The Church as a Carrier of the Idea and Practice of Coexistence in the Reintegration of the Croatian Danubian Region

(Summary)

The present process of peaceful reintegration of the Croatian Danubian region has posed numerous questions, among them also the question of utopian idea of coexistence between those who carried out expulsions and the expellees, i.e. the present returnees. In what "topos" can this idea be brought to life: in state pressure and guarantees of security, in the economic interests of the new entrepreneurial generation, or in the "moral obligation" and the "debt to the homeland"? While taking into consideration also these aspects, the author nevertheless argues that the key "topos" lies in the activity of the Roman Catholic Church, directed at awakening and creating the Christian awareness of forgiving and service. This is so since the (Croatian) area is dominated by the Catholic Church, even though about ten other religious communities also exist in this area. The Church is facing a great challenge and the task of moving from "orthodoxy" to "orthopraxis". In predicting the possible success of such a transition the author has used the results of a survey carried out in 1995 among members of the Roman Catholic Church from East Slavonia. These results suggest the degree to which the Catholic population is prepared to follow the ideas of civilisation and solidarity which the Church has been developing ever since Paul VI, and they also indicate to what degree the concept of coexistence is - or is not - utopian in its nature.