

Abstract

The bachelor thesis is about Opus Dei, the only personal prelature in the Catholic Church. However, the thesis focuses mainly on the origins of the male branch in the Czech Republic. The thesis is based on the analysis of historical works and for the last chapter the method of oral history is used. My oral history research focuses on the narratives of the three founding members of the Prelature in the Czech Republic. The whole thesis can be divided into three parts. In the first part, the life of the founder and the related history of the organization and its structure are written, based on secondary literature of Czech, German and English provenance. I draw here mainly on the three-volume biography of Josemaría by the Spanish historian Vazquez. I deal with the person of the founder quite thoroughly in my work, as his person is very central to understanding Opus Dei. Members often refer to him and various feasts are celebrated throughout the year relating to important events in his life. I also describe the legal development and organizational structure of Opus Dei. The second part of the thesis concerns the situation of the Catholic Church between 1945-1989. Here I try to clarify the somewhat specific background of the situation of the Church in Czechoslovakia before the arrival of Opus Dei. The third part shows the changes that took place after 1989. Among other things, the Velvet Revolution made the arrival of Opus Dei in Czechoslovakia possible. In the last part I try to shed light on the arrival of Opus Dei members in Czechoslovakia through interviews with the narrators. I show what steps were taken to spread Opus Dei's message to society. The interviews revealed that the first social stratum targeted by Opus Dei is young people, especially university students. The members themselves perceive that they are sometimes misunderstood and know the reasons for this. The last part of the thesis sheds light on the motivations, experiences and actual actions of the first Opus Dei members in the Czech Republic.