

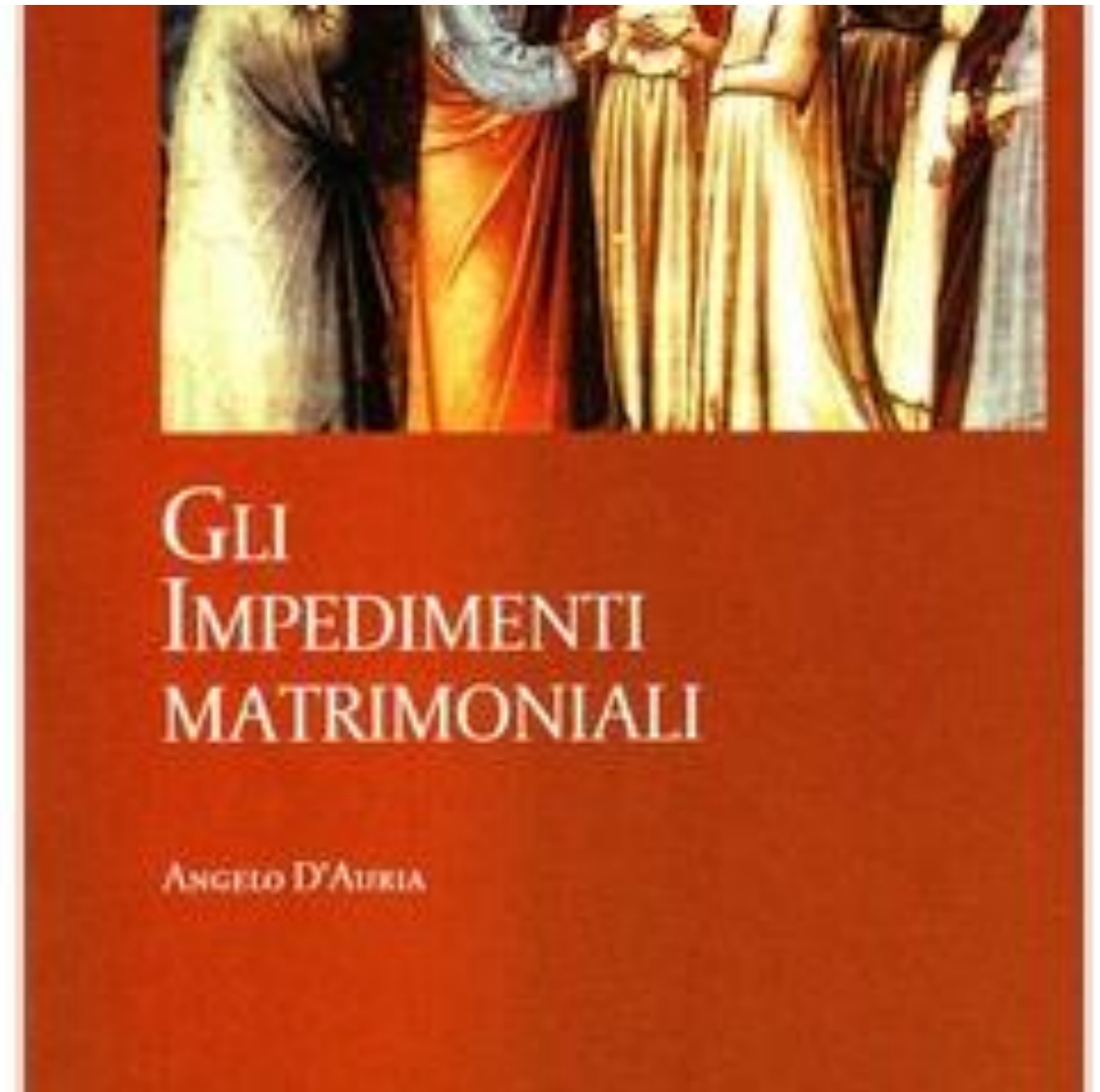


Pastoral care for couples in 'irregular unions'. The context of Hungary

Prof. Ujházi Lóránd

Irregularity or impediment

- These are not pastoral categories.
- Juridical ones —
 - precise,
 - enumerated,
 - governed by strict principles.



'irregular unions'

- Problematic.
- Umbrella term
 - Blurs fundamental legal and theological differences.
 - Canon law does not treat all 'irregular unions' the same way.



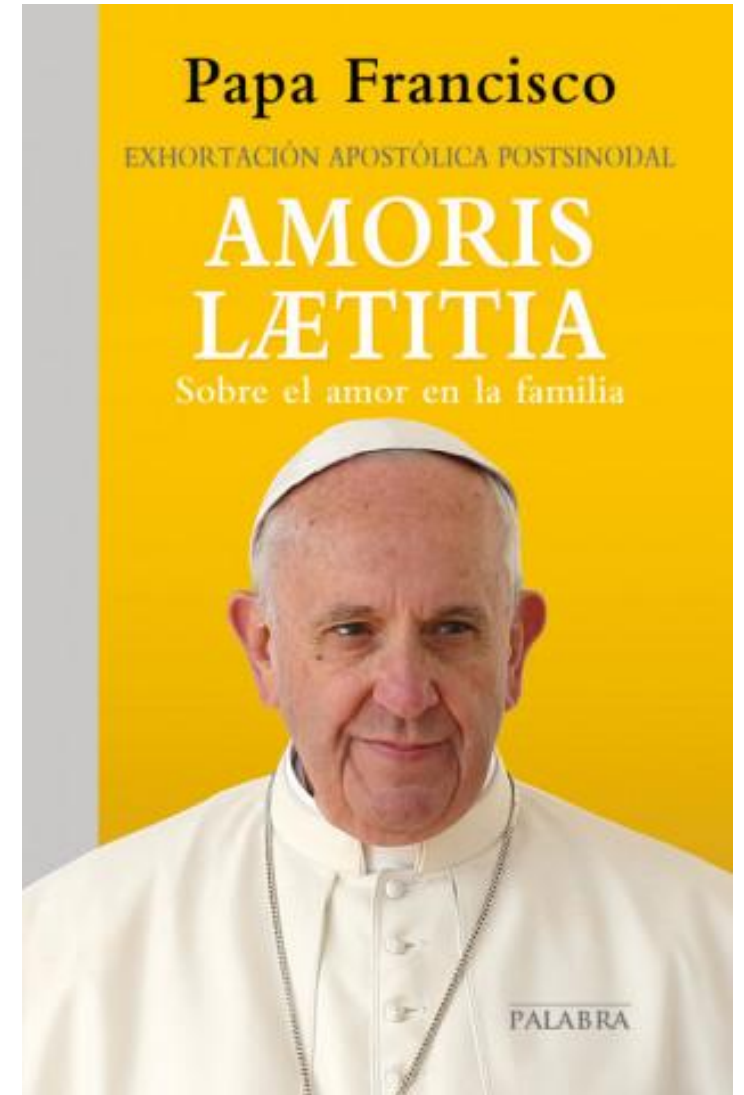


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- Bond of love.
 - Mutual, ecstatic self-giving. Morally binding in itself.
 - Bond of law.
 - Arising from the public, lawfully consent.
 - It adds a legal dimension.
 - The bond of sacrament.
 - Marriage is between two baptized believers.
 - It elevates the union into a kingdom-mystery — a sign and instrument of the grace of God.

-
- Simple cohabitation,
 - Couples live together without any formal bond.
 - Second, purely civil marriages.
 - Third, the divorced and civilly remarried.
 - Canonical marriage is recognized as valid.
 - Theological and juridical dilemma.
 - Subsequent civil union is entered.

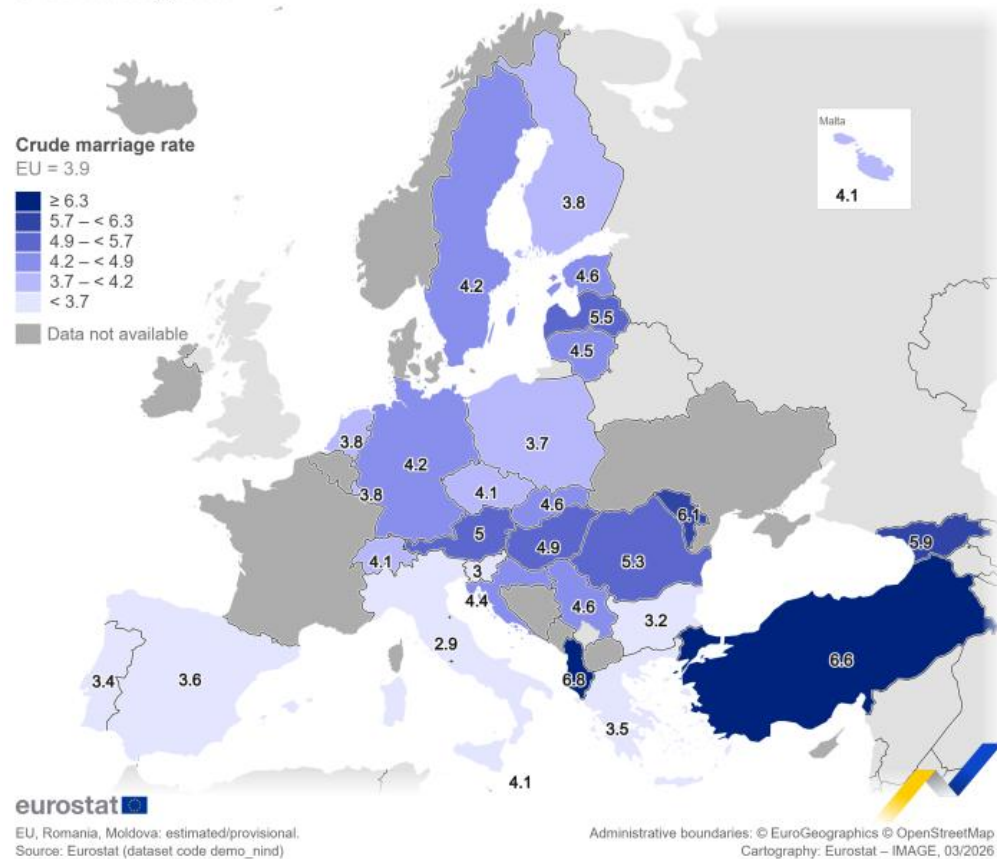


- "Cohabitation which totally excludes any intention to marry" (AL 53).
 - Cohabitation driven by "cultural and contingent situations" (AL 294).
 - Rejection of sacramental union:
 - Economic or social constraints.
 - Dire poverty and great limitations.



Marriage indicators, 2024

Crude marriage rate



- **Max Planck Institute and Eurostat data**

- Europe - marriage become a 'luxury.'
- (jobs, inflation, and a severe housing crisis).

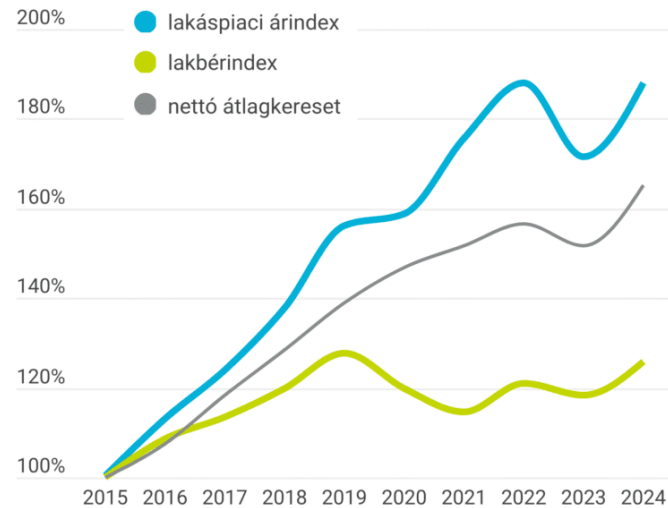
- **Vanier Institute of the Family**

- A traditional wedding - costly affair
- Financial security before marriage.
 - Finishing education,
 - Securing a stable job,
 - Saving enough money for a home.

Housing crisis

A lakáspiaci árak, a lakbérek és az átlagkeresetek alakulása

2015=100%, reálértékek



A kormányzat lakhatási célú kiadásai

milliárd Ft, 2025-ös árakon, 1990–2026



Az ábra részletes, típusonként lebontott verziója ezen a [linken érhető el](#).

Adatok forrása: zárszámadási (1990–2024) és költségvetési (2025, 2026) törvényjavaslatok, Központi Statisztikai Hivatal ([fogyasztói árindex](#)).

A részletes adatok [ezen a linken](#) nyilvánosan elérhetők.





- Habitat for Humanity,
 - the housing crisis is deepening in the country.
- Currently, nearly 2.9 million people are affected by housing poverty.

But if the couple does decide to have a church wedding?

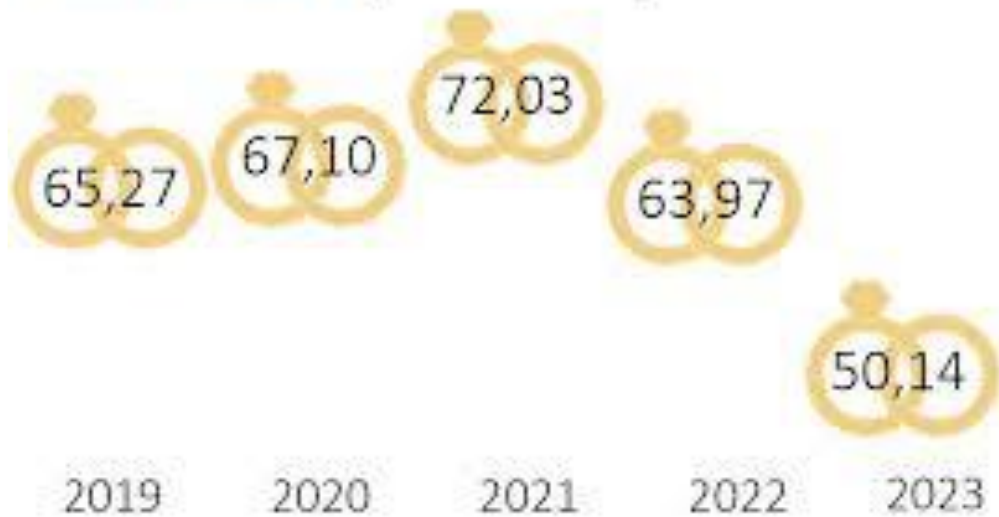
-
- The issue of simulation (Can. 1101.)
 - Broken or even toxic relationships.
 - They cannot divorce civilly
 - Brutal financial penalty.
 - Repayment of the state subsidies with heavy interest.
 - This reality creates a profound canonical problem.





- In Hungary, ecclesiastical tribunals refuse to open a nullity case until a civil divorce is finalized.
- **To avoid a situation in which a person becomes canonically free to marry but remains bound by civil law.**
 - Respect Canon 1071 (Forbids priests from assisting at a marriage that cannot be recognized by civil law.)

HÁZASSÁGKÖTÉSEK SZÁMA,
2019–2023 (ezer darab)



- State financial incentives.

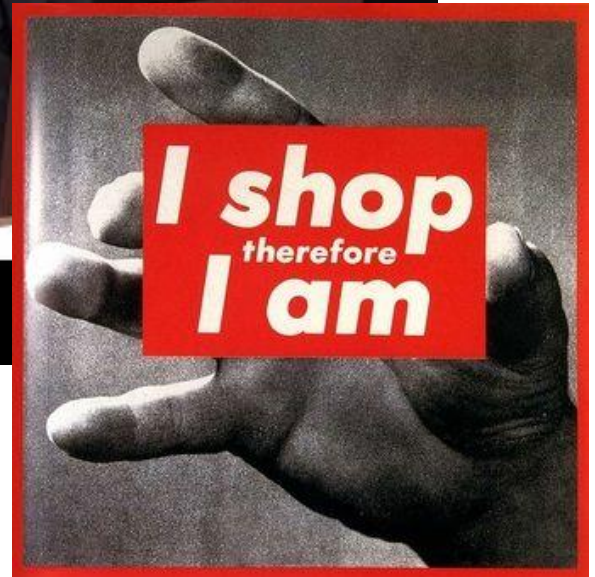
- Housing subsidies and family loans
- Tied to civil marriage and the legal promise to have children.
- Couples marry in civil ceremonies out of economic necessity.
- Skipping the sacramental wedding.
- In Hungary, canonical marriage has no civil legal relevance.

Justice Truth Dignity Common Good
Solidarity
Subsidiarity Human Freedom
Person Love



- Using institutional influence to protect families.
- State lawmakers must be encouraged.
 - Housing support,
 - youth accommodation programs,
 - accessible scholarships.

- Catechism classes,
- Sunday sermons,
- Pastoral letters,
- Essential properties of marriage must be explained.
- Protection of marital unity and family life from the financial pressures of modern consumer society.

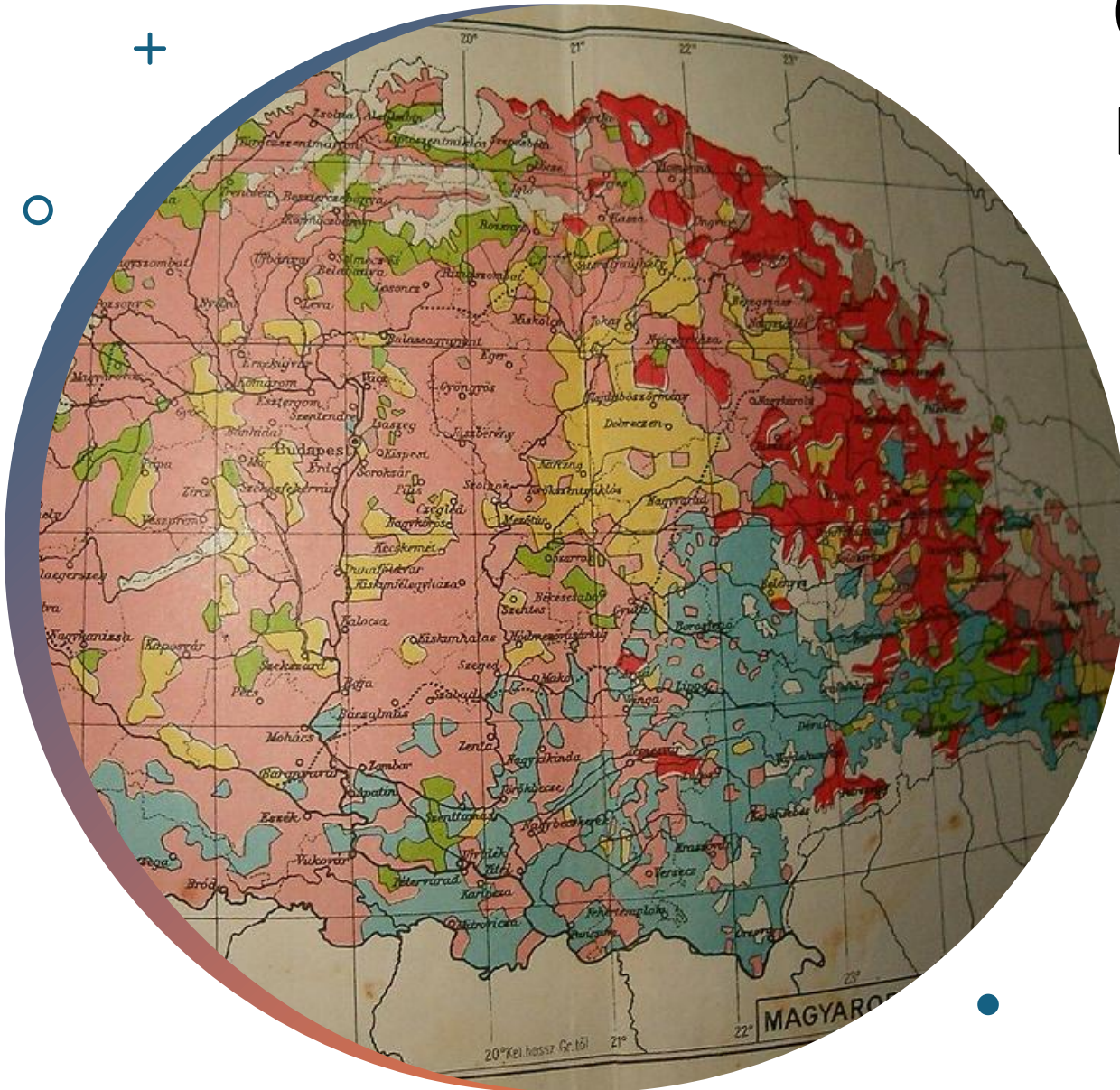


Bishop Marton
Dicastery for Laity, Family and Life



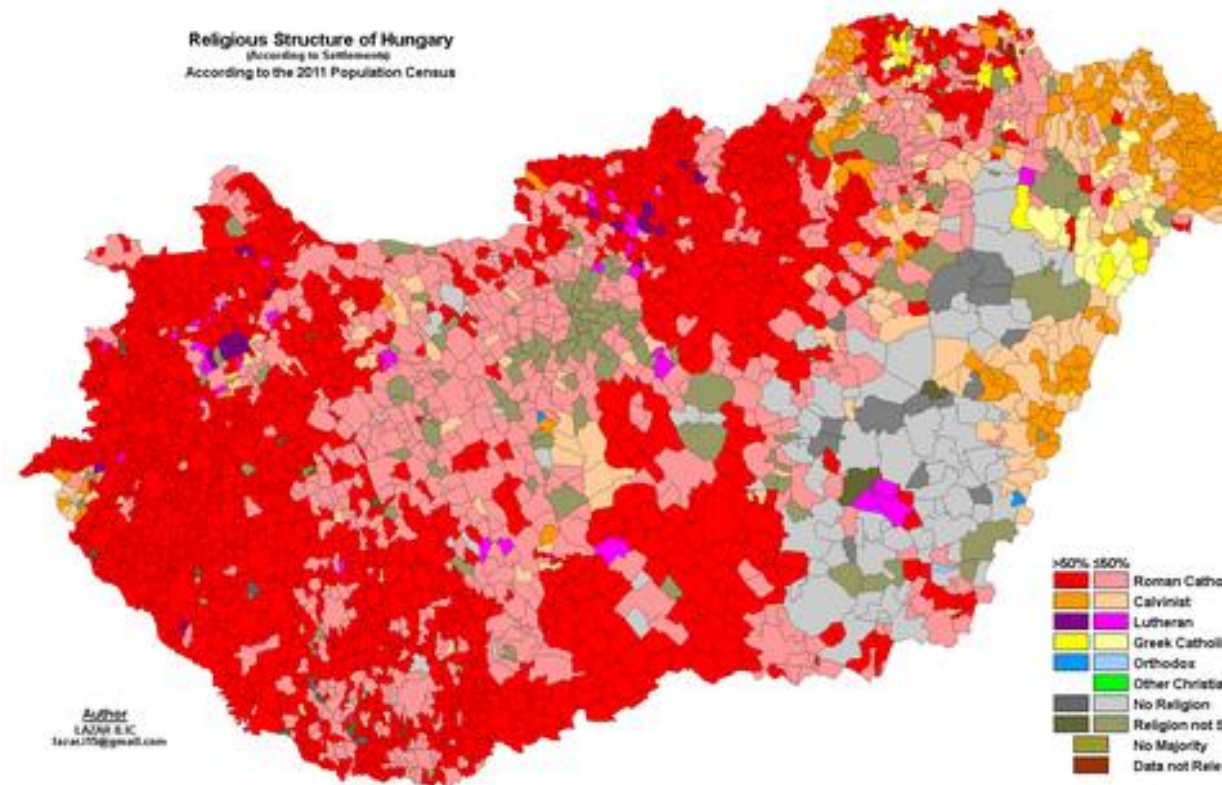
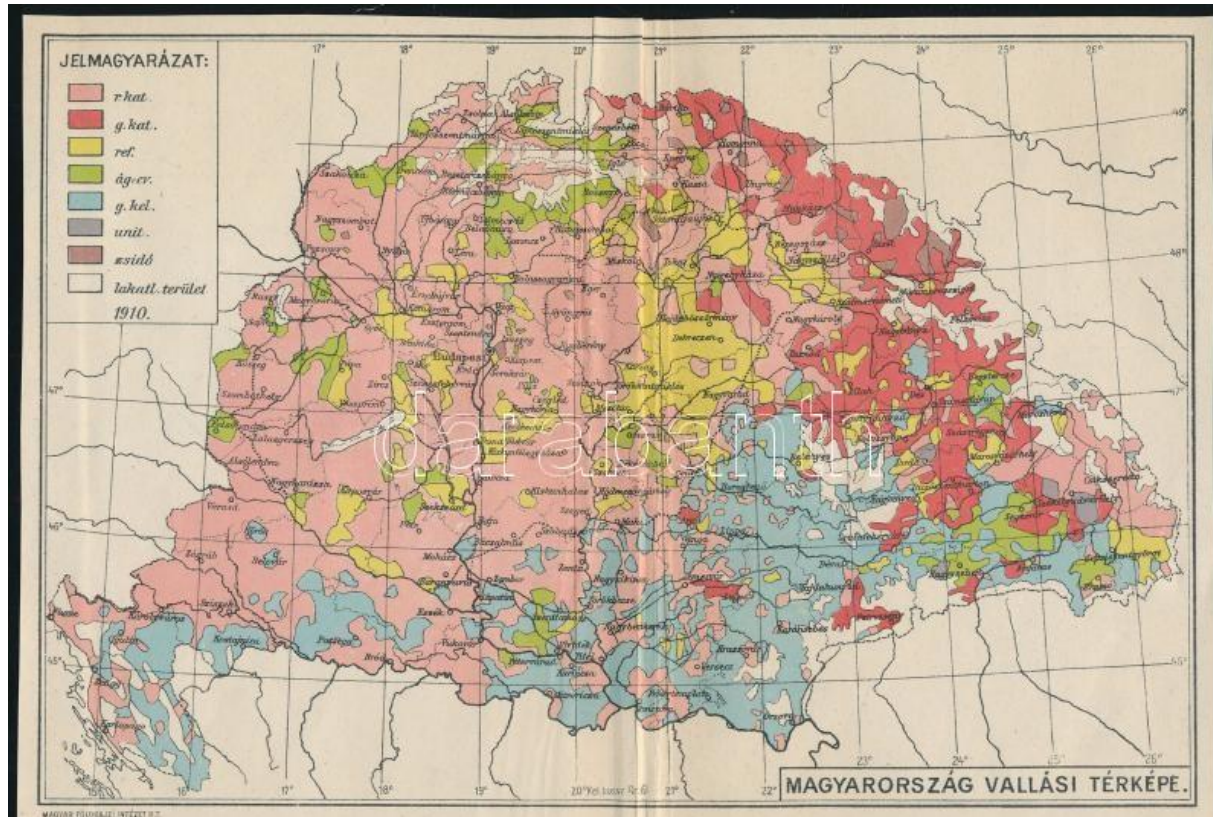
Családegyház

Civil marriage or a non-Catholic rite



- Religiously divided country.
 - Catholics, Calvinists, and Lutherans lived side by side.
 - Two separate legal systems.
 - Eight different confessional marriage laws.

Religious map of Hungary



A
REVERZÁLIS

IRTA
RAFFAY SÁNDOR

"Hear the vow in the secresty".

BUDAPEST

HORNYÁNSZKY VIKTOR CS. ÉS KIR. UDV. KÖNYVNYOMDÁJA



1868/sons/father/daughters/mother



Baptism war

- Act XXX/1894
- Mandatory civil marriage for all Hungarian citizens



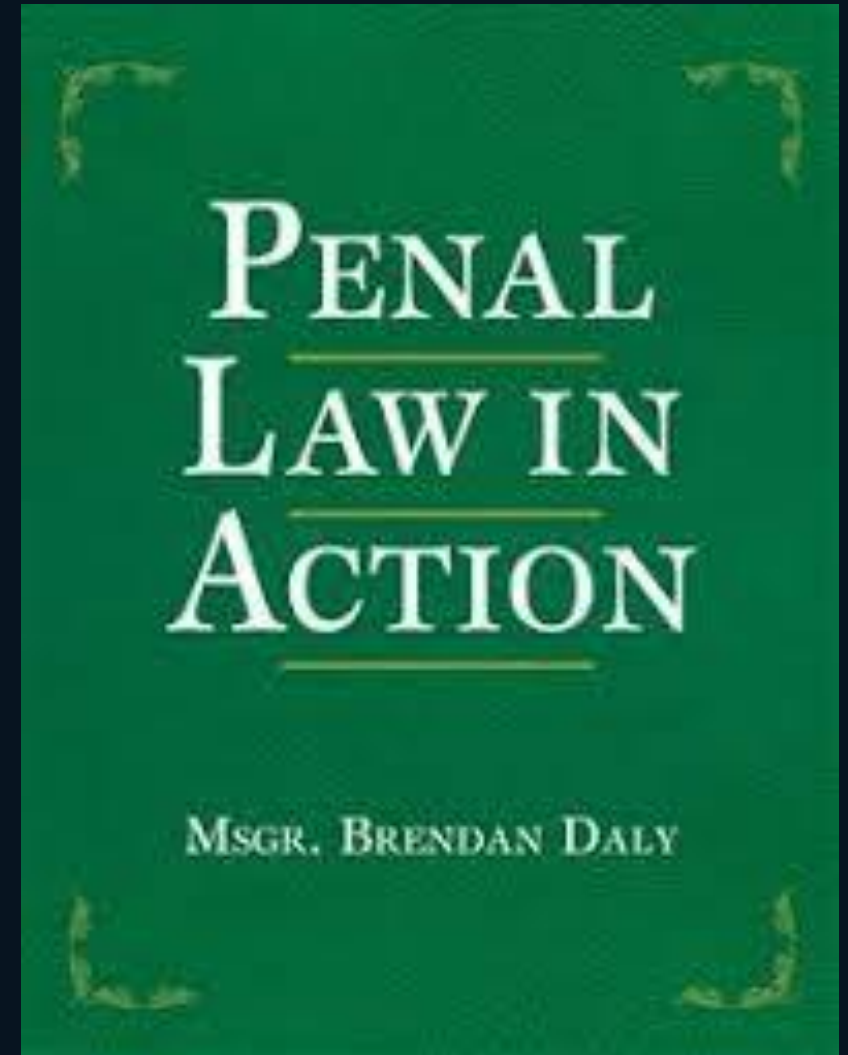
"Contracting marriage before me, you have not yet fulfilled your religious obligations."

- Act XXXI of 1894.
- Introducing mandatory civil marriage for all Hungarian citizens.
- Disciplinary response.
- Public sinners



Response

- Disciplinary
- Excommunication
- Public sinners
- No absolution, Holy Communion church association,
- No acting as godparents or witness of Catholic weddings.
- No post partum blessing
- No ecclesiastical funerals.





SIPOS I.
GÁLOS L.

A

KATOLIKUS

HAZASSÁGJOG

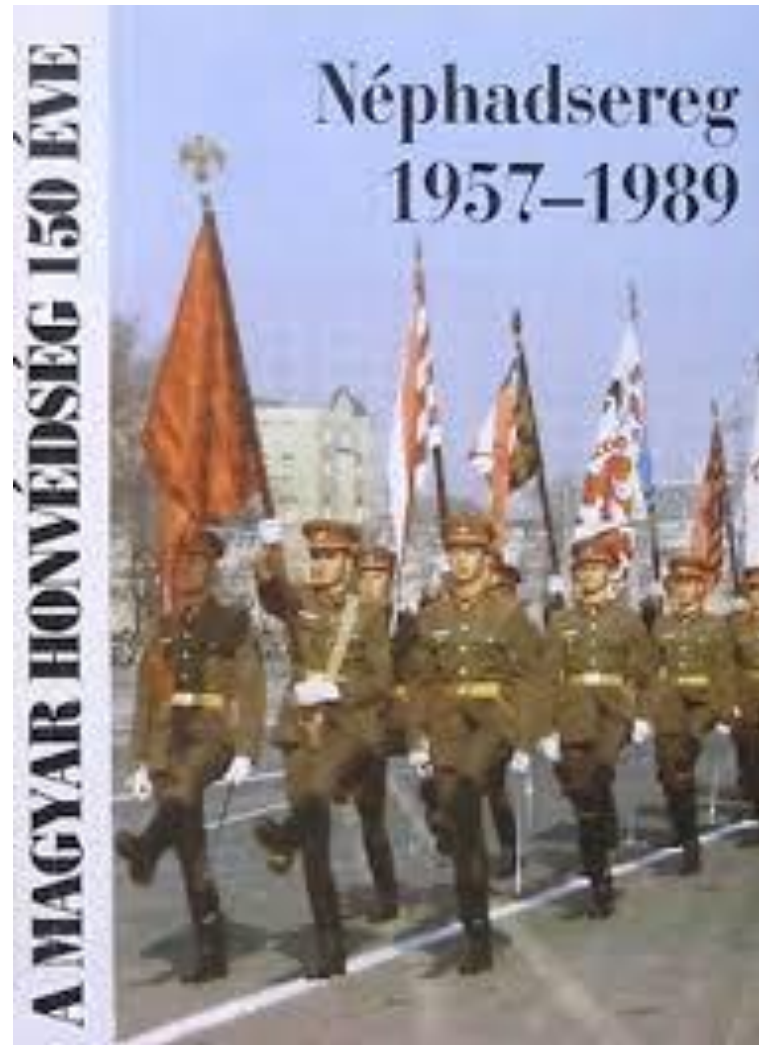
István Sipos - László Gálos
Factual infamy – infamia facti

RENDSZERE
ISTVÁN TÁRSULAT
ÉK
JA
BUDAPEST 1960

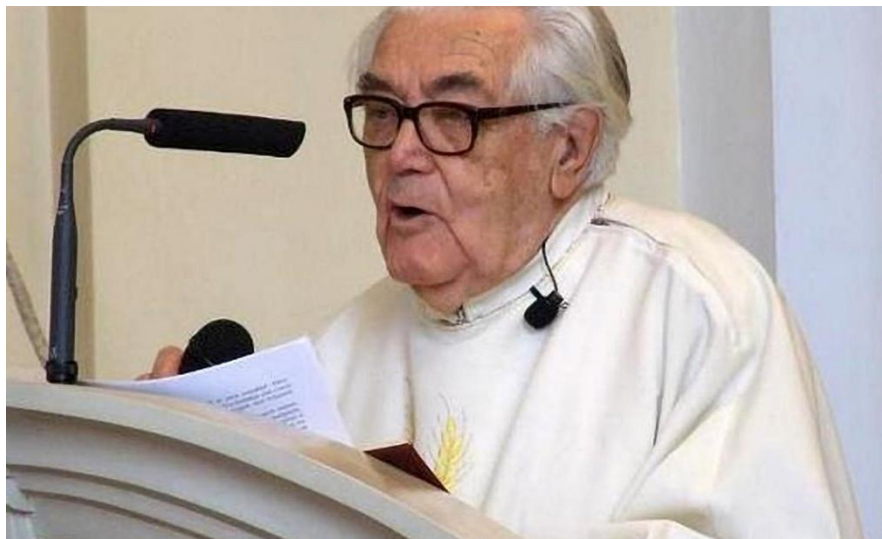
Matrimonium conscientiae

- This was a marriage contracted in **secret**.
- Bishop's permission
- without public announcement.
- In cases of serious and urgent need,
 - to protect the reputation of the parties.
 - to legitimize children
 - while avoiding public scandal.
 - **The records were kept in a sealed register**





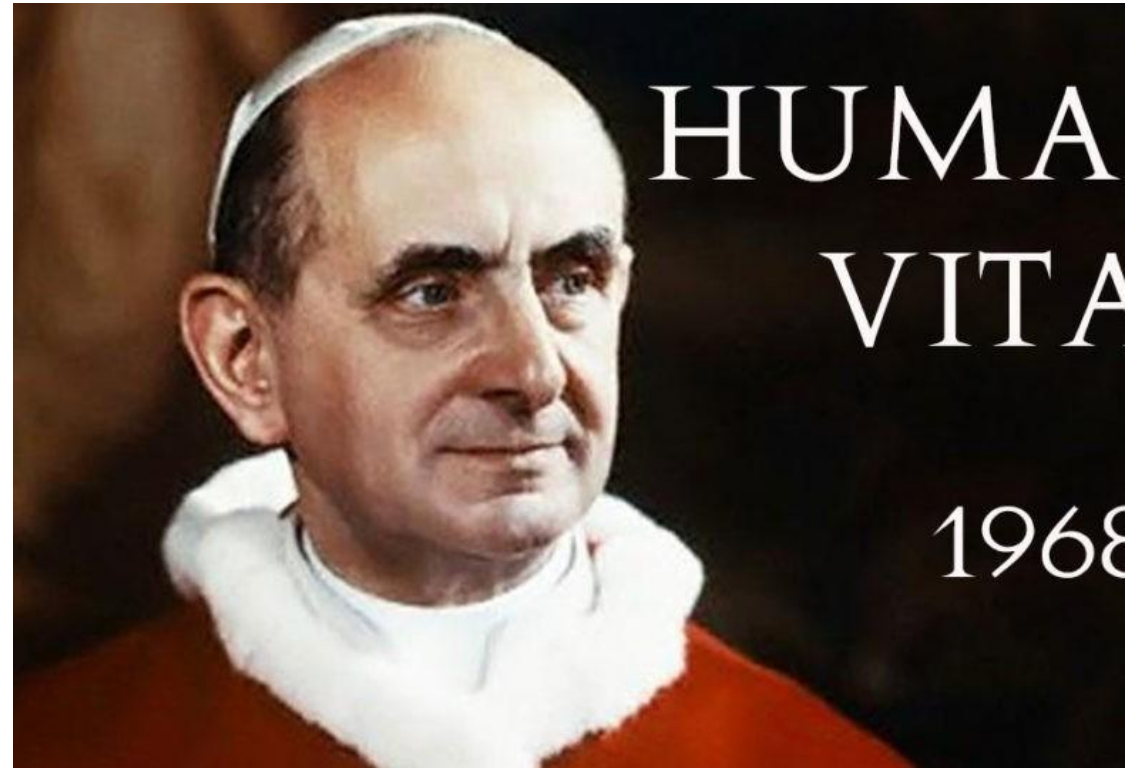
Communist
regime





CATECHISM TRADITION

Paus Yohanes Paul



**APOSTOLIC EXHORTATION
FAMILIARIS CONSORTIO**



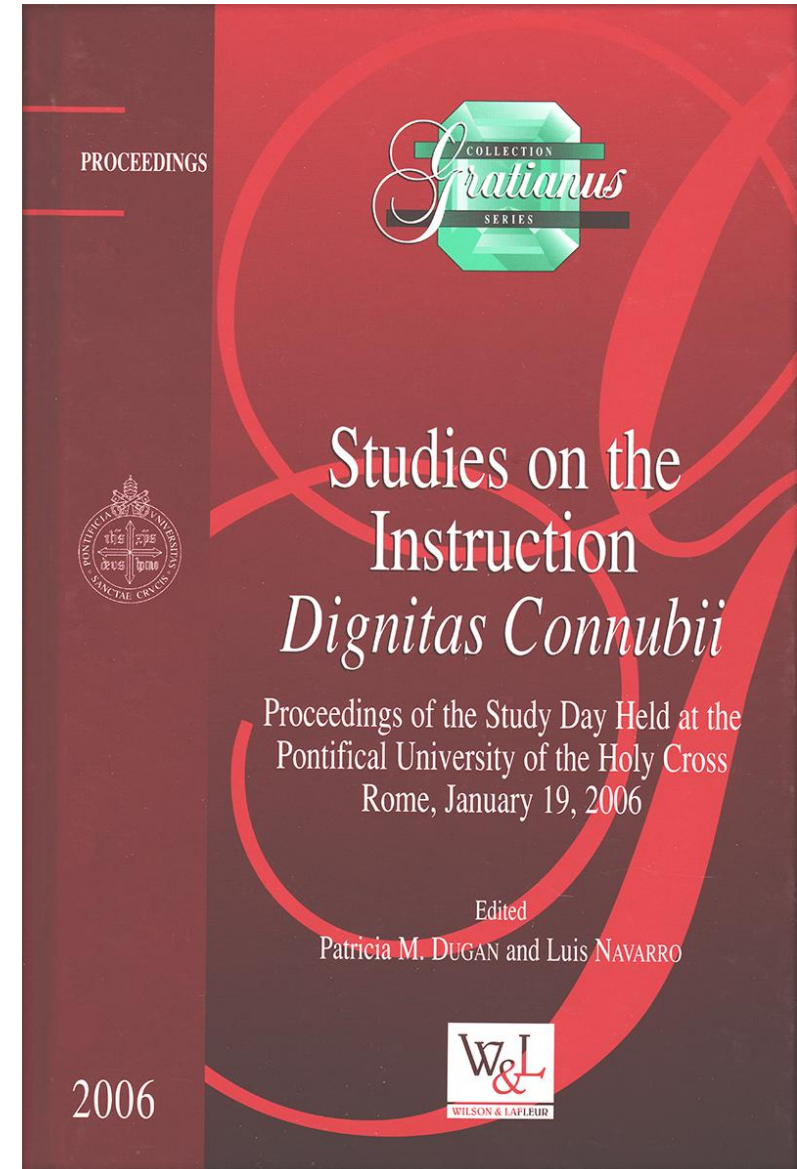
**ON THE ROLE OF THE
CHRISTIAN FAMILY
IN TODAY'S WORLD**

HOLY FATHER JOHN PAUL II

- Couples living in irregular unions.
- Pastoral accompaniment.
- Distinguishing
 - Having sincerely tried and failed.
 - have simply never been reached by the Gospel of marriage.
 - It introduced gradual growth.
 - Called for pastoral accompaniment.
 - Serious, structured marriage preparation.
 - Remote, proximate, and immediate.
 - § s a fundamental pastoral priority.
 - § For Hungary: not abstract theology.
 - § Roadmap for rebuilding what forty years of communism had destroyed.
 - § The generation grew up without sacramental marriage.

Divorced and remarried

-
- "Safeguard the truth with rigor but without rigidity, and to exercise charity without omission" Leo XIV
 - *Dignitas connubii*
 - *Amoris Laetitia*
 - *Rota Romana*
 - duty of mercy
 - human healing
 - comprehensive pastoral support program





Divorced and remarried

- 1894 Act introduced civil divorce for the first time in Hungary.
 - Justice Minister Dezső Szilágyi
 - "If the community is already broken, why forbid a new beginning?"
- Early 1900s,
- 150,000 marriages.
- The number of divorces was between 3,500 and 3,800 per year. (2 to 3 percent.)
- 1930s risen to 6 or 7 percent.
- 1949, 12 percent.
- "What was once forbidden begins to feel merely optional."

- Divorces since the fall of communism consistently high.
- Peaking around 24,000 to 25,000 per year.
- Decline - over the past decade.
- Stagnate around 17,000 to 19,000.



SAN GIOVANNI PAOLO II

ESORTAZIONE APOSTOLICA FAMILIARIS CONSORTIO



They are to be encouraged
to:

- Listen to the Word of God
- Attend the Sacrifice of the Mass
- Persevere in prayer
- Contribute to works of charity
- Raise their children in the Christian faith

Papa Francisco

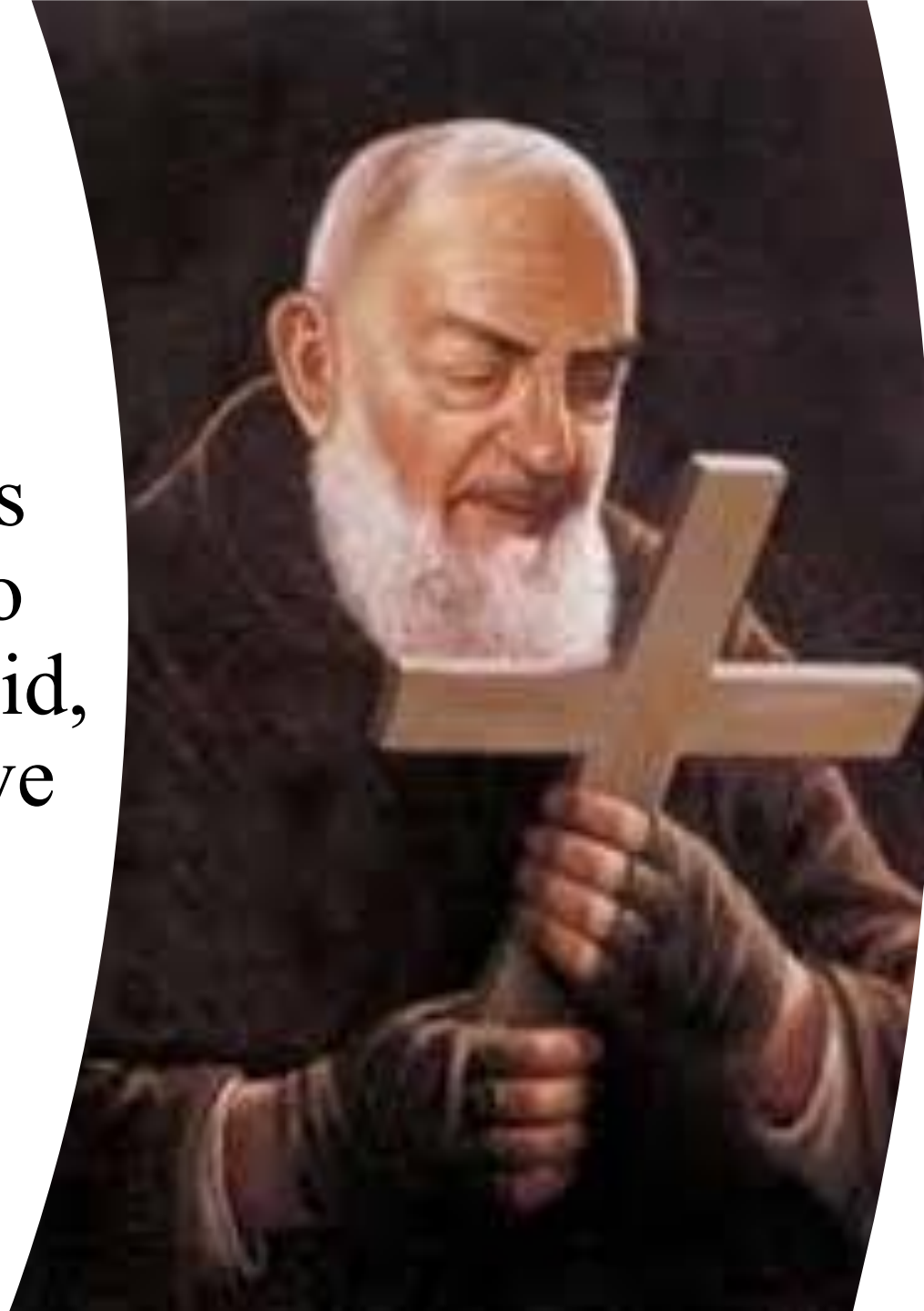
EXHORTACIÓN APOSTÓLICA POSTSINODAL

AMORIS LÆTITIA

Sobre el amor en la familia



God counts
on you! Do
not be afraid,
only believe



The Saint Pio Retreat House in
Székelyudvarhely (Romania).

- Annual spiritual weekend for the divorced and civilly remarried.
 - Thematic presentations,
 - small group conversations,
 - personal reflection,
 - communal prayer,
 - Holy Mass,
 - Eucharistic adoration.

"I felt that we are God's children just as much as those living in a sacramental marriage — and that there is a place for us in the life of the Church."

Annual gatherings at the national Marian shrine of Mátraverebély-Szentkút.

-
- Emmanuel Community
 - retreats for the divorced
 - single parents
 - over twenty years,
 - not only practicing Catholics.
 - **Full sacramental participation, however, remained closed to them**



The Eucharist is not a prize for the perfect
(EG 47; AL 305)

Must continue to propose the full ideal of
marriage and clearly express her objective
moral teaching.



Placing many conditions on God's mercy.

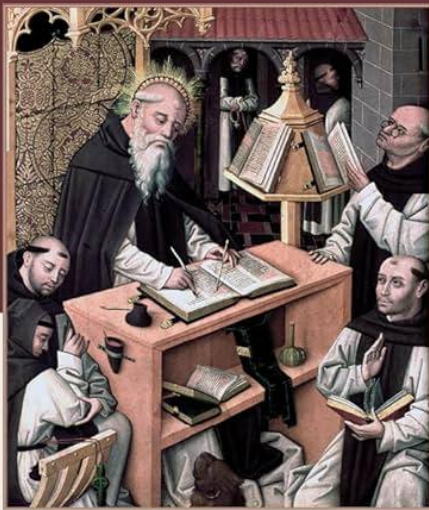
It loses its concrete
meanings,

"The worst way of watering
down the Gospel."



Engaging CATHOLIC DOCTRINE

✦
ESSAYS IN HONOR OF
MATTHEW LEVERING



EDITED BY
Robert Barron, Scott W. Hahn,
and James R. A. Merrick

The Church has changed its teaching and practice.

- Precedents.
- On slavery,
- torture,
- religious freedom,
- and the anointing of the sick.
- Francis has done something analogous.

Archdiocese of Esztergom-Budapest

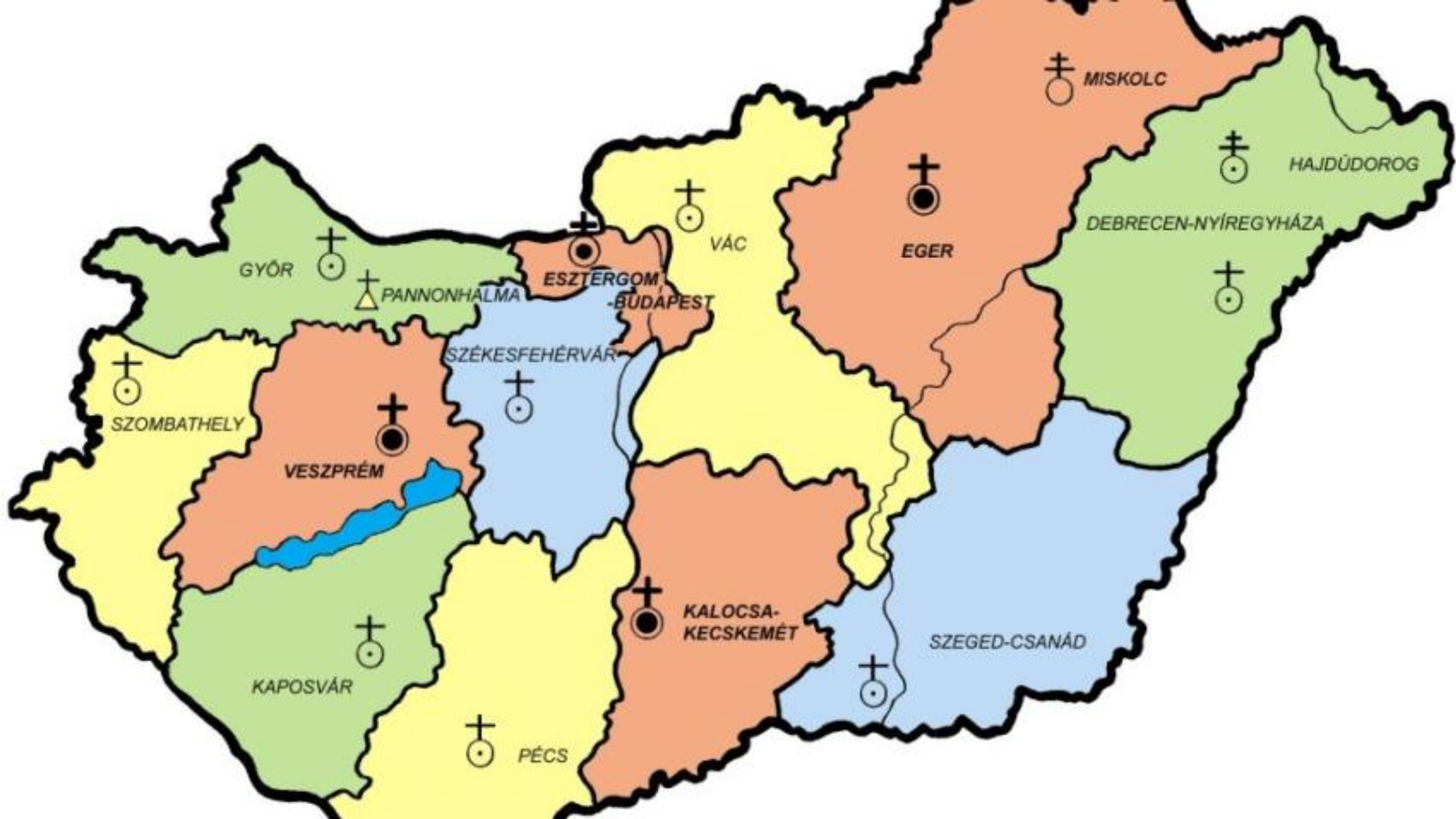
- Specially trained pastoral specialists have been appointed.
 - Personal conversation.
 - Discernment of possible grounds for nullity
 - Assistance with the petition.



Current anthropological crisis

- "Throwaway culture"
- Ecological answer
- Attending to the whole person
- Their whole context.
- Pastoral response more comprehensive.
- The Creation Care Institute at Pázmány Péter Catholic University.





Archdiocesan Tribunal of Veszprém

- basic personal data,
- lists the required documents,
- standard questions to guide petition.
- The process is clearly explained.
- Nothing in the form reflects the specific social, economic, or cultural realities of the region it serves.





- It requires trained pastoral and specialist accompaniment —
- not merely as a juridical body, but as a ministry of mercy.

Military Ordinariate

- Its marriage nullity cases are handled by the Tribunal of Esztergom-Budapest.
- **A Canonical Anomaly-**
- **A Pastoral Deficit.**



Pastoral responsibility at several levels



- Diocesan clergy formation programmes
- Study days and retreats for priests
- The academic level
- Institute of Canon Law at Pázmány Péter Catholic University
 - Specialised lectures and seminars specifically addressing irregular unions, the pastoral application of Amoris Laetitia
- The parish priest
- Family Commission of the Hungarian Catholic Bishops' Conference

Same-Sex Unions — Doctrine, Pastoral Care, and the Hungarian Reality

- Amoris Laetiti (paragraph 250)
- Pope Benedict XVI
- Five Breads Community





Summary

- What exactly is an "irregular union"?
 - Different pastoral responses.
 - historical roots
 - Amoris Laetitia Chapter Eight is not a loophole.
 - It is a serious invitation to discernment.
-