

## **The Light of Thy Countenance. Exhibition & Catalogue**

In preparation for the 52nd International Eucharistic Congress, the Bishops and special committees of the Greek Catholic Metropolitanate decided to introduce the Hungarian Greek Catholic Church – alongside numerous other events, as well as church, public and cultural activities – through a comprehensive ecclesiastical art and historical exhibition. Within a diverse Catholic Church, the Greek Catholic Church is a Church *sui iuris* with its own peculiarities, the history of which, along with the experience and lessons of its individual developmental path in the broader context of the Catholic Church, may be looked upon as important building blocks of the Church of the future. Presence at the Congress through an exhibition also represents an important opportunity for our Church.

Defining the concept of the Exhibition raised a number of professional, theological and identity-related questions. The aim was to present the approximately 400-year long historical journey travelled by communities of the Eastern Church after the proclamation of union with Rome.

Parallel to the planning of the Exhibition began the work of editing the Catalogue presenting the exhibits.

The nearly 250 items of church art, liturgical equipment and archival and bibliographical documentation in the Catalogue published recently tangibly demonstrate the process of change and its uniqueness. Far away from Eastern and Western ecclesiastical and cultural centres, the Greek Catholic Churches living in today's East-Central Europe – including Hungarian Greek Catholics – developed a peculiar, so-called 'Carpathian' church art and culture between the 17th and the 19th century. A local variant of an artistic tradition defined by the liturgical context of the Byzantine Rite evolved over the centuries. The specimens on display could be seen as the reflections of a series of social, ethnic and linguistic changes and a variety of cultural influences affecting Hungarian Greek Catholic communities.

In the Catalogue, this process, some related aspects, as well as the outcomes of the conservatory and exploratory efforts under way in preparation for the Exhibition are described in twenty-six studies written by sixteen authors. No material on the Hungarian Greek Catholic Church comparable in variety or magnitude in time and space has ever been published before. The book presents objects and documents found in Hungarian and foreign ecclesiastical and secular museums, libraries and archives, as well as in our parishes. The so-called union document discovered in the Prešov (*Eperjes*) State Archives some years ago is published in a Hungarian volume for the first time.

The title of the Catalogue – ‘The Light of Thy Countenance’ – is intended to be a reference to the source that has preserved and sustained the Greek Catholic Church at the crossroads of East and West to this day. The studies and the descriptions of nearly 250 items included in the book combine to reveal Eastern identity and a viable alternative historical direction between East and West, distinct from either.

The Exhibition envisaged for the Hall of Art/Kunsthalle in Budapest was cancelled due to the postponement of the International Eucharistic Congress. As a reflection of the original concept of the Exhibition, readers may now take the Exhibition Catalogue in their hands.

With modified content, the introductory exhibition ‘The Light of Thy Countenance’ will open at the Pest Vigadó Concert Hall in August 2021. It is hoped that visiting the Exhibition will be possible without restrictions.

The book has been published in 1000 Hungarian and 500 English copies. It is available in Greek Catholic religious items shops and online via the webshop ‘szentatanazbolt.hu’ at the following link: [https://szentatanazbolt.hu/konyv/4823-orcad-vilagossaga.html?search\\_query=orcad&results=2](https://szentatanazbolt.hu/konyv/4823-orcad-vilagossaga.html?search_query=orcad&results=2).

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