

## IN MEMORIAM CARDINALIS DOMINIK DUKA

Dear Brothers,

On Tuesday, November 4, at three o'clock in the morning, our brother, Cardinal Dominik Duka, O.P., Archbishop Emeritus of Prague, passed away at the age of 82. The Funeral Mass will be celebrated on Saturday, November 15, at 11:00 a.m. in the Cathedral of St. Vitus, St. Wenceslaus, and St. Adalbert in Prague.

Dominik Jaroslav Duka was born on April 26, 1943, in Hradec Králové, into the family of a career soldier who had served in the foreign resistance during World War II and fought with the Czechoslovak army in Great Britain. After the war, his father was imprisoned for having served on the Western Front – a fate that deeply influenced the course of his son's life. Duka grew up in Hradec Králové, where, after graduating from high school, he was denied further education by the communist regime and therefore worked as a mechanical locksmith. Following his military service (1962–1964), he was accepted in 1965 to study theology at the Theological Faculty in Litoměřice.

On January 5, 1968, he secretly entered the Order of Preachers – then banned in Czechoslovakia – and took the religious name Dominik. He was ordained a priest on June 22, 1970, by Cardinal Štěpán Trochta and served in pastoral ministry in the border regions of Bohemia. In 1975, his state authorization to exercise priestly ministry was revoked, forcing him to take a civilian job at the Škoda Works in Plzeň. Nevertheless, he continued his pastoral and formation work in secret, training young Dominicans, organizing underground theological studies, and maintaining contact with Dominicans abroad. For these activities, he was arrested in 1981 and convicted of “obstructing state supervision of churches.” He spent fifteen months in the Plzeň-Bory prison, where he prayed with fellow inmates and strengthened them in their faith.

After his release, he resumed his work with the Order and, in 1986, was appointed Provincial of the Czechoslovak Dominican Province, a position he held until 1998. Following the political changes of 1989, he played a key role in restoring Dominican life in Czechoslovakia and later in the Czech Republic. He served as president of the Conference of Major Superiors, vice president of the Union of European Conferences of Major Superiors, and taught biblical studies at the Theological Faculty in Olomouc. He was also a member of the Accreditation Commission of the Czech government and actively contributed to public discussions on the role of Christianity in contemporary society.

On June 6, 1998, Pope John Paul II appointed him Bishop of Hradec Králové, and on September 26 of the same year, he received episcopal consecration in the Cathedral of the Holy Spirit in Hradec Králové. Continuing the work of his predecessor, Karel Otčenášek, he promoted education and pastoral care, founded the Diocesan Theological Institute and a church-run grammar school in Skuteč, and restored the diocesan libraries. He also initiated the second Diocesan Eucharistic Congress and supported the development of new pastoral structures within the diocese.

On February 13, 2010, Pope Benedict XVI appointed him the 36th Archbishop of Prague and, in 2012, elevated him to the College of Cardinals. He became Cardinal-Priest of the titular church of Santi Marcellino e Pietro in Rome. As president of the Czech Bishops' Conference (2010–2020), he played a key role in the restitution of church property and in fostering public dialogue on the role of the Church in contemporary society.

He contributed to the publication of the Czech edition of the *Jerusalem Bible* (2009) and served as editor-in-chief of *Revue Salve* from 1998 to 2015. Throughout his 27 years of episcopal ministry, he remained deeply connected to the Order and supported it in many ways.

We commend our dear brother to the mercy of God and pray for the eternal repose of his soul. May he enter into the fullness of divine mercy, which he sought from the beginning of his life in the Order, and behold forever the glory of God in His presence.

  
Fr. Gerard Francisco Timoner III, OP.  
Master of the Order