation by the Council of Constance. On the other hand, Luther was forced by the Hus episode, not only to call into question the primacy and authority of the Pope, as Hus had done, but also to call into question the authority of a

EDITORIAL

The Publishers and Editorial Board of the Czechoslovak Weekly NASE HLASY (OUR VOICES) are happy to present this special issue dedicated entirely to the memory of JOHN HUS.

On the occasion of the 550th anniversary of his death we are prompted to make in this way, the great fore-runner of the Reformation better known in our new homeland, Canada. In doing so, we wish also to draw the attention to one of the greatest contributions our old country gave to the world: namely the determination of JOHN HUS to defend freedom of conscience, and his love of truth, which we believe to be still characteristic of the people from which we came.

This publication, which to our knowledge, is the first of its kind outside Czechoslovakia, would not have been possible without the assistance of the scholars who kindly contributed their articles. We would like to thank Professor DOM PAUL VAN VOOCHT, the author of "L'Hérésie de Jean Hus";

Professor S. H. THOMSON, the learned friend of the Czechs and Slovaks; Professor MATTHEW SPINKA, devoted expert on John Hus; Professor A. L. FARRIS, our Canadian contributor, and finally, Professor O. ODLOŽILÍK, whom we thank also for valuable suggestions.

On behalf of the Publishers and Editorial Board,
JAROMÍR PETŘÍČEK.

great council. Up to this time the mainstay of criticism against papal claims and papal abuses had been the conciliar principle, namely, that the real authority of the Church was exercised by a properly constituted council. A council might have the Pope as its president, or its chief executive officer, but the office of the papacy was dependent upon, and subject to, the power of a council. Now however, Luther was forced to say that Councils may err and to substitute as a more fundamental authority that of Holy Scripture. The conciliar principle is valid, Luther claimed, only insofar as councils acknowledge the primacy of Scripture. It took Luther some months to appreciate the full implications of what he had been forced to do by Eck, but at Leipsig the die was cast and Luther was inevitably on the road to Reform, and his place in world history was assured.

Soon after the Disputation Luther received a communication from two Hussites of the Utraquist party, John Poduschka and Wenzel Rosdolowsky, expressing their felicitations and enclosing a copy of Hus's treatise On the Church. They declared that what Hus had been to Bohemia, Luther was to Saxony. Of this fact Luther himself soon became convinced. In his Open Letter to the Christian Nobility of the German Nation written in the summer of 1520 he called upon the Roman

"IN MEMORIAM" OF JOHN HUS

MATTHEW SPINKA, University College, Claremont, Cal.

This year we commemorate the 550th anniversary of the martyr death of John Hus. There are still extant so many misunderstandings and misrepresentations, particularly of his doctrinal views, that it is high time to correct them. I have attempted to do so in two forthcoming books.¹ This is all too brief a summary of some of the salient points of these two works.

First of all, Hus was primarily a reformer: his ideal, at the time of appalling moral degradation, was the Church "without spot or wrinkle." He continued therein the native reform movement already some half a century old, although he was also influenced by the English reformer, John Wyclif, whom he admired, but did not follow slavishly. The first inveterate error which must be corrected, consists of the assertion that Hus was but an echo of Wyclif, possessing no independent views worth mentioning. Actually, Hus accepted from Wyclif's teaching only what he regarded as sound doctrinally, and passed over in silence whatever he disagreed with. He wrote:

I indeed confess that I hold the true opinions which Master John Wyclif, professor of sacred theology, taught, not because he declared them, but because Scripture and infallible reason declare them. If, however, he taught any error, I do not in any way emulate him or anyone else in the error.

Nevertheless, his enemies perverted it into a charge of thoroughgoing "Wyclifism." It was the first charge against him in the definitive sentence pronounced upon him at the Council of Constance. Not one of the

Church to confess that it had done wrong in condemning Hus and declared that an innocent man's blood was crying from the ground for redress. A few months later in his Articles relating to his condemnation by the papal bull *Exsurge Domine* he declared that he had erred at Leipsig in saying that some of Hus's articles condemned at Leipsig were true. Now he had to affirm that all Hus's Articles were true and that the Council of Constance in condemning Hus had condemned the gospel and put in its place "the doctrines of the dragon of hell."

When Luther confessed at the Diet of Worms in 1521 before the Emperor, the Princes and High-ranking prelates, that it was wrong to go against Scripture and conscience it was undoubtedly an echo of Hus's sentiments, and an affirmation that like Hus he was willing to forfeit his life rather than deny his faith which was captive to the Word of God.

thirty articles on the basis of which he was condemned represented correctly his views. He was thus condemned not for what he himself believed, but on the garbled charges of his enemies.

In the second place, as to Hus's doctrine, he declared it repeatedly to be biblical. No one could go beyond Scripture, be he pope or the most famous theologian. The Bible was the source of all truth and as such was the rule of faith. He wrote:

I confess that I desire nothing but simply to believe, hold, preach and assert as faith which is necessary to salvation, unless I have the following theological demonstration: "Thus the sacred Scriptures have declared explicitly or implicitly, therefore we should thus believe, hold, and assert it as faith." Accordingly, I humbly accord faith, i.e., trust, to the holy Scriptures, desiring to hold, believe, and assert whatever is contained in them as long as I have breath in me.

However, he interpreted Scripture according to the teaching of the fathers, particularly St. Augustine, from whom both he and Wyclif derived much of their own theology. Thus Hus anticipated in this matter the Reformers of the sixteenth century—such as Martin Luther and John Calvin—who likewise followed in the scriptural interpretation the principal early Creeds and Augustine. Hus, however, allowed what was not clearly against the Scriptures; thus he tolerated the popular doctrine of the resurrection and ascension of the Virgin Mary into heaven, even though it was only traditional, not strictly Scriptural. He likewise believed in the saints (one of his published books of sermons is devoted exclusively to sermons preached on saints' days). Nevertheless, he strongly deprecated their excessive veneration bordering on worship. Only God is to be worshipped. He

1. Matthew Spinka, *John Hus at the Council of Constance* (Columbia University Press, 1965).

Matthew Spinka, *John Hus's Concept of the Church* (Princeton University Press, in the process of publication).

continued on page 4

TO ALL THE PEOPLE OF BOHEMIA JUNE 10, 1415

Master John Hus, a servant of God, in hope, to all the faithful Bohemians who love and will love God, praying that God may grant them to live and die in His grace and dwell for ever in the heavenly joy. Amen.

Faithful and beloved of God, lords and ladies, rich and poor! I entreat you and exhort you to love God, to spread abroad His word, and to hear and observe it more willingly. I entreat you to hold fast the truth of God, which I have written and preached to you from the Holy Scriptures and the utterances of His saints. I entreat you also, if any have heard in my preaching or private conversation that which is opposed to God's

truth, or if I have ever written anything of that kind—I trust God that it is not so—not to hold to it. I entreat you, if any have noticed frivolity in my words or actions, not to imitate it, but to pray God that it may please Him to pardon me. I entreat you to love and commend and cultivate priests of good life—especially those that are earnest students of Holy Writ. I entreat you to beware of deceitful men, and particularly of wicked priests, of whom the Saviour saith that they are in sheep's clothing, but inwardly are raving wolves. I entreat you to be kind to the poor and to rule them justly. I entreat all citizens to be righteous in their business dealings. I entreat all artisans faithfully to follow their craft and take delight

in it. I entreat all servants to be faithful servants of their masters and mistresses. I entreat masters to live a good life and faithfully to instruct their scholars, especially that they may love God and learn to give themselves to knowledge, in order to promote His honour, the welfare of the state, and their own salvation, but not for the sake of avarice or the praise of man. I entreat students of letters and other scholars to obey their masters in things good, to imitate them, and diligently apply themselves to letters for the sake of God's honour and their own salvation and of other men. . .

I write this letter to you in prison, bound with chains and expecting on the morrow the sentence of

death, yet fully trusting in God that I shall not swerve from His truth nor swear denial of the errors, whereof I have been charged by false witnesses. What grace God hath shown me, and how He helps me in the midst of strange temptations, you will know when by His mercy we meet in joy in His presence. Of Master Jerome, my beloved friend, I hear nothing except that he too like myself, is in a noisome prison waiting for death, and that on account of his faith which he showed so earnestly to the Bohemians. The Bohemians are our fiercest enemies, and have put us under the power and custody of other adversaries: pray for them, I beseech you. Also I entreat you, especially people of Prague, to sup-

port the chapel at Bethlehem, so far as God shall permit His holy word to be preached there. It is on account of that chapel that the devil hath blazed forth with anger, and it is against it that he hath aroused parish priests and cathedral clergy; in truth he felt that his kingdom was being overthrown in that place. I trust that God will preserve that chapel as long as it is His pleasure, and cause greater good to be done there by others than by me, His unprofitable servant. I entreat this too of you, that ye love one another, defend good men from violent oppression, and give every one an opportunity of hearing the truth. I am writing this with the help of a good angel on Monday night before St. Vitus's Day.

THE LIFE and DEATH of JAN HUS

OTAKAR ODLOŽILÍK, University of Pennsylvania, Philadelphia.

The sixth of July 1965 will be the five hundred and fiftieth anniversary of the death of Jan Hus. It will be observed as a great day by many Czechs and Slovaks in their native land as well as in their new homes, in Canada, in the United States, in Great Britain, in Australia, in Switzerland, and in many other countries. Why will it be so? Why will the day not marked in our calendars as a national or religious holiday be commemorated as a significant anniversary?

The story which we wish to recapitulate, had its modest origin in southern Bohemia around 1370. A boy born in a small town of Husinec and given the name of Jan (John) would have hardly achieved distinction, if he had not left, at an early age, his parental home to study in higher schools in Prague. The blessed reign of Charles IV., "the Father of the Country" was over, when Jan of Husinec entered one of the parochial schools of which there were many in the three "towns" of Prague, both on the right and left banks of Vltava river. From there he proceeded to the university flourishing in Prague since its foundation in 1348. In university and in other public records Jan continued to use his full name "of Husinec" but soon an abbreviated form Jan Hus became common among his fellow-students. As HUS in Czech means goose, both Jan and his friends played with the name and used it for all kind of jokes.

There was in the early career of Jan Hus nothing strikingly different from the conventional pattern of medieval academic life. He advanced in his studies successfully, and in 1396 he took the degree of master of arts. At a later date he entered the divinity school and earned there the degree of bachelor. But throughout his life he was more attached to the school of liberal arts than to theology and the master's degree in arts came to be closely linked with his name.

The early years of the fifteenth century were eventful and decisive for the young scholar's future life. Hus' reputation among the university masters was soon well established and in 1401 he was elected dean of the faculty of liberal arts. At a somewhat earlier date he took the holy orders and attracted large audiences by his sermons. In 1402 he was appointed as rector and preacher at the Bethlehem Chapel in the Old Town of Prague. The combination of academic duties with the preaching at Bethlehem proved to be particularly useful and fortunate. As an academic teacher Hus maintained close contacts with his colleagues and the student body; from the Bethlehem pulpit he spoke to the Czech population of the city, since the foundation charter of the chapel stipulated that sermons there should be delivered in the native language and not in Latin.

Hus once admitted that as a poor student he thought of the ecclesiastical career as the best means to secure easy and comfortable living. Not by a sudden conversion which could be connected with a specific date but by spiritual processes, which he never described in detail, Hus arrived at a subtler and more inspiring conception of priesthood. He began to see his chief duty in promoting the program of church reform for which many ardent clerics campaigned, in the latter part of the fourteenth century, in England as well as in Bohemia. Although temporarily interrupted, the activities of the Czech pioneers of reform were known to the younger generation. They served as a source of inspiration for Jan Hus and his circle. Among Hus' friends Jerome of Prague distinguished himself by his ardor and courage and Jacobell of Stribro by his penetrating analysis of theological problems. The writings of John Wyclif of which many copies reached Prague around 1400, and after, were eagerly read by the Czech advocates of reform as they contained ideas similar to their own aspirations.

For several years following Hus' appointment to the Bethlehem pulpit the reform party worked in harmony with the church authorities, especially the archbishop of Prague Zbynek Zajic of Hazmburk. The causes of estrangement and finally of se-

paration are too complicated to be presented in a succinct outline, as one party blamed the other for the final rupture. Whereas Hus and his followers suspected the archbishop's conservative advisers of lack of interest in any improvement of conditions prevailing in the Western Christendom, the prelates and their associates at the university reproached the reform leaders with disobedience. The heated controversies concerning Wyclif's teachings increased tensions both at the university and among the clergy. In the atmosphere of mutual distrust and accusations the original connections dissolved and a rift occurred which nobody in Bohemia, not even King Vaclav IV., was able to heal.

Minor clashes and animated disputations at the university preceded a decree by which Jan Hus was more severely affected than any of his colleagues. Acting on information from Prague, Pope Alexander V., elected to the pontificate in 1409 at the council of Pisa, issued a bull by which he declared that no one should be allowed to preach elsewhere than in "cathedrals, collegiate churches, parish churches, and churches belonging to monasteries". The bull dated on December 20, 1409, reached Prague after several months. After consultation with the doctors of theology and canon law, the archbishop issued orders concerning not only preaching but also the circulation of Wyclif's writings. Convinced that the papal bull resulted from inadequate information and that it was his sacred duty not to deprive his audience of the word of God, Hus addressed an appeal to the pope and continued to preach.

The conflict, ostensibly limited in its scope, continued after the death of Alexander V. The new pope, John XXIII., was even less familiar with the intricacies of Czech spiritual life than his predecessor. Accepting as true the accusations from Prague and from other centers hostile to the idea of reform, the pope apparently believed that Wyclif's views, including those expressly condemned by the church authorities, were freely propagated in Bohemia, and that Jan Hus was their principal disseminator. Instead of ordering a careful investigation, the pope instructed some of his most faithful cardinals to go ahead with disciplinary measures and to aggravate the sentences

against Hus. The reformer defended himself with the help of his legal advisers, knowing well that he would never return from the papal court to his beloved Bethlehem if he obeyed the summonses and appeared before the investigating cardinals personally.

The crisis growing since the election of John XXIII. came to a head late in the spring of 1412. The cause of irritation was similar to that which, in 1517, ignited Martin Luther's revolt, namely the indulgences. Shocked by the activities of the papal collector, Hus attacked the practice of granting indulgences for the support of worldly affairs. In this instance the pope's war with King Ladislav of Naples. The pope retaliated quickly. The city of Prague or any other place of Hus' residence was put under an interdict. As the ecclesiastical authorities were prepared to enforce the ban and stop religious service, Hus left the city in October 1412 and found refuge, first at Kozi Hradek in Central Bohemia and later at Krakovec some fifty miles west of Prague. In those quiet places he enjoyed protection of the mighty lords who sympathized with his endeavors. He engaged in literary activities and continued to preach "in the highways and among the hedges" (an allusion to Luke XIV, 23.), that is in open spaces, whenever large crowds of the peasantry assembled to listen to him. In those years of separation from his Bethlehem audience Hus produced his most important works, some in the vernacular destined for his Czech followers, others in Latin to answer the polemical writings of his opponents.

In 1414 Emperor Sigismund, a younger brother of Vaclav IV., induced the pope to call a general council for the purpose of undertaking a thorough reform of the Western Church plagued, since 1378, by the schism and other evils. Not only the royal brothers but also many Czech lords believed that Hus' conflict with the ecclesiastical authorities could be settled more easily at a general church assembly than by direct dealings with the papal court. As Sigismund was willing to issue a letter of safe conduct for Hus, there seemed to be no danger in accepting that proposition. Trusting that he would be allowed freely to expound his views before the assembled churchmen, Hus left Krakovec on October 11, 1414, and reached Constance early in November.

Before the end of that month Hus was arrested by order of pope John XXIII. and imprisoned at the Dominican convent at Constance. The decision to deprive Hus of personal freedom was made in complete disregard of Sigismund's pledges. The emperor was not present at Constance at that time but when he arrived, late on Christmas eve, he did not insist that Hus be set free.

There were no public discussions at the council of the views attributed to Hus by his opponents or found in his books, especially in his most important treatise on the church (De ecclesia). Instead, a special commission was appointed by John XXIII. to examine the depositions of the witnesses and the articles extracted from Hus' works. This investigation was interrupted by the pope's escape from Constance on March 20, 1415. It would not have been too

JAN HUS

By Pavel Javor

*With your martyrdom the Middle Ages ceased,
The reign of pretence, obscurity and lies,
Czech nation ripened in your sacred truth,
Your truth for which you died.*

*Against them, each a self-professed God,
Or Christ messenger here on earth,
Although himself living in mortal sin,
Against them all you waged our Czech war.*

*Not the strength of arms, or cunning,
Not the purchase of wretched souls,
But a life conforming to the Holy Script
Was your one and only gospel law.*

*You have preached e'en the smallest,
Unarmed, can triumphantly win
Over all, if he shields the truth
And wills for it to give his life.*

*With your God's truth,
Our invisible weapon,
To glorious destiny the Czech nation you lead . . .*

difficult for the Czech lords who accompanied Hus to Constance to remove him from the prison and to take him to a safe place. But at this juncture Sigismund took the initiative and handed Hus over to Otto von Hachberg, the bishop of Constance. The bishop's henchmen transferred the prisoner from the Dominican convent to the castle of Gottlieben. The day was the Palm Sunday of 1415.

When the tumult caused in the city and especially in the council halls by the pope's flight had subsided, the investigation of the charges against Hus was resumed. The directors of the assembly were no less rigid in the matters of procedure than John XXIII. They treated Hus as a prisoner and requested that he abjure all the opinions that had been attributed to him. The Czech lords petitioned the council that a public hearing be granted to Hus, and their appeal was supported by some members of the Polish nobility also attending the council.

After some more delays arrangements were made for plenary sessions in the refectory of the Franciscan convent at Constance. On June 3, 1415, Hus was brought from Gottlieben and put in jail in the basement of the convent. The first session took place on June 5, and it was followed by two more gatherings, on June 7, and June 8. Hus made several attempts to make his position clear but his words were seldom heard in the uproar into which the sessions soon turned. The hearings were discontinued and Hus was kept in the Franciscan convent as the council's prisoner. Several members of the council visited him there and attempted to induce him to recant. Various formulas were devised to make the abjuration of them acceptable. After several easier but Hus did not find any months of suffering in prison he lost interest in a compromise by which he would have discredited his earlier endeavors. The martyr's crown had for him an irresistible fascination.

The solemn session held on July 6, 1415, in the cathedral was

formal. It was attended not only by the leading cardinals but also by Emperor Sigismund and several other temporal lords. The articles compiled partly in Prague, partly in Constance were once more recited. Hus made occasional attempts to defend himself but was put to silence by the cardinals. Thereupon one of the bishops read the prepared sentence. In an elaborate ceremony Hus was stripped of sacerdotal dignity and handed over to the secular arm for execution. He was escorted by a unit of armed men to the execution ground outside the city walls and burned there at the stake.

A good deal of work has been done to elucidate the intricate question of Hus' guilt or innocence. Scholars of various religious convictions and nationalities participated in that research. They reached agreement on some facets of the story whereas other points are still open and debatable. It is widely believed that Hus' admiration for John Wyclif was one of the chief causes of bitter campaigns conducted, since 1403, in Bohemia and continued at the council. The nominalist opponents of Wyclif's philosophy and theology, like Jean Gerson, chancellor of the university of Paris, were the chief advocates of stern measures against Hus. The earlier condemnations of Wyclif's ideas really sealed the fate of Hus. In the agitated atmosphere prevailing at the council nobody was seriously interested in a dispassionate examination of the charges against Hus, to find out what he had really said or written, and what was imputed to him by his adversaries.

Modern research has made it clear that Hus did not accept Wyclif's doctrine of remanence but adhered to the doctrine of transubstantiation approved at the Lateran council in 1215. The differences between Hus' views and the official doctrine could be found in the teachings concerning the nature of the church of Christ. The articles presented to the council on various occasions were extracted mostly from Hus' book De ecclesia.

continued on page 4

O loving Christ, draw me, a weakling, after Thyself; for if Thou drawest me not, I cannot follow Thee. Grant me a brave spirit that it may be ready. If the flesh is weak, let Thy grace prevail, come in the middle, and follow; for without Thee I can do nothing and, especially, for Thy sake I cannot go to a cruel death. Grant me a ready spirit, a fearless heart, a right faith, a firm hope, and a perfect love, that for Thy sake I may lay down my life with patience and joy. Amen.
From a letter to his friends at Constance (June 23, 1415)

JEAN HUSS A L'HEURE DE VATICAN II

Suite et fin

Le terrain sur lequel Vatican II s'est avancé le plus loin jusqu'à présent dans la voie des réalisations pratiques est celui de la liturgie. Le concile a mis fin (en partie, mais le reste suivra inévitablement) à la situation incroyable qui consistait à vouloir célébrer un culte communautaire en se servant d'une langue que personne n'entendait dans la communauté. Vatican II a attaqué en même temps les innombrables cérémonies de pure forme et dénuées de sens qui ont proliféré sur le corps malade de la liturgie. La suppression graduelle des étranges "chevauchements" (1) qui déshonoraient le culte catholique s'ensuivra nécessairement. La "Messe" est ainsi en train de redevenir une assemblée organiquement une, où la prière en commun reprend la place usurpée par une multitude de cérémonies sans intérêt, où la liturgie de la Parole est remise en honneur et où la Cène du Seigneur est célébrée de manière authentique.

Mais n'est-ce pas déjà cela qu'on voulu et vainement tenté d'obtenir dans l'Eglise les Mathias de Janov, les Jakoubek de Stribro et Jean Huss: la fin des cérémonies vaines et ostentatoires, l'abolition d'un rituel de la messe dont l'action, réservée aux seuls prêtres, consistait pour eux à "créer chaque jour leur créateur", comme ils disaient (alors que, comme ils disaient encore, la Vierge ne l'avait enfanté qu'une fois) et, pour les laïcs, les "simples fidèles", à adorer à distance tout en versant leur obole ?

Cette démonstration pourrait s'allonger. Restreignons-nous à l'essentiel. Après que Paul VI est allé à la rencontre du patriarche Athénagoras à Jérusalem et des Hindous à Bombay, Vatican II s'apprête à publier une constitution sur la liberté de conscience. Ce document consacrerait l'idée que la foi en Jésus-Christ est un acte libre qu'aucune contrainte ne peut imposer, et aussi l'idée parallèle que personne ne peut être inquiété pour sa foi religieuse ou sa philosophie personnelle. Condamnés sont donc les persécutions, les camps d'extermination, les inquisitions, de quelque nature ou inspiration qu'ils soient. Condamnés aussi sans rémission, les juges et les bourreaux de Huss qui envoyèrent leur victime au bûcher pour des "erreurs" qu'en partie, il ne reconnut jamais comme siennes, et qu'en partie, il refusait de considérer comme hérétiques jusqu'à meilleur informé. Cette information meilleure, personne ne sut la lui donner et à ses dénégations on préféra les assertions passionnées de ses ennemis. Aujourd'hui, sans faire son procès, sans même parler de lui, Vatican II condamne en tout état de cause les juges de Huss, puisqu'il affirme, après Jean XXIII (encyclique *Pacem in Terris*), que personne ne peut être condamné et exécuté pour ses croyances ou ses convictions. Le martyr de Constance est donc bien vengé et cela dans et par l'Eglise même en laquelle il n'avait cessé de croire.

De toute manière, nous constatons que le démantèlement progressif de l'Eglise catholique comme société juridique et profane libre en elle des forces spirituelles d'une vitalité étonnante pour son accroissement comme peuple de Dieu. Les uns après les autres, les liens tombent qui la tenaient enchaînée à ce monde. Auprès d's sources de la Parole de Dieu, elle est en train de se réconcilier positivement avec des frères qu'elle croyait des ennemis. Parmi eux, qui plus que Jean Huss mérite ses égards, lui qui mourut en pardonnant à ceux qui le torturaient et en récitant le symbole de la foi catholique ?

(1) Je fais allusion à une organisation du culte qu'on peut encore voir dans pas mal d'églises romaines: à l'autel, le prêtre "lit" la messe; à la tribune, un chœur exécute des musiques variées qui n'ont rien à voir avec le Saint Sacrifice; dans la nef, fidèles lisent dans leur livre de prières, ou écoutent la musique, ou regardent, chacun pour soi...

"IN MEMORIAM"

continuation from page 2

stoutly held to the dogma of transubstantiation, thus differing from Wyclif. Throughout his preaching ministry he urged his hearers to strive to attain "the faith formed by love," which alone was the saving faith. Man is saved by faith and works, not faith alone.

As for the rest of the sacraments, he particularly stressed the grace conferred in priestly ordination. Nevertheless, he distinguished between a *veritable* pope, prelate, or priest and the one merely legitimately elected and consecrated. Only he who, in addition to the ordination, possesses the spirit of Christ, is a *veritable* pope or other ecclesiastic. None of the three popes then existing was such a pope, for by their lives they proved to lack the grace of predestination. Moreover, the priestly office was only ministerial, not self-authoritative: the priest did not himself forgive sins, but only declared them forgiven when the required conditions were met. Only God forgives sins. Nevertheless, even wicked priests' sacramental acts are valid, although unworthy; for God acts through such ministerial acts.

THE HERITAGE OF JOHN HUSS.

continuation from page 1

Catholicism. Wanderers over the face of the earth, many of them found refuge in Poland, Hungary or Germany. Some went to England, others settled in the Netherlands. Of those who stayed in Bohemia, though coerced into the Catholic fold, many retained secretly their Hussite convictions.

When, in 1781, the "enlightened" Habsburg emperor, Joseph II, decreed religious toleration in the whole Empire, thousands of Bohemians, both German and Czech, declared themselves Hussite or Evangelical. This steadfastness of faith over several generations, in the face of persecution or attempted compromise the temper of modern Czechoslovakia.

Along with this tradition of toleration and personal religious conviction there has persisted a strong adhesion to the principle of historical enlightenment among the Czech nation. Their leading figure Hus was himself a learned man, willing to meet the powerful fathers of the Council on their own ground and indeed to baffle his accusers by his intimate knowledge of Christian history and canon law. Enraptured, because they could not match his control of Scripture or equal his confidence in face of bitter and malicious vituperation, they were reduced to declaring him a heretic and "relaxing" him to the secular arm, which meant the stake.

Many historians have written about John Hus and, as is to be expected, from different points of view. The camp of his detractors, largely of German origin, attempt to minimize Hus' capacities, accepting the thesis of Professor Johann Lösserth who, in 1881 first advanced the view that Hus was a slavish plagiarist of the English reformer John Wyclif. The high repute enjoyed by German scholasticism during the last century assured Lösserth a wide and receptive audience. But during the last 80 years much has changed and Lösserth's thesis is no longer accepted in its totality. Czech scholars, both Catholic and Protestant, French, English, Dutch and American, have shown that Hus was a very competent philosopher and theologian, a dynamic preacher, an effective leader of his nation in times of stress. His conduct at Constance, with malice toward none and charity for his enemies, is indeed enough to place him high among the heroes of the nations and to join with him his beloved Czech people.

In spite of these traditional doctrines, Hus also professed progressive views which linked him with the Protestant Reformation. First of all, it was his insistence on the sole authority of Scripture, even though it was not wholly consistent. He insisted on the right and freedom of its individual interpretation, although in reality he limited it to the early patristic teaching. Nevertheless he was free in making his choice among the various views of the Fathers. He thus repudiated all absolute submission to the magisterial authority of the Church. He vehemently claimed, on the part of the members of the Church, the duty of discriminating whether the orders and the decisions of the ecclesiastical superiors, even those of the pope, were in conformity with the Scriptural precepts. If they were not, they must be rejected. "It is proper to obey God rather than men." He himself refused to obey the order to stop preaching at the Bethlehem Chapel, and denounced on the same ground the "crusading" bull of Pope John XXIII. He did not rebel against the ecclesiastical authority as such, but only against its abuse. This was, of course, regarded, on the part of the Council, as flagrant disobedience; for the Council claimed to possess supreme authority over the entire Church, including the popes, two of whom it deposed and the third induced to resign.

Furthermore, as far as the concept of the Church was concerned, he regarded it as a spiritual fellowship of those possessing the spirit of Christ, rather than a legal corporation governed at that critical time by the Council. Thus he defined the Church catholic as consisting only of the predestined, while the Roman Church and every other particular church as comprising mixed membership of both the predestined and the foreknown. The latter were in the Church but were not of the Church. They would be purged from it as extraneous elements in the Day of Judgment.

Another radical progressive idea of Hus was that of the "federal" nature of the Church. He held that the Roman Church does not possess universal rule over the entire Christendom, but is limited to its own particular communion. There are other particular churches, such as the Eastern Orthodox, the Monophysite, and Nestorian, (to which in more than a century the Protestant communions were to be added), which possess ecclesiastical autonomy. Such is, of course, the situation today. Thus the Roman Church is not the universal, but merely one of the particular churches composing Christendom.

This led Hus to his "ecumenical" concept of the Church. The predestinate in all these particular communions comprise one Church catholic, which is the body of Christ. Their unity is spiritual, not organizational or legalistic. Hus is thus even ahead of some present-day "ecumenicists" who think that by organizational union of the particular churches they can produce "Church catholic." No one can "produce" spiritual unity but God alone.

Finally, Hus anticipated the Reformation tenet of the "priesthood of all believers." Since the function of the priest in the forgiveness of sin is only declarative, every believer has a direct access to God without the priestly inter-

mediation.

Hus was not conscious of any deviation from the faith. He wrote:

I trust that by God's grace I am a sincere Christian, not deviating from the faith. I would rather suffer the dire punishment of death than to put forth anything contrary to the faith or to transgress the commands of the Lord Jesus Christ. . . . Hence I wish that the Victor (Pope) would show me today one precept of sacred Scripture that I do not hold. . . . And if I ever taught anything I should not have taught, I am ready humbly to revoke it. But I trust that I shall sooner appear before the tribunal of Christ before he finds me to deny one jot of the law of the Lord!

Because of these traditional as well as progressive and forward-looking views, Hus belongs both to the past and the future. He stands on the threshold of the Protestant Reformation. The leaders of that era, particularly Martin Luther, who sincerely admired him, repudiated his traditional and further developed and sharpened his progressive views.

In the third place, considering Hus personal character, we note particularly his tender devotion to his friends and his forgiving attitude toward his foes. To the very end he was anxiously solicitous for his flock at the Bethlehem Chapel. In his letters from Constance he pours out his love and care for all of them, not only the well-to-do and learned but also his humblest members—the tailors, shoemakers, and other artisans. He was devotedly faithful to his friends, as is clear from his most appreciative and grateful letters to his protectors and even from his audacious defense of Wyclif, which exposed him to calumny and trumped-up charges which mainly contributed to his condemnation. Young Peter of Mladonovice, who accompanied him to Constance and wrote the most detailed account of the trial, concluded his epic narrative with the words that he had written it "that the memory of the Master, the truth's most steadfast champion, may thus live in the future."

Hus fully deserved that tribute, for throughout his life he not only gave, but himself adhered to, the advice:

Therefore, faithful Christian, seek the truth, hear the truth, learn the truth, defend the truth to death for the truth will liberate you from sin, the devil, and the death of the soul, and finally from eternal death.

When both Cardinal d'Ailly, his principal judge, and Emperor Sigismund, exhorted him to recant and submit unconditionally to the judgment of the Council, he pleaded pitifully:

I pray for God's sake that you desire not to lay a snare of damnation for me, that I be not forced to lie and abjure those articles of which—God and conscience are my witnesses—I know nothing.

His unyielding devotion to the truth which he held to the end, the purity and integrity of his character, and his unswerving loyalty to the Church universal—the body of Christ—raised him morally above all his conciliar judges, and particularly above his Czech foes. He remained faithful to his oft-asserted conviction that "Truth conquers all!"

1. Splinka, John Hus at the Council of Constance, p. 234.

OF JAN HUS THE LIFE AND DEATH

continuation from page 3

As Professor S. H. Thomson had stated "by the standards of medieval church some of his teachings were dangerous, some few heretical". Hus requested that he be convinced by the testimonies drawn from the Scriptures, the council insisted on an unconditional abjuration. The views expressed in the book *De ecclesia* were not formulated exclusively by Hus and they were not suppressed forever by his execution. In October 1519 Martin Luther received a copy of *De ecclesia* and read it attentively. He summed up his impressions in a letter to his former fellow student George Spalatin: "Without being aware of it I have till now taught and held the whole doctrine of John Hus. . . . In short we are all Hussites without knowing it, and therefore Paul and Augustine are literally Hussites." Other names, from both the earlier period and after 1519, could be added to this list. As Count Francis Lutzwow has said "the whole proceeding against Hus can scarcely be termed a trial, and the conviction was a foregone conclusion".

The Czech lords present at Constance as well as their Polish friends were not trained in theological niceties but they had the eyes and ears open to see and to hear what was going on not only in the public sessions but also in private circles. They witnessed the violation of the safe conduct and Sigismund's cynical behavior. Some of them attended the stormy sessions in the Franciscan refectory during which "almost all those present screamed at Hus as did the Jews against the Christ". The Czech lords felt that the treatment to which Hus was subjected both by the temporal and spiritual authorities, was ruthless and unjust.

Their impressions and sentiments were shared by the masses of people in Bohemia and Moravia. Not only those who knew Hus personally when he either lectured at the university or preached from the Bethlehem pulpit, but also the hosts of anonymous supporters of the reform program reacted passionately. They remembered the Reformer's piety, irreproachable life, devotion to the national cause, and above all his zeal for the law of God. His life ended at the stake—a revolution was born in his homeland simultaneously.

The sixth of July was observed by the Hussites as a holiday. The services held on that anniversary in Hussite churches included a recital of an account of his trial and death. Most of these narratives were derived from the writings of Hus' disciple and companion Peter of Mladonovice. Occasionally passages from the Reformer's letters from Constance were added to the selections from Peter's story. The name of Hus was known not only among the Czechs in Bohemia and Moravia but also in the surrounding countries, among the Slovaks, Poles and other peoples. It had not fallen into oblivion when the Reformation was suppressed in the Habsburg lands. Temporarily obscured, it re-emerged with the advent of religious toleration and it has remained in circulation ever since.