

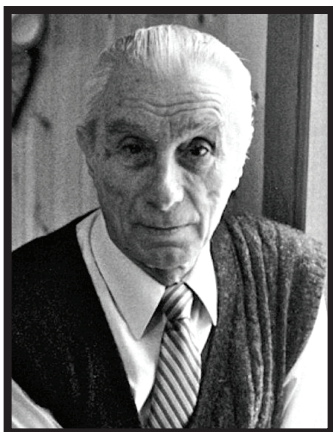


# OUR STORY NAŠA ZGODOVINA

Vol. 4 No. 4 Winter 2014

## “A True Renaissance Man”

Miriam Čekuta



Vilko Čekuta

Sitting in his chair by the window cradling a book in his hands, reading, exploring, creating, always thirsting for knowledge, this is how I remember my father. He was never idle and he remained a lifelong learner even during these last few years when he was somewhat immobile, residing quietly in his room at Dom Lipa.

May third of this year, my father, Vilko Čekuta, died. He was born September 17, 1915 in (Trst), Trieste where his father was a gendarme and his mother a chef. At the close of WWI, the family moved to Maribor where he attended school. He became enchanted with theatre, learned how to bind books and among other things, took up regular hiking trips through his cherished Slovenian alps as chronicled in his diaries. He moved to Ljubljana to complete his studies. In 1938 he became an architect, married in 1943 and started his family. Not willing to live under a communist regime at the end of WWII, he was forced to escape Slovenia and settled first in (Gorica) Gorizia and then Trieste.

While residing in the Free Territory of Trieste, he taught art and mathematics in a technical school, worked as a freelance architect and participated with various theatrical groups in an acting and/or directing capacity. How often late at night, I recall, listening with my older brother, our ears glued to the radio, plays that my father directed. In 1955 our family moved to Canada where he believed that his children would flourish in the freedom and wealth of this new homeland. For this my father was forever thankful.

While working for the Ministry of Government Services, he continued wholeheartedly to generate a variety of architectural creations and he supported and promoted Slovenian culture through his establishment of a theatre group, teaching heritage language and designing many chapels for the Slovene communities.

Recently, as my siblings and I began cleaning up and organizing my father's place of residence so many wonderful and memorable moments came to mind as we discovered a myriad of items that he had collected and stored in his basement office from blueprints to theatre costumes. As we rummage through all his possessions, we are amazed at what he had assembled and all that he had accomplished over the years.

My brothers and sister remember our father, “oči”, as we all called him, each in our own personal way. For me, my relationship with my father was always quite special. He was the one who raised me in my first years of life, while our mother, Milena, due to circumstances was away earning “the daily bread”. Not knowing any better, I used to call him “mami”. As he took great pleasure in uncovering new areas, he and I travelled together discovering new places, driving through the Smokey Mountains, sailing across Lake Michigan, and lastly our trip together in Slovenia which proved to be our final trip as he said goodbye to his beloved homeland before a stroke prevented him from enjoying many of his gratifying activities. When we were younger, he took my brother and me into the mountains, most often trekking around “Svete Višarje”. At times, on these late night hikes in the hills and valleys of the Alps he would recite poems or tell scary stories. I specifically remember tightly holding his hand as he told us about “Kekec in Brdaus”.

I recall all those late night rehearsals in the basement of our home where he prepared us for the various dramas and comedies and other theatrical productions that were then performed here in Toronto and many other Slovenian communities throughout Ontario and the USA. My fluency in reading, writing and speaking Slovenian I owe to the many years of being a member of “Slovensko gledališče”. My younger brother and sister have made theatre a part of their professional lives because of our father's influence and his love of theatre and the spoken word.

Our home was always full of books that were strewn everywhere, much to the chagrin of my mother. He cherished these above all other possessions and when we moved to Canada, he filled our travel trunks with books rather than other much needed essentials as he realized that unless he encouraged us to read we would not develop a love of learning and creating and keep our Slovenian language alive.

My father was a quiet, reserved and humble man, a man who tended not to walk in the lime light, whose many talents will thus remain unrecognized. His life often difficult, especially his last few years when he was no longer

able to put pen to paper, did not deter him from continuing learning and discussing all kinds of topics with us. He even learned to play chess on his computer. Wherever life carried him, he always found a way to make the world a better place either through his beautiful creations or with his written word.

It is difficult for me to honour my father with just a few simple memories, as words fail to encompass all that he was and all that he meant to not only me, to our family, but also to the Slovenian community both here and abroad.

I still miss my daily visits with "oči" at Dom Lipa where I continuously experienced his relentless passion for life. I am honoured and blessed to have been his daughter and I must agree with one of his former work colleagues who wrote: "He was a true renaissance man."

## Hamiltonski Slovenci so praznovali

*Slovesnosti ob 50-letnici župnije sv. Gregorija Velikega*

dr. Bogdan Kolar SDB

Slovenska skupnost, ki se zbira ob župnijskem središču sv. Gregorija Velikega v mestu Hamilton, Ontario, Kanada, je nedeljo 28. septembra obhajala nadvse praznično. S slovesnim bogoslužjem in nato družabnim ter kulturnim srečanjem so obeležili 50-letnico ustanovitve župnije. Čeprav so se dogodki, ki so bili del praznovanja, vrstili celotno leto, so bili vendarle dnevi pred osrednjo slovesnostjo še posebej delovni in hkrati praznični.

Manjša slovenska skupnost je na področju Niagarskega polotoka začela nastajati že v letih pred drugo svetovno vojno; v njej so bili večinoma rojaki iz Prekmurja. Svoje središče zbiranja so imeli v cerkvi Srca Jezusovega v kraju Vineland, nekako na pol poti med Hamiltonom in St. Catharinesom. Imeli so tudi svoje društvo, ki se je imenovalo po sv. Jožefu. Občasno jih je obiskoval slovenski frančiškan p. Bernard Ambrožič, ki je sicer deloval v Združenih državah. Ker se je v letih po drugi svetovni vojni število slovenskih priseljencev v tem delu Kanade hitro večalo in je poleg Toronta, kjer se je zbrala največja skupina, postalo pomembno središče mesto Hamilton s številnimi industrijskimi podjetji, je začela nastajati tudi cerkvena skupnost. Sprva so za njihova verska srečanja v poljski cerkvi sv. Stanislava ali v krajevni župniji sv. Ane skrbeli slovenski lazaristi, ki so v Torontu ustanovili dve slovenski župniji. Na razpolago jim je bil tudi hrvaški duhovnik Štefan Sprajc.

V letu 1960 se je načrtnega dela za ustanovitev samostojne narodne župnije, ki bi povezovala Slovence iz škofij Hamilton, London in St. Catharines, lotil duhovnik dr. Alojzij Tomc, ki je v Hamilton prišel iz Clevelanda, OH. S podporo rojakov in voditeljev krajevnih Cerkev je poskrbel za nakup zemljišča v letu 1961, pripravo načrtov in zbiranje sredstev, s katerimi je bilo mogoče zgraditi najprej večje poslopje s prostorom za kapelo in večjo dvorano za družabna srečanja. Že od začetka so tu imele svoje prostore še slovenska šola in različne cerkvene organizacije. Okoli dvesto družin, ki so redno sodelovale pri življenju cerkvene skupnosti, je z odobrenjem hamiltonskega škofa mons. Josepha F. Ryana predstavljalo dobro osnovo za nadaljnje načrtovanje. Zato je škof na dobro utemeljeno prošnjo 29. novembra 1964 izdal listino, s katero je ustanovil župnijo z imenom Slovenska župnija svetega Gregorija Velikega. 22. maja 1965 je

bila blagoslovljena dvorana, ki je služila kot kapela. Pridobljen je bil velik parkirni prostor in druge površine, kjer so lahko organizirali družabne prireditve in nadaljevali gradnjo poslopja. 23. maja 1970 je škof mons. Ryan blagoslovil celotno poslopje. V kratkem času so prostori dobili vso potrebno opremo.

Župniku Ivanu Dobršku, ki je župnijo vodil za župnikom Tomcem od leta 1970 do 1975, je sledil Karel Ceglar, ki je pogumno zastavil vse moči, da bi župnija dobila še primerno župnišče, pravo cerkev in površine za športna srečanja. Konec aprila 1980 so ustanovili gradbeni odbor, ki je prevzel skrb za pripravo načrtov in njihovo izvedbo. Maja 1982 so začeli z gradbenimi deli, 5. decembra istega leta pa je takratni hamiltonski škof mons. Paul F. Reding posvetil novo cerkev, ki nosi ime po velikem voditelju Cerkve sv. Gregoriju Velikem in je spomin izseljenskemu škofu mons. Gregoriju Rožmanu. Zvonik z zvonovi, kar je bistveni del vsake slovenske cerkve, je bil dograjen leta 1993. Prenovitevna dela in skrb za opremo so se nadaljevali tudi v naslednjih letih. Da bi bili dvorani, kjer potekajo vsa velika srečanja slovenske skupnosti, dostopna tudi invalidom in starejšim, je bilo v letu 2012 zgrajeno še dvigalo. Med letom 1984 in 2000 je bil dušni pastir slovenske skupnosti v Hamiltonu Franci Slobodnik.

Kot vse slovenske narodne župnije po svetu je bila tudi hamiltonska vseh petdeset let duhovno, kulturno in socialno središče za Slovence na Niagarskem polotoku. Poleg svojega verskega poslanstva je omogočala delovanje različnim skupinam, v katerih so se rojaki zavzemali za skupne cilje. Najbolj poznane skupine so bile: zavzet in delovni župnijski odbor (prvi je bil ustanovljen v letu 1969), slovenska šola, razne plesne





skupine, več pevskih zborov, športne skupine in mladinske skupine. Slovenci se zbirajo tudi v drugih krajih, kjer imajo svoja društva: Breslau, Beamsville, St. Catharines, Puslinch in London, Ont. Na teh krajih imajo rojaki bogoslužna srečanja vsaj občasno. Duhovniki so spodbujali člane župnije, da so se aktivno vključevali v Katoliško žensko ligo, Slomškovo oltarno društvo in v Liturgični odbor. Župnija je pomagala, da je oživel Društvo sv. Jožefa, ki je povezovalo moški del župnije; sad njihovega prizadevanja je poslopje z imenom Villa Slovenia, kjer imajo možnost bivanja starejši. Poslopje je bilo slovesno odprto leta 1992.

Ko je sedanjí voditelj cerkvenega občestva župnik Drago Gačnik, ki župnijo vodi od leta 2003, zbiral podatke o pastoralnem delovanju v preteklih petih desetletjih, je ugotovil, da je bilo v tem času krščenih 1014 otrok in odraslih, da je bilo 490 prvoobhajancev in 417 birmancev, da se je poročilo 371 parov in da so k večnemu počitku pospremili 330 članov župnije. Župnija je ohranjala povezanost z drugimi slovenskimi skupnostmi po svetu in v Sloveniji. Bila je velika podpornica misijonarjev in imela odprto srce za ljudi, ki so se znašli v stiski. V župnijo je prihajal slovenski tisk, za več publikacij pa je poskrbela tudi župnija sama. Župnik Karel Ceglar je dal dragocen prispevek pri zbiranju zgradiva za življenjepis Božjega služabnika Friderika I. Baraga.

Bolezen je preprečila, da jubilejne slovesnosti ni mogel voditi upokojeni hamiltonski škof mons. Anthony Tonnos, velik prijatelj slovenske skupnosti. Kljub temu so rojaki z bogatim duhovnim in kulturnim programom dali pečat pomembnemu dogodku. Ne le, da je bilo preteklo pastoralno leto v znamenju priprav, temveč so še posebej v tednih neposredno pred nedeljo pokazali vso svojo delavnost in pripadnost skupnosti. Nedeljsko srečanje je pomenilo bogat sad skupnega dela. Pri bogoslužju v cerkvi, vodil ga je predstojnik slovenskih salezijancev Janez Potočnik, je sodelovalo prek 500 ljudi. Somaševalo je več drugih duhovnikov, slavnostni pridigar je bil Thomas Dunne, voditelj salezijanskih ustanov v Kanadi in vzhodnem delu Združenih držav Amerike. Župnijski mešani zbor in pevska skupina, ki sodeluje pri bogoslužjih v angleškem jeziku, sta poskrbela za petje. Druge skupine so pomagale pri pripravi cerkve in izvedbi bogoslužja. Preko 420 ljudi se je popoldne zbralo v župnijski dvorani, kjer so si po skupnem kosilu ogledali nastope pevskih zborov in plesne skupine ter zgodovinski pregled župnije. V drugi dvorani je bila pripravljena razstava, za katero je poskrbela slovensko zgodovinsko društvo. Slovesnosti sta se udeležila še novoimenovani slovenski veleposlanik v Kanadi Marjan Cencen in častni konzul John Doma. Urad Vlade Republike Slovenije za Slovence v zamejstvu in po svetu je župniji sv. Gregorija Velikega v Hamiltonu in slovenski šoli ob tej priložnosti podelil zahvalno listino »za neprecenljivo vlogo pri ohranjanju slovenskega kulturnega in duhovnega izročila v Kanadi«.



## dr. Bogdan Kolar SDB

*Dr. Bogdan Kolar (\* 1954) je po študiju teologije na Universita' Pontificia Salesiana v Rimu (diploma leta 1980) študij nadaljeval na Filozofski fakulteti Univerze v Ljubljani. Iz zgodovine in angleškega jezika je diplomiral leta 1984. Magistrski in nato doktorski študij je nadaljeval na Teološki fakulteti v Ljubljani, Katedra za zgodovino Cerkev, kjer je leta 1994 doktoriral. Od leta 1983 do 1997 je poučeval na Gimnaziji Želimlje. Bil je vodja arhiva nadškofije v Ljubljani (med letoma 1987 in 2000). Leta 1994 je bil izvoljen za asistenta pri Katedri za zgodovino Cerkev na Teološki fakulteti, leta 1997 za docenta, leta 2002 za izrednega in leta 2009 za rednega profesorja. V študijskem letu 2003-04 je bil gostujoči raziskovalec (visiting scholar) na Graduate Theological Union, Berkeley, California. Dva mandata (od 2004 do 2008) je bil dekan fakultete. - Bogdan Kolar (b. 1954), full professor of Church history, graduated at the Salesian Pontifical University in Rome (1980). He was a teacher at the Salesian High School at Želimlje and continued his studies of history and English at the University of Ljubljana (graduation in 1984). In 1988 he received his Master of Arts degree in Theology and in 1994 his Ph.D., with a specialization in Church history. From 1987 to 2000 he was in charge of the Archdiocesan Archives in Ljubljana and a member of various Church commissions. Since 1994 he has been a teacher at the University of Ljubljana, School of Theology (assistant teacher until 2002, associate professor 2002 and full professor since 2009). Between 2004 and 2008 he was Dean of the School of Theology at the University of Ljubljana.*



*Želimo vam vesele božične praznike in srečno novo leto 2015*



## CSHS Library at St. Gregory the Great

Jožica Vegelj

The Slovenian nation is known worldwide for the significant numbers of yearly publications of books. It is precisely this love of the written word that has helped to maintain and preserve the Slovenian culture. Following the establishment of the CSHS, we initially began collecting literary works and books written by Canadian Slovenians. However, we were soon inundated with many rich, vast private collections that were donated to the society. Soon the books numbered

in the thousands. Due to lack of space in our office at Dom Lipa, room was made available to us by Rev. D. Gačnik, pastor of St Gregory the Great in Hamilton. This space was then rearranged and furnished with proper library shelving bought by the CSHS. This can be seen in the photographs. Now begins the huge task of sorting, shelving and arranging the donated books. Soon it will be possible to borrow books from this comprehensive valuable collection .



Archivist Frank Majzelj, Mrs Majzelj and Mrs Vegelj working in our library at St. Gregory the Great Church in Hamilton



OUR STORY is published by:  
Canadian Slovenian Historical Society  
52 Neilson Drive,  
Toronto, ON M9C 1V7  
For more information contact:  
Frank Brence  
Telephone: 416-281-6794  
E-mail: [frankbrence@rogers.com](mailto:frankbrence@rogers.com)

### In this issue:

- A True Renaissance Man
- Hamiltonski Slovenci so praznovali
- CSHS Library at St. Gregory the Great