

Challenges for Religious Education in Slovenia

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After a short introduction, this article presents four major challenges for religious education in Slovenia. The first challenge in working with young people in Slovenia is education without making “enemies”. The totalitarian system paid attention to enemies and that is what the young would like to break free from. The second challenge is reconciliation with the past which also embodies reconciliation with their own parents and ancestors. Communism marked a big gap between the time before and after the revolution and thus ripped people from history. The young would like to shape history and feel the need to bond with it. The third challenge refers to working with adults. The young expect them to acknowledge their weaknesses in order to be able to accept and forgive them. The fourth challenge is involving the young in creative cooperation in the Church. Young people are motivated for such cooperation if adults respect and count on them.

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Introduction – present state

There are 44 Churches and religious communities registered in Slovenia, of which only the Roman Catholic and Protestant Church are indigenous. Relatively strong among them are also the Islamic community and the Serbian Orthodox Church. Just over 60% of the population belongs to the Roman Catholic Church,¹ under which it is understandable that the latter played a major role both during the communist era as well as in the democratic processes.

Slovenia experienced great socio-political changes in 1990–1991. The birth of “democracy” also influenced the life of the Catholic Church, its functioning and the proclamation of the Gospel. The Church wishes to preserve and upgrade all that is good and has been formed through the efforts of past decades. Despite the “new” (secularised) way of life, many young people remain connected to the Church. And what is more surprising is the fact that international research from some years ago shows that the young

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¹ Stanko Gerjolj, Andrej Saje, “Religiöse Bildung an Schulen in Slowenien”, in: Martin Jäggle, Martin Rothgangel, Thomas Schlag (ed.), *Religiöse Bildung an Schulen in Europa, Teil 1: Mitteleuropa*, Wien 2013, p. 184.