

## ABSTRACT

The subject of this paper is the public role of the Catholic priest in the Czech national society of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, when the Catholic Church lost its ideological and influential position and when it had to face the process of secularization. The situation of the Catholic Church had changed radically as it became only one of many different cultural or political entities in that century and had to find new means of how to influence opinions of the people.

This essay discusses the life and work of Václav Štulc (1814 – 1887), a Czech Catholic priest and an enthusiastic patriot. It describes three fundamental tendencies in his political thought.

The first tendency in his work is associated with his role of representative of the Catholic Church and with his emphasizing the importance of religious values for the common good of society. Štulc's conservatism is based on very sharp criticism of the Enlightenment, revolutionary violence and the enlightened rule of Emperor Joseph II. Štulc urges all social classes to respect the basic laws and to maintain public order.

Secondly, Štulc often refers to the relationship of the religious and national identities. Štulc is trying to unite the Catholic faith with the modern concept of the nation, challenging many prejudices about the Catholic Church and demonstrating the importance of the Catholic clergy for the flourishing of the Czech nation.

Thirdly, Štulc reflects on sensitive social problems of the Czech society of his time. His thought, which is underpinned by religious principles, emphasizes that people have to accept the necessity of Christian morality again.

With regard to political thought, Štulc symbolizes a very fascinating and problematic personality, as he combines many different and contradictory ideas in his work. It is very difficult to interpret the intents of his work. At any rate, Štulc's conception of society is based on religious values, and his ideas imply that the Catholic Church should play a unifying role in the Czech national movement.

**Keywords:** Václav Štulc, 19<sup>th</sup> century, conservative thought, revolution, Catholic Church, fatherland, Czech nation, Czech history, enlightenment, social inequality.