

Introduction

The Many Guises of European Catholicism

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The Roman Catholic Church is one of the fastest growing religious communities in Sweden. Over the last decade, its membership had a stable three to four per cent annual growth, reaching 124,000 registered members in 2019, with an estimate of at least 25,000 additional people who participate in its services without registering. And while it is still a tiny proportion of Swedish society, a streak of recent events, such as the Papal visit to Sweden in October–November 2016, the installation in the following year of Anders Arborelius as the first Swedish cardinal in history and the recent (2018–2019) regular celebration of Catholic Mass in Lund Cathedral, have significantly raised visibility and interest in the Catholic Church among the Swedish public. Simultaneously, historically conditioned attitudes, selective portrayals in public culture, and widely publicized controversies surrounding sexual abuse have resulted in a partial, biased, and sometimes confused image of what Catholicism is.

This is why we, the editors of this issue, organized a series of lectures and seminars which focused on the notion of variety within the Catholic Church in Europe. In eight lectures and five seminars held from February to September 2019 at the Centre for Theology and Religious Studies, Lund University, we took our audience on a tour of Catholicism in eight different countries, presenting it in a multi-dimensional perspective spanning from Ireland to the Ukraine, from an alien entity in Sweden to a 2000-year-old presence in Italy, from small local communities to huge international movements, from legal perspectives to studies in mysticism, and from secularism and loss of members to liberation from oppression and the revival of traditionalism.

This issue of *Svensk Teologisk Kvartalskrift* cannot, alas, encompass more than a third of the live events – but it is a good third! We are proud to

present four articles that skilfully situate a representative selection of European varieties of Catholicism in their regional and historical contexts, while simultaneously tracking dynamics that will shape their future.

The issue begins with two articles that take a closer look at countries with a long-standing established position of the Catholic Church. Fáinche Ryan, director of the Loyola Institute at the Trinity College Dublin, describes the case of Ireland, investigating whether consumerism is replacing Christianity on the Emerald Isle. Magdalena Dziaczkowska, a doctoral student at the Centre for Theology and Religious Studies in Lund, follows up with a discussion of Catholicism in Poland, and the long-standing entanglement of national identity, messianic ideology, and Catholicism, seen both as a faith and as an institution. Yvonne Maria Werner, professor of history at Lund University, leaves the national perspective to discuss the emergence of a more transnational phenomenon: the traditionalist movement within the Catholic Church, with its ultramontane roots, its inception in opposition to the Second Vatican Council, and its development of an organization with its own rites, congregations, schools and priest seminaries. The issue closes with an article by Ryszard Bobrowicz, also a doctoral student in Lund, who looks at the domestic situation of Catholicism in Sweden, asking whether the kind of approach chosen by the Roman Catholic Diocese of Stockholm could provide a promising framework for the Catholic Church more broadly.

These articles touch upon many of the broader issues of Catholic studies. Firstly, they underline the complex relationship between Catholicism and modernity, including various responses: from the stark opposition of the traditionalists, through a competition between the Catholic Church and consumerism in Ireland, to the use of Catholicism in building a modern Polish nation. Secondly, they discuss the implications of the varying status of the Catholic Church in different countries, from the small but dynamic minority in Sweden to the overwhelming majority in Poland, including the issues of establishment and mission. Thirdly, they show that, despite its name, Catholicism is suspended between the universal and the particular, and that its local expressions are as important as its underlying transnationality.

Readers will surely find many more links between the articles. We hope that they will function as a concise introduction to the many guises of European Catholicism. We are most grateful to the authors for their willingness to rework and publish their lectures, giving the readers of *Svensk Teologisk Kvartalskrift* a chance to have a share in their learning and insights. We also sincerely wish to thank the Centre for European Studies and the Centre

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