

Dávid Bacsa

**The Pastoral Care for the Deaf
with Reference to Universal Ecclesiastical Laws
For Application in Hungary**

PHD THESIS BOOKLET

Supervisor: Dr. Lóránd Ujházi

**Pázmány Péter Catholic University
Canon Law Institute**

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Canon Law embraces the deaf in equality by definition driven from their baptism, they have the rights and responsibilities in Church (Cf. cann. 208 - 223 CIC). However, due to their loss of hearing, the disability or hindrance the deaf can hardly likely or under no circumstances benefit from their basic rights, including the Word of God or the sacraments (can. 213), similarly in no customary way may the teachings of the Church reach them (can. 217). Thus, the deaf may be feeling neglected by the Catholic Church. Subsequently, the Church needs to facilitate the way to establish a special kind of pastoral care to reach the deaf living on the margins of society and fulfil the missionary task received from Jesus Himself. The Church authority is to educate ministers who are able to be provided and made to have the deaf live by their basic rights.

In Hungary the pastoral care for the deaf has been established for nearly 50 years, mainly in the Archdiocese of Esztergom–Budapest. The complete structure of the pastoral care for the deaf is lending further opportunities are introduced here, and illustrated through examples from foreign countries in order to enhance the Hungarian pastoral care for the deaf.

Research Method

In the first chapter, Foundations of the Research Question (I) the deaf are dealt with in the framework of the teachings and Canon Law of the Church. Furthermore, the threefold mission of the Church, with reference to each, namely guidance (II), deification (II) and education (IV), is analysed to explore the possibilities of deaf participation in the Church.

On account of exclusive papal and dicastery legal regulations for providing pastoral care for the deaf and disabled are missing, the church structures for migrants and travellers, who are similarly in need of special pastoral care, serve as analogy and basis for analysing the potentials of pastoral care for the deaf. In the final sections of each chapter the legal possibilities for making partial law available for the local bishop are described in order to provide special pastoral care for the deaf living in his diocese with respect to the prescripts of their own rite. The Conclusion offers the solutions in short including the principles which may serve the purpose of successful church inclusion of the deaf.

Hypotheses

Answers are offered for the following questions in the current phd thesis:

- 1. The Catholic Church, both at the universal and local levels, owns appropriate structural and legal framework for providing the pastoral care for the deaf. Having analysed, the Church is currently not using it to full capacity. Similarly, church staff in many cases do not allow either for exploiting the legal framework for full benefit.*
- 2. The Catholic Church in theory emphasises establishing the pastoral care for the deaf. However, more often than not, adequate human resources are missing to realise the theory in practice.*
- 3. The Catholic Church had always been reflecting reference to the pastoral care for the deaf although the specifications were drafted not until the Second Vatican Council by subsequently establishing the threefold mission of the Church (guidance, deification and education) in the integrated way.*

Research Goals

Based on Canon Law and my own knowledge and experience, the hypotheses are proven. The qualitative method is employed in the dissertation with the air of paving the way for deaf integration in all fields of church life. In the first part of the paper the relevant section of terminology is defined with reference to state law and medical studies. The basis for human dignity of the deaf is dealt with, that is the biblical view of the human person and the guaranteed equality for the faithful and criteria for Church membership.

In the second part of the dissertation the principles for the guidance mission are introduced that are available for the Church to provide the deaf their spiritual merits as legally guaranteed. Universal ecclesiastical laws ensure the possibilities of establishing the personal parish (can. 518), the personal prelature (can. 294) and the personal diocese (can. 372 § 2) with respect for providing the pastoral care for the deaf in the Hungarian setting. Within the parish system, the examples of the segregated way, the integrated and the cooperative ways between parishes, including the hearing and the deaf, are proven. The rights of the pastor (can. 564) providing the pastoral care for the deaf are researched, and similarly the criteria needed in the

education system for the priests leading them to successful pastoral care. Models, which are ready for application by the dioceses after some minor modifications, are also illustrated.

The third part outlines the Church task of administering the sacraments for the deaf and the ways for easing the task: the use of sign language and its application during the liturgy, the role of the sign language interpreter, the specific guidelines for the liturgical books, and the exclusive liturgical books that have been published for the deaf. From the history of law the guiding principles, which are necessary for taking the sacraments for both the ministering and receiving as a deaf, are shown based on the previous Codex 1917 and Canon Law in effect as much as presenting the nonverbal signs for the deaf available to express how to agree before receiving the sacraments. The ways of transforming the sacred places for the deaf are also put on display. The conditions for deaf participation in criminal law and procedural law highlight the emphasis on the topic of using intelligence.

In the fourth part, the Church task, which is needed for delivering the deaf the good news of salvation, is analysed. In order the deaf faithfuls are to develop their mission as a priest, a prophet and a king driven from their baptism, and practise their rights and responsibilities as inspired by the documents of the Vatican Council II (cann. 208 - 223), the Church takes proper care through ordained pastors and lay people. Besides the pastor, it is the catechists, especially the deaf catechists, whose roles are also emphasised. The national institutions with the catechism in progress are presented as a meeting point for the Church to meet with the deaf native language (sign language) and culture where the new Church related expressions are born during the enculturation process. By their right, the deaf may as well form groups within the Church to better achieve their mutual aims. The particular Hungarian church organisations established within the legal framework are dealt with respect to the role and significance toward the deaf integration.

The dissertation is avoiding the legal regulations for the mentally disabled, yet numerous deaf are affected therefore certain documents from the Holy See are also mentioned. As it is the responsibility of the given pastor and the catechist to acknowledge and assess the mental skills of the deaf in their caring, the dissertation is aiming to assist the minister in transferring the meaning of the Church teachings, and not to lose the proper content of faith.

Despite not being a pedagogical work or a set of relevant guidelines, it lists the legal regulations and the basic principles that are not to be excluded at any rate. The sign language interpreter when translating words during administering the sacraments, might as well not be familiar with the exact content of a religious expression and misinterprets the word, then the sacrament is invalid for the deaf (e.g.: the sanctity of the marriage). By no means may the Church deny sign language education for priests and lay people.

The dissertation is providing support for the local bishops in how to make the deaf more visible in the local church and integrated in the parish community via the institutional and pastoral methods described. Finally, besides aiming at helping the Hungarian Catholic Church to provide pastoral care for the deaf, it also induces further research into providing special pastoral care for the deaf.