

IVAN RAFAEL RODIĆ – FRANCISCAN AND ARCHBISHOP OF BELGRADE

Daniel PATAFTA*

Friar Ivan Rafael Rodić was the first archbishop of Belgrade (1924-1936). Before obtaining his position as the archbishop, he performed a series of significant and demanding services within his province, but also on the wider level of the Church. He was also a professor of Biblical studies at the Study of Theology in Baja, a participant of the reform movement of the Franciscan Order in Croatia, the first custos of the newly founded Croatian Franciscan province of SS Cyril and Methodius, the office he held on two occasions. He was also guardian of the Franciscan convents in Zagreb, Varaždin and Trsat, provincial definator, and minister provincial during the period from 1912 to 1918. He rebuilt the churches in Zagreb, Ilok and Vienna, edited homiletic journal *Dušobrižnik* [Curator of souls], reorganized the Third Order of the Franciscans in Croatia and Bosnia and Hercegovina, and united them into the Alliance of the Third Order. He was the founder of the Society of St. Raphael and organised the pastoral care for Croatian immigrants in Canada and USA, where he was also the first church visitor. He was one of the leading members of the Croatian Catholic Movement. In 1923, he was appointed as the apostolic administrator of Banat, and the next year he became the first archbishop of Belgrade. As the archbishop, he organised the life of the Catholics within his archdiocese, founded new parishes and entrusted some of them to friars; encouraged the development of Catholic press and organisation of Catholic associations. He had successfully worked on the edification of ecclesiastical administration and pastoral life of his archdiocese. He resigned from his position after suffering a financial crash, due to the building of the Convict of Blessed Crisinus in Zagreb and unsuccessful organisation of the lottery aimed towards the fund-raising for building of the Belgrade cathedral. After the resignation, he resided in the Franciscan convents of Hrvatska Kostajnica and Požega, where he passed away in 1954.

* Daniel Patafta, Ph.D., Catholic Faculty of Theology of the University of Zagreb, Zagreb, Croatia

Keywords: Franciscans, apostolic administrator, archbishop of Belgrade, guardian, provincial, visitor, Crisineum, lottery, friars

1. Ivan Rafael Rodić – Franciscan

Ivan Rafael Rodić was born on June 15, 1870, in the village of Nurkovac, which is located in the parish of Brestovec near Požega, in the family of peasant origine, as a son of Fabijan and Ana, born Kožović. On the baptism, he received the name Ivan. He started his education in the elementary school in Brestovac, finished high school in Požega, where he resided in the Franciscan convent.¹ He entered the Franciscan Order in Vienna on September 14, 1886, when he received the name Rafael. He continued his education at Duna-Földvár in Hungary. He finished two semesters of Theology at the Franciscan study in Baja, and afterwards six semesters at the Faculty of Theology in Vienna. He took his solemn vows in Vienna on July 14, 1891, and he was ordained to priesthood in St. Stephen's Cathedral of Vienna on July 23, 1893, by the archbishop, cardinal A. J. Gruscha.² He finished his studies with excellence. It should also be emphasized that his professors at that time were eminent theologians, such as dr. Franz Schnidler (1847-1922), who was one of the creators of the program of Christian Social Party and the professor of moral Theology. It is also important to mention dr. Franz Hölzl (1848-1914), an exegete, who later held the position of the rector of the University of Graz.³ The First Holy Mass he celebrated in Vienna Franciscan Church on July 30, 1893, accompanied by his great-uncle, Ivo Rodić, Franciscan and visitor of the Province of St. John of Capistrano.⁴ Right before finishing his theological studies, he applied to take an exam to become a lector of theology with the right to teach theological studies, which he took in Budapest on August 9/10, 1893.⁵

After completing the exam, he started teaching biblical theology of the Old and New Testament at the Franciscan Studies in Baja. As a lecturer, he

¹ Cf. Arhiv franjevačkog samostana Požega (hencefurther: AFSP): Osobni fond nadbiskupa Rodića, b.[ox] 1; K. Suhodolski, "Apostolski administrator Rafael Rodić", *Katolički list*, 22 March 1923., p. 146; Franjo Pipinić, "Nadbiskup o. Rafael Rodić zlatomisnik", *Katolički list*, 22 July 1943, p. 319.

² Arhiv Hrvatske franjevačke provincije (hencefurther: AHFP), Osobnik [Personel], b. D-18; AFSP, Osobni fond nadbiskupa Rodića, b. 1.

³ Srećko Majstorović, *Ivan Rafael Rodić – prvi beogradski nadbiskup* (Slavonski Brod, 1971), pp. 11-12.

⁴ Cf. K. Suhodolski, Apostolski administrator Rafael Rodić, 146; S. Majstorović, *Ivan Rafael Rodić*, p. 12; Franjo Pipinić, "Nadbiskup o. Rafael Rodić zlatomisnik", p. 319.

⁵ AHFP, Osobnik, b. D-18; AFSP, Osobni fond nadbiskupa Rodića, b. 1.

demanded that students participate in class assignments and tried to maintain a high level of discipline.⁶ In the same time, while he was performing his professorial duties in Baja, another event occurred. It was the Reform of the Franciscan Order, which was implemented by the Pope Leo XIII on October 4, 1897. This Reform spread through all of the branches of the Franciscan Order promoting religious life, and this change especially affected the Franciscan Order in the Austro-Hungarian Monarchy, where there were still visible effects of *Josephinism*, which took a heavy toll on the Franciscan Order in the Empire, and particularly on their way of life. Rodić accepted the new reform with enthusiasm and in one of his letters from 1898 he mentions: *Otkako poznajem naš Red, nikada nisam odobravao način života koji se po našim stranama uvukao i uvriježio. Stoga sam radosno pozdravio vijest o reformi... Ja vas iskreno kao pravi vaš brat savjetujem, da bez ikakva krzmanja primite reformu* [Ever since I have known our Order, I never approved the way of life which became accustomed among us. That is why I joyfully greeted the news of the reformation... I, as your true brother, sincerely advise you to accept this reform without any hesitation].⁷ General Administration of the Order appointed him as an advisor to Martin Lutz, who was conducting the Franciscan restoration according to the guidelines of Pope Leo XIII in the Province of St. John Capistrano.⁸ General Commissariat was established in Vienna by the decree of the General Curia of the Franciscan Order, for those friars of the Province of St. John Capistrano who accepted the new constitutions. Rodić was elected as the head of the Vienna convent, and with this position he was also charged with the services of the Sunday preacher, librarian and chronicler. During his administration of the Vienna convent, few changes were made to the interior: three chapels in the church were painted and several rooms in the convent were rearranged. It should also be emphasized that while the minister general of the Order was visiting the Austrian convents in 1899, Rodić was a member of his entourage.⁹ During two years of his service in Vienna, Rodić managed to persuade a part of the Franciscans of his Province to implement the Reform, amongst which was also his great-uncle Ivo Rodić.¹⁰

Rodić, as a supporter of the Reform of Pope Leo XIII, in 1900 moved to the newly established Province of SS. Cyril and Methodius. Namely, the new

⁶ AHFP, Osobnik, b. D-18; Arhiv vicepostulature Vendelina Vošnjaka (henceforward: AVVV), Reliquiae littere p. Vendelini (A), no. 1.

⁷ AHFP, Osobnik, D-18, Pismo iz Baje [Letter from Baja], 19 April 1898.; AFSP, Osobni fond nadbiskupa Rodića, b. 1.

⁸ Cf. Emanuel Hoško, *Trsatski franjevci* (Rijeka, 2004), p. 266.

⁹ Cf. Srećko Majstorović, *Ivan Rafael Rodić-prvi beogradski nadbiskup*, p. 13.

¹⁰ Cf. K. Suhodolski, "Apostolski administrator Rafael Rodić", p. 146.

distribution of Franciscan Provinces was carried out according to the national borders that same year in Austro-Hungarian Empire, and new Croatian Franciscan Province of SS Cyril and Methodius with the center in Zagreb was founded from the convents, which were located in the area under the rule of Croatian ban. The General Administration of the Order appointed Rafael Rodić as a member of the administration of the new Province, and he was appointed as the custos.¹¹ The same year he was also elected as the guardian of the convent in Zagreb.¹² As the guardian of Zagreb he rebuilt the convent church of St. Francis, which was heavily damaged due to the catastrophic earthquake in 1880. During the renovation, he collected the money for the restoration and interior decoration of the church in Croatia and beyond. The experience he gained as the guardian of Vienna, where he also conducted the rebuilding of the convent church, helped him to gain confidence to take on a renovation of the church of the convent in Zagreb. For the renovation he hired distinguished artists, amongst which the main architect was Herman Bolle. The ceremonial dedication of the church was on May 5, 1902. The church and the main altar were consecrated by archbishop Posilović of Zagreb, and the side altars were consecrated by the bishops Mahnić, Maurović and Voršak. The following day, minister provincial Vendelin Vošnjak performed blessing of the new pipe organs.¹³ Rodić, as a guardian in Zagreb, introduced regular sermons and new devotions to the restored church of St. Francis.¹⁴

The First Croatian Catholic Meeting/Congress was held in Zagreb on September 2-5, which was in the time of Rodić's election for the guardian of the Franciscan convent in Zagreb. The task of this meeting was to create the foundations for the Catholic Movement in the Croatian countries. Rodić helped with the organisation of the meeting and on the very first session he was elected as one of the four secretaries of the meeting.¹⁵

In 1903, when the convent in Varaždin was being reformed on the Provincial Chapter, Rodić was entrusted with the office of the guardian, with the task of implementing reformation of the said convent.¹⁶ After completing this task, he takes on a challenging, but for Croatian Province very important, activity and in 1904 he founded the institute for Franciscan youth (seminary) called

¹¹ Franjo Pipinić, "Nadbiskup o. Rafael Rodić zlatomisnik", p. 319; AFSP, Osobni fond nadbiskupa Rodića, b. 3.

¹² AHFP, Osobnik, D-18

¹³ Arhiv franjevačkog samostana Zagreb (henceforward: AFSZ), Kronika, p. 312.

¹⁴ Cf. Mladen Barbarić, *Kratka povijest crkve i samostana* (Zagreb, 1906), p. 32.

¹⁵ Cf. Franjo Pipinić, "Nadbiskup o. Rafael Rodić zlatomisnik", p. 319; Jure Krišto, *Hrvatski katolički pokret* (Zagreb, 2004), p. 95.

¹⁶ AHFP, Osobnik, D-18

Collegium seraphicum. The institute accepted young boys from poor families from all over the Province, many of which later joined the Franciscan Order. Rodić remained in Varaždin for six years, first three as the guardian, and afterwards as the master and lector of the seminarists. During all this time, he performed the service of the confessor of the Ursulines Sisters.¹⁷ He also became the main editor of the homiletic journal *Dušobrižnik* [Curator of souls] during his stay in Varaždin, and he stayed in this office from 1906 to 1909.¹⁸ Around this journal, Rodić gathered a large group of associates from the ranks of both diocesan and regular clergy. Apart from the *Dušobrižnik*, in 1906 he also edited the newsletter of the Third Order of Saint Francis called *Ružičnjak sv. Franje* [The Rose Garden of Saint Francis].¹⁹ Among other things, he was also a lecturer on the local studies university (*Studium philosophicum*), and the subjects he taught were rhetoric, history and German language.²⁰ Not long after that, Rodić assumed the responsibility of renovating the church of St. John Capistrano in Ilok, and for this purpose he collected donations all around the Monarchy. To complete this mission, he travelled all over Croatia, Austria and Hungary, and he was even received by the Emperor Francis Joseph himself on January 29, 1906 in Vienna, and for the purpose of rebuilding the minister of Worship, Count Appony, donated the sum of 10.000 crowns.²¹ Franciscan Mladen Barabarić, the writer of the book *Povijest crkve Iločke* [The History of the Church in Ilok], dedicated this work to Friar Rafael Rodić *as to an extraordinary friend of church architecture, and for his great merits for the renovation of the church in Ilok*.²² Shortly before the solemn consecration

¹⁷ Franjo Pipinić, "Nadbiskup o. Rafael Rodić zlatomisnik", p. 319; AFSP, Osobni fond nadbiskupa Rodića, b. 3.

¹⁸ Cf. The journal *Dušobrižnik* [Curator of souls] was the homiletic journal which was first published in Trsat in 1896. by Franciscan Josip Ivančić. The journal was published until 1919, and Rodić himself published a number of homilies there, especially as the editor of the journal. See: Rafael Rodić, "Propovijed na staru godinu", *Dušobrižnik*, 12 (1907) 2: 624-627; Rafael Rodić, "Kanonizacija sv. Angjele i njezin sveti život", *Dušobrižnik*, 12 (1907) 2: 633-640; Rafael Rodić, "Propovijed na Svijećnicu", *Dušobrižnik*, 13 (1908), 2: 49-53; Rafael Rodić, "Na rođendan sv. Ivana Krstitelja", *Dušobrižnik*, 13 (1908), 6: 264-268; Rafael Rodić, "Na Uskrs", *Dušobrižnik*, 14 (1909): 107-112; Rafael Rodić, "Propovijed prigodom blagoslova kipa Majke Božje Lurdske", *Dušobrižnik*, 14 (1909): 54-59; Rafael Rodić, "Propovijed na svetkovinu presv. Srca Isusova", *Dušobrižnik*, 14 (1909): 174-178; Rafo Rodić, "Devetnaesta nedjelja po Duhovima", *Dušobrižnik*, 15 (1910): 254-258; Rafo Rodić, "Dvadesetčetvrti nedjelja po Duhovima", *Dušobrižnik*, 15 (1910): 333-338; Rafo Rodić, "Bezgrešno začće", *Dušobrižnik*, 15 (1910): 364-367.

¹⁹ "Preuzvišenom gospodinu o. Rafaelu Rodiću u spomen", *Vjesnik Hrvatske franjevačke provincije sv. Ćirila i Metoda*, 7 (1954), 4: 62.

²⁰ Srećko Majstorović, *Ivan Rafael Rodić-prvi beogradski nadbiskup*, p. 16.

²¹ "Novčani prilog za iločku crkvu", *Ružičnjak sv. Franje*, (1906): 48.

²² Cf. Mladen Barabarić, *Povijest crkve Iločke* (Osijek, 1918), p. 3.

of the Ilok church, the bishop of Đakovo, Msgr. Antun Akšamović, appointed Rodić an assessor of the Archdiocesan Curia.²³

In 1909 he was re-elected as a definator of the Diocesan Province, and the very same year, he again became the head of the Zagreb convent, as a guardian,²⁴ where he displayed particular care of the Third Order of the Franciscans. In September of 1910, he traveled to Innsbruck to participate in the congress of the Third Order of the Franciscans of Austria, and he transferred the impressions and practices, which he got and learned there, to Zagreb. He divided the whole area of Zagreb in fourteen districts of the Third Order, and at the head of those districts he placed commissioners whose duty was to take care of members living within their districts. Besides regular meetings in the Church, he introduced irregular ones, which took place outside the Church.²⁵ He published in a large circulation a number of popular booklets about the Third Order. He also organised the pilgrimage of the members of the Third Order to the Worldwide Eucharistic Congress in Vienna, which took place in April from 13th to 15th, 1912, and he personally participated in this work. There, connections became evident, which Rodić had with Austrian and Hungarian convents in the Empire, which were once a part of the Province of the St. John Capistrano.²⁶ He sent two circular letters with the purpose of convoking Meeting of the Croatian Administrators of the Third Order. In the second circular letter he revised the situation of the Third Order in Croatian lands, encouraging the expansion of the Third Order all across the country, and giving instructions based on experience and literature. So, among other things, he stated: *Već je posljednji čas da se Treći red probudi iz svoga mrtvila i da svi upravitelji dođu na sastanak u bijeli Zagreb* [It is already the final hour for the Third Order to awake from its letargy and for the administrators to come to a meeting in the white city of Zagreb].²⁷ The person who delivered the introductory speech on the *First Meeting of the Croatian Administrators of the Third Order* was none other than Rafael Rodić, who did it as the provincial and the host of the meeting. In this introductory speech, he referred to the significance of the *Meeting* for renovation and expansion of the Third Order in Croatian lands, and especially emphasized how *po svjedočanstvu tijare III. red najzgodnije sredstvo, da se obnovi svijet. Ne samo to, nego i u materijalnom pogledu koristimo i narodu i sebi radeći za III. red. Nadam se, kad vidim na*

²³ AHFP, Osobnik, D-18.

²⁴ AHFP, Osobnik, D-18.

²⁵ AVVV, Pismo o. Rafela Rodića.

²⁶ AVVV, Pismo o. Rafela Rodića.

²⁷ Cf. Rafael Rodić, "I. Sastanak hrv. upravitelja III. Reda", *Izvjješće I. sastanka hrv. upravitelja Trećeg reda* (Zagreb, 1913), p. 5.

okupu toliku braću, da će se misao III. reda rasprest i raširiti [the Third Order is the most suitable tool for renewal of the world, by the testimony of the tiara. However, by working for the Third Order, we contribute both to the people and ourselves in spiritual, but also in the material sense. I hope, when I see many brothers together, that the idea of the Third Order will spread all over and expand].²⁸

On the Provincial Chapter, which was held on July 25, 1912, Rodić was elected as the minister provincial of the Croatian Franciscan Province of SS. Cyril and Methodius, the Province which he also co-founded.²⁹ His agency during the WW1 can best be seen from the *Knjige pohoda* [Books of Visitations], which he introduced and in which is recorded that he demanded from his friars to live piously and perform their religious duties.³⁰ As the cardinal rule for the upbringing, he emphasized presenting of good examples from older brothers to younger ones.³¹ To the priests of certain convents, Rodić emphasized the need to make a positive impression on the younger friars and lay brothers by their own good example and showing zeal for their priestly calling.³² On the session of a provincial definitory *Provinciae* in 1913 there was agreed that the *Marijine misne zadruga* [Mary's Mass Associations] should be founded all over the Province, and that their central seat should be in Varaždin.³³ The same year he participated in the session of Croatian Franciscan Provincials in Živogošće, where the *Pravilnik saveza Trećeg reda* [Rule Book of the Association of the Third Order] – for which he was the main initiator, and the *Pravilnik za franjevačke misije* [Rule Book for Franciscan Missions] were decreed. In this meeting the *Pravila franjevačkog književnog društva* [Rules of the Franciscan Literature Society] – whose journal was the magazine *Serafski perivoj* [Seraphic garden], and the *Pravila društva sv. Rafaela za iseljenike* [Rules of the Society of St. Raphael for immigrants], which were both founded by Rodić, with a recommendation of Archbishop Bauer, and with the centre in the Franciscan convent of Zagreb, were discussed.³⁴ Rodić sent Croatian missionaries to USA, but also one popular missionary in Germany, with a purpose to perform missions to Croatian and Slovenian immigrants.³⁵

²⁸ Rafael Rodić, "I. Sastanak hrv. upravitelja III. Reda", p. 7.

²⁹ AHFP, Osobnik, D-18.

³⁰ AHFP, Liber visitationis 1913-1924.

³¹ AHFP, Liber visitationis 1913-1924, p. 6.

³² AHFP, Liber visitationis 1913-1924, p. 9.

³³ AHFP, Zapisnik zasjedanja defnitorija iz 1913; AFSP, Osobni fond nadbiskupa Rodića, b. 2.

³⁴ AFSP, Osobni fond nadbiskupa Rodića, b. 3; Srećko Majstorović, *Ivan Rafael Rodić-prvi beogradski nadbiskup*, p. 19.

³⁵ AHFP, Zapisnik zasjedanja defnitorija iz 1913.

In 1913, according to the recommendation of archbishop Bauer, Rodić was sent to USA as visitor, to assess there for seven years the state of religious life of Croatian immigrants, and to create a detailed plan for organising the Croatian Catholic Missions in the USA, with a special emphasis on the foundation of schools in Croatian language. Because of that, he immediately sent several seminarists to finish their education there, and a larger number of priests.³⁶ Upon his return, Rodić presented the results of his journey in an extensive article, which was published in *Danica*.³⁷ The lecture which Rodić held about the Croatian immigrants after his return was published by the *Društvo sv. Rafaela* [Society of St. Raphael] as a special brochure.³⁸

The WWI significantly marked his provincial minister mandate. Thus in 1915, 24 priests from the Province and over 50 lay brothers and tertiaries were called onto military service, as chaplains. Military authorities occupied the convents in Našice, Brod na Savi and Samobor, mainly for the needs of military hospitals.³⁹ When the Zagreb Theological seminary was used for military purposes, Rodić accepted a part of the seminarists in the Zagreb convent.⁴⁰ In the period from 1915 to 1918, a large number of Hungarian schools were opened in the area of Croatia and Slavonia, with an apparent goal to denationalize Croats, so that is why Rodić sent Croatian Franciscans as catechists to these schools, to prevent *Magyarization*.⁴¹ On request of the great archbishop of Lviv, Andrey Sheptytsky, he started to form a group of priests for missionary work in Ukraine and Russia.⁴² In 1917 he established the *Misijsko društvo sv. Franje Solana* [Missionary Society of Saint Francis Solano].⁴³ He also founded the *Vojska svetog križa* [Army of St. Cross], to collect alms for the Holy Land and to promote strongly Portiuncula indulgence, as well as the society of *Marijina misna zadruga* [Mary's Mass Associations].⁴⁴ At the intervention of the Vienna nunciature, he accommodated a large number of Italian

³⁶ Franjo Pipinić, "Nadbiskup o. Rafael Rodić zlatomisnik", p. 320; AFSP, Osobni fond nadbiskupa Rodića, b. 3.

³⁷ Rafael Rodić, "Moj put po Americi", *Danica* (1915): 264-268.

³⁸ Rafael Rodić, *Moj put po Americi* (Zagreb, 1914); AFSP, Osobni fond nadbiskupa Rodića, b. 2.

³⁹ AHFP, Zapisnik zasjedanja definitorijske komisije iz 1915.

⁴⁰ Franjo Pipinić, "Nadbiskup o. Rafael Rodić zlatomisnik", p. 319; AFSP, Osobni fond nadbiskupa Rodića, b. 3.

⁴¹ AHFP, Zapisnik zasjedanja definitorijske komisije iz 1916.

⁴² AHFP, Zapisnik zasjedanja definitorijske komisije iz 1916.

⁴³ "Društvo sv. Franje Solana", *Glasnik sv. Franje* (1917): 63, 80; "Preuzvišenom gospodinu o. Rafaelu Rodiću u spomen", p. 62.

⁴⁴ "Preuzvišenom gospodinu o. Rafaelu Rodiću u spomen", p. 62.

prisoners, priests, clerics and lay brothers in convents.⁴⁵ His administration suffered difficulties due to the fact that a substantial number of friars did not accept the Reform of Pope Leo XIII. As a minister provincial, he fulfilled a promise he gave to Bishop Strossmayer on the Catholic Congress in Ljubljana, that he will encourage Croatian priests to direct their activities towards popular missions. During his stay in office, the number of priests and lay brothers in the Province significantly increased.⁴⁶

Since he was highly educated and spoke many foreign languages, he was often appointed as visitator in various Franciscan Provinces. Thus in 1909, he was a visitator of the Province of St. Mary in Hungary, in 1911 of the Province in Tirol, in 1912 again in Hungary, and in 1913, he inspected the Commissariat of the Croatian and Slovenian Franciscans in the USA, and also the Polish Province of Sacred Heart of Jesus, also situated in the USA, and in 1918 he was visitator of the two Franciscan Provinces in the desolated Galicia.⁴⁷

Rodić was the guardian of the Trsat convent and the caretaker of the Sanctuary Blessed Virgin of Trsat, which was entrusted to him after finishing his service as the minister provincial in 1918, and this was the last service he performed within the Order.⁴⁸ From this brief survey of offices that Rodić performed, it is important to mention that this last when he was the guardian of Trsat, may seem to be of lesser significance, in comparison to previous ones, if it would not occur in a specific historical period for Rijeka and Sušak of that time, that is in the time of the fall of the Austro-Hungarian Monarchy, Italian occupation, D'Annunzio's adventures, and finally annexation of Sušak to Croatia, i.e. to the Kingdom of Serbs, Croats and Slovenes. Rodić assumed his position as the guardian of Trsat on June 25, 1918, three months before the end of the WW1 and the disappearance of the old Monarchy, in a very uncertain and crucial time for the city on Rječina.

The attempt on establishing the authority of the National Council of Slovenes, Croats and Serbs from Zagreb in Rijeka – Sušak was blocked by the military occupation of the city by the allies. American and Italian troops arrived on Trstat from Rijeka on the November 7, 1918. According to the chronicler of the convent, Italian soldiers occupied *Čitaonica* [The Reading Room], and hung Italian flags on it, and also on the castle.⁴⁹ New group of Italians

⁴⁵ AHFP, Zapisnik zasjedanja definitorija iz 1918.

⁴⁶ "Preuzvišenom gospodinu o. Rafaelu Rodiću u spomen", p. 62.

⁴⁷ AHFP, Osobnik, D-18; K. Suhodolski, Apostolski administrator Rafael Rodić, p. 146.

⁴⁸ AHFP, Osobnik, D-18.

⁴⁹ Arhiv franjevačkog samostana Trsat (henceforward: AFST), Samostanska kronika 1921.-1957., p. 14.

arrived in the early December, and two of their officers took up residence in the convent. The primary school functioned within the convent for several months, because the Italians occupied the school building.⁵⁰

Real problems occurred with the arrival of Italian poet, adventurer and fierce nationalist Gabriele D'Annunzio in Rijeka at the beginning of September 1919. As a zealous supporter of the annexation of Rijeka and its vicinity to Italy, and as an ideological predecessor of Italian fascism, D'Annunzio introduced a reign of terror in Rijeka, with the help of his *Arditi*, troops of deserters from the Italian army, which consisted of nationalists, poets, philosophers and various criminals. Immediately after the arrival, the terror on the Rijeka Croats began, and the Zagreb journal *Obzor* [The Horizon] records that *na Rijeci zatvoreno oko 400 osoba, a na Sušaku 130* [in Rijeka about 400 people were incarcerated, and in Sušak about 130].⁵¹ According to the notes of the chronicler from the convent, the *arditi* those days invaded the convent: *jedni su poplavili samostansko dvorište, a drugi počeli premetačinom samostana. Jedan oficir je motivirao napad na samostan rekavši da je poslan po višoj zapovijedi da obavi premetačinu, jer su čuli da u samostanu ima sva sila oružja i municije. Dok je taj još bio kod o. gvardijana vojnici su već pretresli sav donji dio ... Kad su braća otišla na molitvu, nastavili su rigoroznu premetačinu. U knjižnici je jedan od vojnika postavio pakleni stroj i na njem držao ruku za cijelo vrijeme premetačine. Jedan od otaca snažno je protestirao, što su nestale mnoge samostanske stvari, koje su se kasnije našle u džepovima vojnika* [some flooded the courtyards, others started the search of the convent. One officer explained the motives of the attack on the convent by saying that he was sent by higher authority to perform a search, because they heard that there is a large amount of weapons and ammunition in the convent. While he was still with the father guardian, the soldiers searched the whole lower part of the convent ... When the friars left for a prayer, the soldiers continued their meticulous search. One of the soldiers set up the explosive device in the library, and held his hand on it during the entire search. One of the fathers strongly protested, because many of the convent items were missing after the search, and they were later found in the pockets of the soldiers].⁵² Trsat and Sušak, as ethnically clean Croatian settlements, were not spared of the violence of D'Annunzio's *Arditi* and the members of the Italian regular troops, which were still garrisoned in Rijeka and on Sušak. All this time, there was a real danger that the Trsat Franciscans will be taken to Italy, as it was the case with the parish priest of Trsat, Andrija Rački, Croatian historian and patriot, who was, in the mid-May 1920, taken

⁵⁰ AFST, Samostanska kronika 1921.-1957, p. 19.

⁵¹ "Divljanja ardita", *Obzor*, 16 September 1919, p. 2.

⁵² AFST, Samostanska kronika 1921.-1957, p. 27.

to the Sušak prison, and afterwards to Trieste, where he stayed until July 1921. During that time, Rafael Rodić was performing a service of the Trsat parish priest. The bishop of Senj, Josip Marušić, in his letter of October 15, 1922, to guardian Rodić, referred to his service as parish priest during that period and wrote the next lines: ... *Ordinarijat je povjerio službu privremenog upravitelja trsatskom župom Tvom velečasnom gospodstvu, koji si kroz 6 godina tako slavno vršio službu provincijala Provincije sv. Ćirila i Metoda. Prilike onoga vremena u trsatskoj župi imperativno su iziskivale od Ordinarijata da spomenutoj župi da takva svećenika, koji može i zna braniti prava Crkve, plodonosno širiti slavu Božju i spas duša* [... the ordinariate has entrusted the service of a temporary administrator of the parish of Trsat to your Reverend Lordship, who gloriously performed the service of the minister provincial of the Province of SS Cyril and Methodius for six years. The circumstances of that time in the Trsat parish imperatively demanded that the ordinariate assign to the parish such a priest, who can and knows how to defend the Church rights, and to fruitfully spread the glory of God and the salvation of the souls].⁵³ The Italian occupation of Sušak and Trsat lasted until 1923, and through all this time Rodić performed the service of the guardian and caretaker of the sanctuary. This extremely difficult and fateful time for Sušak and Rijeka was marked not only by the Italian occupation and violence of D'Annunzio's Ariditi, but also by the appearance of the so-called *yellow movement*, i.e. the Old Catholic Movement. In this period, precisely on February 7, 1919, Rodić was also appointed as the general visitator of the Province of Bosna Srebrena.⁵⁴

During the time when Rodić was the guardian of Trsat, in Rijeka a pamphlet of the supporters of the so-called *Yellow Movement* appeared, with the title: *Načela za uređenje i reformu života u našim samostanima* [The Principles for Regulation and Reform of Life in Our Convents]. Movement was especially active in the Capuchin convent of Rijeka, where the reformists demanded that Rodić would perform spiritual exercises to the community of the convent according to these Principles, which he openly refused.⁵⁵

The situation in the Trsat convent during the administration of Rafael Rodić, can be discerned from the records of two visitators. The provincial Mihael Troha, after finishing visitation of the convent, wrote on May 4, 1919: *Za me je najveća utjeha što vidim da braća žive u miru i međusobnoj ljubavi i da služe Bogu u izvršavanju redovničkih propisa* [For me, the biggest comfort is to see brothers living in peace and mutual love, and serving God by execu-

⁵³ AFST, Samostanska kronika 1921.-1957, p. 29.

⁵⁴ AHFP, Osobnik, D-18; AFSP, Osobni fond nadbiskupa Rodića, b. 1.

⁵⁵ AFST, Samostanska kronika 1921.-1957, p. 30.

tion of religious regulatory of the Order].⁵⁶ The general visitor friar Augustin Junčić wrote on August 3, 1921: *Sve se obdržava što spada na poglavara: konferencije, kapituli za priznavanje pogrešaka, diskretorijske sjednice* [All is hold which depends on the guardian; conferences, chapters for confessing mistakes, discreditorial sessions].⁵⁷

It is definitely an indisputable fact that Rafael Rodić was an exceptional person of his time. The man with versatile spirit and great energy, who managed to initiate so many things through his presence in the newly founded Croatian Franciscan Province of SS. Cyril and Methodius for approximately twenty years, not only on the level of the Province, but also on the level of the Church in Croatia. It is highly probable that all this influenced him being appointed as the apostolic administrator of Banat in 1923. This service marked the new chapter of the life of father Rafael Rodić.

2. Ivan Rafael Rodić – the first Archbishop of Belgrade

2.1. Apostolic administrator of Banat

According to Milinović, the Archbishop of Bar, the name of Rafael Rodić was frequently mentioned when there was a need to fill the position in the hierarchy of the Church, and that was before he was named the apostolic administrator of Banat.⁵⁸ On February 10, 1923, Rodić was appointed as the apostolic administrator of Banat.⁵⁹ In the accompanying letter to the appointment, Msgr. Hermenegildo Pellegrinetti, Apostolic nuncio, says: *Iako te osobno još ne poznajem već si mi osobito drag, jer sam saznao za Tvoje vrline. Tvoju odanost Božjoj Crkvi, za Tvoju okretnost i razboritost u upravljanju koja pristaje pastiru duša* [Although I personally have not met you yet, I am already fond of you, because I have heard about Your virtues, Your devotion to the Church of God, Your agility and prudence in management, which is fit for the shepherd of souls].⁶⁰ While Rodić was leaving to take on his new service, father Vendelin Vošnjak, the new guardian of Trsat, delivered an address speech, and at the 25th anniversary of the new Province, he pointed out that father Rodić

⁵⁶ AFST, Samostanska kronika 1921 - 1957, p. 32.

⁵⁷ AFST, Samostanska kronika 1921 - 1957, p. 35.

⁵⁸ Cf. Srećko Majstorović, *Ivan Rafael Rodić-prvi beogradski nadbiskup*, p. 33; AFSP, Osobni fond nadbiskupa Rodića, b. 1.

⁵⁹ AHFP, Osobnik, D-18.

⁶⁰ Cf. Srećko Majstorović, *Ivan Rafael Rodić-prvi beogradski nadbiskup*, pp. 33-34.

can rightfully consider the glory of the Province as his own glory.⁶¹ Even the press reported the departure of Rodić to his new service. K. Suhodolski in the *Katolički list* [Catholic Journal] wrote the following: *marnom kulturnom radniku, vještom uzgojitelju i propovjedniku, vrijednom rodoljubu, pravom i skromnom sinu sv. Franje, visokom crkvenom dostojanstveniku, kojemu po službi i položaju pripadaju biskupska prava-u nadi da će od sv. rimske stolice biti naskoro urešen i biskupskim dostojanstvom-molimo od Svevišnjega obilje milosti u teškoj zadaći i uzvišenoj službi, koja mu je povjerena* [to the diligent cultural worker, skillful educator and preacher, patriot, true and humble son of Saint Francis, high ecclesiastical dignitary, to whom by service and position belong episcopal rights in the hope that the Holy Roman See will soon bestow on him the episcopal dignity, we ask the Almighty for the abundance of grace for this difficult task and exalted service, with which he is entrusted (...)].⁶² After his appointment, Rodić wrote to the general Minister of the Order: *Čvrsto sam odlučio da i u novom položaju ostanem franjevac i da svom dragom Redu koristim koliko to samo mogu* [I firmly decided that I will remain a Franciscan also in this new position and that I will be useful to my beloved Order as much as I can].⁶³

The Apostolic administration of Banat was a part of the Diocese of Csanád, which was founded in the eleventh century by Saint King Stephen. The Diocese is located between rivers Tisza and Danube, and after the First World War, by the Treaty of Trianon, the territory fell to the newly established Kingdom of Serbs, Croats and Slovenes. Until the Apostolic Administration was established, it was under the administration of the vicar of the bishop of Csanád, with the center in Veliki Bečkerek (present-day Zrenjanin). In 1927, the Apostolic Administration had 64 parishes with 202.000 believers, which were mostly Germans, followed by Hungarians, Croats and Romanians.⁶⁴ In the beginning of 1923, Janko Šimrak wrote about the situation concerning the Church in Bačka, Banat and Baranja in the *Katolički list* [Catholic Journal], and he says that this situation should be, *barem privremeno urediti sa imenovanjem apostolskih administratora. Sa strane katoličkog episkopata, koliko je nama poznato, učinjeni su u tom pogledu prijedlozi. Što se stvar zategla sve do danas na štetu ne samo crkvenih nego i državnih interesa, krivnja je na našim nesređenim stranačkim prilikama. Beogradski politički krugovi traže da se osnuju za pomenute pokrajine katoličke biskupije. Jedna bi imala sjedište u Subotici, druga u Novome Sadu, a treća u Vel. Bečkereku, a 4. u Vršcu. Ovakvo*

⁶¹ AFST, Samostanska kronika 1921.-1957, p. 38.

⁶² Cf. K. Suhodolski, "Apostolski administrator Rafael Rodić", p. 146.

⁶³ AVVV, Reliquiae litt. P. Vendelini (N), no. 20.

⁶⁴ *Šematizam apostolske administrature u Banatu* (Belgrade, 1937.)

rješenje formira srp. najjača politička stranka u onim krajevima. Sa stanovišta dobre pastve nije loše da su biskupije manje, ali ovdje nije to razlogom cijepanju, nego nešto posve drugo, što nije teško otkriti. Državna će vlast-barem ona tako misli-imati veći utjecaj na katoličke crkvene prilike u onim krajevima, što će biti više biskupa. Među četvoricom će vazda naći po jednoga pristašu, a moći će kod imenovanja da stavlja uslove drugome faktoru [at least temporary regulated by the appointing of the Apostolic Administrator. To our knowledge, from the side of Catholic Episcopate, suggestions in such direction have been made. For the delay of the matter until today, which harmed not only interests of the Church, but also of the state, our unstable political affairs are to be blamed. The political circles in Beograd request the establishment of Catholic Dioceses for the aforementioned provinces. The first province should have the center in Subotica, the second in Novi Sad, the third in Veliki Bečkerek, and the fourth in Vršac. Such proposal for the solution is formed by the most powerful Serbian party in this area. From the good congregation's point of view, it would not be bad that the dioceses there would be smaller, but here this is not the real reason for the fragmentation, but something else, which won't be hard to discover. The State Administration thinks that they will have bigger influence on the Church affairs in these regions, if there are more bishops. They consider, one out of four will always be their supporter, while during the appointment they might put conditions to others].⁶⁵ This indicates that the appointment of the apostolic administrator was not only religious, but also political question, especially if we consider the ruler's right to participate in the election of each particular bishop.

The new apostolic administrator was ceremoniously installed on April 15, 1923, in the parish church of Veliki Bečkerek. During this solemn act there were present Msgr. Josip Garić, the Bishop of Banja Luka, Boneventura Diamant, Abbot of the Trappist abbey of Marija Zvijezda, and Father Mihael Troha, Croatian Franciscan provincial.⁶⁶

Together with his secretary, Father Justin Čmelar, settled initially in the parish house of Veliki Bečkerek, but later moved to the convent of the Piarists. The minister general of the Order, with the permission of the Congregation for regular clergy, allowed that, besides the secretary, in the residence might also temporary live two lay brothers, in order to manage the household.⁶⁷

The whole Administration had 80 priests. Almost very parish was multilingual. The administrator himself had no house, nor benefits, nor educa-

⁶⁵ Cf. Janko Šimrak, "Katolička Crkva i Prijedlog budžeta rashoda Ministarstva Vjera kraljevine Srba, Hrvata i Slovenaca za g. 1923./24.", *Katolički list*, 11 January 1923, p. 16.

⁶⁶ "Instalacija apostolskog administrator", *Katolički list*, 3 May 1923, p. 216.

⁶⁷ AHFP, *Indulta varia*.

tional institutions for clerical youth. Because of the Agrarian reform in the new state, the clergy in the area of the administration was impoverished. The *Katolički list* [Catholic Journal] already warned on the difficult financial situation of priests in Bačka, Banat and Baranja.⁶⁸ Rodić immediately filled all the offices, as it was decreed by the canon law. In the first year of his service, he immediately performed the canonical visitation and administered confirmation in 25 parishes.⁶⁹ The *Službeni vjesnik* [Official Journal] of the Administration wrote how Rodić was received in parishes: *U svim tim zgodama apostolski administrator vrlo je ljubezno kao pravi otac govorio s mladeži i odraslima. Bodrio ih je da ustraju u svome radu i dadu lijep primjer budućim pokoljenjima. A oni-razdragani-ljubili su mu desnicu, molili za blagoslov, preporučivali mu molitve svoje potrebe i sa suzom u oku od njega se opraštali* [On all these occasions, the Apostolic Administrator spoke to the youth and adults very friendly, like a true father. He encouraged them to persist in their work and to set a good example for future generations. And they, overjoyed, kissed his right hand, prayed for a blessing, recommended in his prayers their needs and, with tears in their eyes, said farewell to him].⁷⁰ Rodić preached in three languages – Croatian, Hungarian and German. His decrees show how he determined that the spiritual exercises for priests should be held; he recommended the foundation of the Society of Pius X, and decreed the standards for accepting candidates to the seminary. He devoted particular attention to the Orphanotrofium, the old diocesan institution in Veliki Bečkerek. He also ordered the organisation of Catholic parochial missions and issued regulations about church music.⁷¹

His appointment as the first Archbishop of Belgrade on October 6, 1924, was immediately noted by all Serbian and Hungarian newspapers, and one day later also by German newspapers. Croatian press was not far behind them. During the appointment, Nuncio Pellegrinetti pointed out that it is a desire of the Holy Father that Rodić, as the Archbishop of Belgrade, would still continue to govern the Administration of Banat.⁷² In 1936/37, after he resigned this position, the Administration had 23 students of theology and 18 seminarians.⁷³ In the *Katolički list* [Catholic Journal], M. Rihtarić, referring to

⁶⁸ Cf. Janko Šimrak, “Katolička Crkva i Prijedlog budžeta rashoda Ministarstva Vjera kraljevine Srba, Hrvata i Slovenaca za g. 1923./24.”, p. 16; “Instalacija apostolskog administratora”, p. 217.

⁶⁹ Cf. Srećko Majstorović, *Ivan Rafael Rodić-prvi beogradski nadbiskup*, pp. 36-37.

⁷⁰ “Pohod administratora Rodića”, *Službeni vjesnik*, 18 April 1923, p. 1.

⁷¹ Cf. “Pohod administratora Rodića”, *Službeni vjesnik*, 18 April 1923, pp. 1-8.

⁷² Cf. Matija Rihtarić, “Imenovanje apoštolskoga administratora banatskog O. Rafe Rodića, nadbiskupom beogradskim”, *Katolički list*, 23 October 1924, p. 533.

⁷³ Cf. *Šematizam apostolske administrature u Banatu*.

this appointment, wrote: *Mnogi će prijatelji biti zahvalni Svetoj Stolici na ovom imenovanju. O. Rafo je čovjek jake volje, žilave naravi, a željezne ustrajnosti* [Many friends will be grateful to the Holy See on this appointment. Father Rafo is a man of strong willpower, with resilient nature and iron perseverance].⁷⁴

2.2. The Archbishop of Belgrade and Smederevo

The foundation of the Archdiocese of Belgrade was planned by the concordat, which the Holy See concluded with the Kingdom of Serbia in 1914. Concordat was signed in Rome on 24 June 1914, and was unanimously ratified by the Serbian National Assembly in Niš on August 8 of the same year.⁷⁵ Since the WW1 obstructed the foundation of the new Archdiocese, it had to be finalized after the war, and the Archdiocese was founded in 1924. Ivan Rafael Rodić was appointed as the first Archbishop. He received his episcopal consecration on December 7, 1924, in, at that time, the only Catholic Church in Belgrade, and apostolic nuncio, Monsignor Pellegrinetti was the principal consecrator. The act of consecration was attended by three bishops, large number of provincials and public figures of the Kingdom of Serbs, Croats and Slovenes.⁷⁶

The foundation of the new Archdiocese occurred due to a personal influence of the nuncio, Msgr. Pellegrinetti, but the issue of establishing the new ecclesiastical province should have been regulated by the new concordat.⁷⁷ According to statistics, published in the *Katolički list* [Catholic Journal] by the parish priest of Belgrade, Msgr. Vjekoslav Wagner in 1923, in that time on Serbian territory there were only two Catholic Churches, which were located in Belgrade and Niš. Belgrade Church was built in 1888 by Austro-Hungarian Embassy for its own needs, but it soon became too small for the needs of the Belgrade Catholics, whose number that year already reached ca. 12.000. The Church in Niš was smaller than the one in Belgrade, but the municipality in Niš already gave land to the parish to build the new Church. In Belgrade

⁷⁴ Cf. Matija Rihtarić, "Imenovanje apoštolskoga administratora banatskog O. Rafe Rodića, nadbiskupom beogradskim", p. 533.

⁷⁵ Cf. Franjo Emanuel Hoško, "Trsatski franjevac Ivan Rafael Rodić-prvi beogradski nadbiskup", *Riječki teološki časopis*, 15 (2007), no. 1: 182; "Prošlost nadbiskupije Beogradsko-smederevske", *Blagovest*, 44 (1975), 12: 211.

⁷⁶ Cf. Matija Rihtarić, "Konsakracija nadbiskupa Beogradskoga", *Katolički list*, 18 December 1924, p. 645.

⁷⁷ Cf. Prošlost nadbiskupije Beogradsko-smederevske, p. 211.

there were also two private chapels, one in the Apostolic Nunciature, and the other at the Sanctuary of the Sisters of Charity at Vračar. In 1923, three priests were active in Belgrade: Msgr. Wagner, the parish priest, Dr. Juraj Magjerec, the catechist, and Stjepan Kokanović, the chaplain. Canon Ferdo Hrđy, the Apostolic Administrator for the Northern Serbia, except Belgrade, was active in Niš, and Ivan Vinodolac was the parish priest in Kragujevac. The Apostolic Administrator in Niš started the foundation of new parishes in Bor, Čuprija, Užice and Zaječar. Military chaplains also took care for the religious needs of the Catholics in Serbia, and they were situated in Valjevo, Kragujevac, Niš and Zaječar, while the military vicar, Msgr. Ferdo Rožić, had his residence in Belgrade. From 1919, Belgrade schools maintained regular catechetical lessons for the Catholics in the city. Also, few Catholic societies were organized in Belgrade: *Društvo za gradnju katoličke crkve u Beogradu* [The Society for the construction of the Catholic Church in Belgrade], *Društvo sv. Vinka* [The Society of Saint Vincent], *Društvo samostalnih katoličkih djevojaka* [The Society of independent Catholic girls], *Jugoslavensko katoličko akademsko društvo sv. Ćirila i Metoda* [The Yugoslav Catholic Academic Society of SS Cyril and Methodius], *Katolička srednjoškolska muška organizacija* [The Catholic High-school Male Organisation] and *Katolička srednjoškolska ženska organizacija* [The Catholic Highschool Female Organisation]. The societies which were active in Niš were: *Odbor za građenje katoličke crkve u Nišu* [The Committee for the construction of the Catholic Church in Niš] and *Djevojačko društvo Presvetog Srca Isusova* [The Girls Society of the Sacred Heart of Jesus].⁷⁸ At the beginning of Rodić's service, in Serbia there were only five Catholic priests per 40.000 believers.⁷⁹

With the creation of the new state – the Kingdom of Serbs, Croats and Slovenes, Belgrade became the new capital of the state, which included a large number of Catholics. As the center of the new monarchy, Belgrade became appealing for many who found a new home there. People from different classes and occupations reached the new capital, and many of them were Catholics. Especially numerous was the group of young Slovenian and Croatian girls, who came to seek employment as maids in the houses of wealthy people. There were also, amongst others, politicians, artists, scientists, intellectuals, workers from different professions and others, who arrived to the city. The immigration process of the Catholics in Serbia spread to other urban centers in the country, especially centers of mining industry, where they came as skilled workers. That is why in Belgrade in 1921, there were 10.000 Catholics, and

⁷⁸ Vjekoslav Wagner, "Katolička diaspora u Jugoslaviji", *Katolički list*, 27 September 1923, pp. 467-469.

⁷⁹ Cf. "Prošlost nadbiskupije Beogradsko-smederevske", p. 211.

by 1926, that number reached more than 16.000.⁸⁰ So it is not surprising that the nuncio, in his letter considering Rodić's appointment for the archbishop, wrote this: *Znaj, katedrale nemaš, a nije se ni počela graditi; nadb. kurije ne ima, svećenika je jako malo, vjernici su u najudaljenijim mjestima razasuti, redovničkog zavoda nikakova, ni muškog ni ženskog, katoličkih škola nikakovih, siromaštvo najveće – a sve se ovo ima urediti malne bez svake ljudske pomoći* [Behold, you have no cathedral, and the construction of it has not begun yet, there is no archdiocesan curia, there are very few priests, believers are scattered in the most remote places, there are no religious institutes, neither male nor female, no Catholic schools whatsoever, the poverty is at its highest level – and all this should be arranged without almost any human help].⁸¹

The first task Rodić faced upon his arrival in Belgrade was to establish administrative and pastoral structure of the Archdiocese. The archbishop himself lived in a rented house in Zorina ulica, number 62. By mediation of the nuncio, the Archdiocese in 1925 managed to buy the building of the former Austro-Hungarian Embassy with its accompanying facilities, and made it into the Archbishop's residence.⁸² It was agreed that the building of the former Austro-Hungarian Embassy would be bought by the Belgrade government, but the Holy See paid for the first installment. The government did not keep to this agreement and was often late with the payments to Austrian Embassy. That is why Archbishop Rodić himself was forced to react to this breach of the contract from the side of the government, and soon it was clear that the Ministry of Religions did not even have this matter predicted in their budget.⁸³ Alongside the existing old Church, the hall of Pio XI was built for the Belgrade Catholic youth, which was organized in Catholic societies, and the Holy Father himself financed its construction.⁸⁴ In 1926, the official herald of the Archdiocese, the *Glasnik Katoličke crkve u Beogradu* [Herald of the Catholic Church in Belgrade], was launched.⁸⁵ The old chapel of Saint Ladislaus, within the former Austro-Hungarian Embassy, was enlarged and adjusted to its new needs, the choir and the bell tower were added, and it was dedicated on October 31, 1925, to Christ the King.⁸⁶ Trying to revive and organize

⁸⁰ Cf. Robert Skenderović, "Crisinum i lutrija-dva neuspjela pothvata beogradskog nadbiskupa Rafaela Rodića (1924.-1936.)", *Croatica Christiana periodica*, 24 (2000), no. 45: 161.

⁸¹ Matija Rihtarić, "Imenovanje apoštolskoga administratora banatskoga O. Rafe Rodića, nadbiskupom beogradskim", p. 533.

⁸² "Prošlost nadbiskupije Beogradsko-smederevske", p. 212.

⁸³ "Pitanje nadbiskupske rezidencije", *Katolički list*, 19 January 1928, p. 35.

⁸⁴ "Slavlje katoličke mladeži u Beogradu", *Katolički list*, 2 June 1927, p. 317.

⁸⁵ "Katolici u Beogradu", *Katolički list*, 17 June 1926, p. 342.

⁸⁶ "Proširenje župne crkve", *Katolički list*, 16 September 1926, p. 515.

the life of the Catholics in Belgrade and Serbia, Rodić successfully gathered around himself many prominent priests from Croatia, and appointed them as his advisers. Two Franciscan friars, dr. Petar Grbić, former headmaster of the Franciscan theological seminary in Makarska, and Petar Vlašić, entered his consistory.⁸⁷ As early as 1926, The Procession of Corpus Christi was celebrated on the streets of Belgrade, led by nuncio Pellegrinetti.⁸⁸ From that time the procession was celebrated annually. He divided the Archdiocese in two deaneries, one in Belgrade, presided by Dr. Wagner as the dean, and the other one in Niš, presided by dean Kudrić. To the Belgrade deanery belonged three parishes: the parish of Christ the King (with Wagner as the parish priest), parish of the Saint Anthony of Padua (entrusted to the Bosnian Franciscans), the parish of the Blessed Virgin Mary (entrusted to the French Assumptionists), and also the parish in Šabac. Parishes belonging to the deanery in Niš were: Niš, Kragujevac, Smederevo and Bar.⁸⁹ After Rodić put in order the internal structure of the Archdiocese, he embarked on fulfilling the pastoral needs of his Archdiocese. This primarily referred to the establishment of the new churches and parishes, but since the Archdiocese was relatively poor, Rodić decided to entrust this mission to religious orders.

Sisters of Charity of Saint Vincent de Paul were active in Belgrade from 1920. The first ones arrived from Slovenia as nurses to the sanatorium in Vračar, and afterwards, in 1925, they started working in a private clinic of doctor Miljenić, and in 1927, Sister of Charity from Zagreb opened the kindergarten in Belgrade. In the beginning of 1927, 25 sisters from Zagreb started working in the State Hospital, on the general surgery ward, and in July another 20 nurses started working in the isolation (infectious) ward of the same hospital. The total number of the Sisters of Charity, who were active in Belgrade in 1927 reached 76 sisters.⁹⁰ The archbishop helped them to open the *Zavod za odgoj djevojaka* [Institute for the education of girls] and the *Penzionat za sveučilištarke i činovnice* [Boarding-school for college girls and female clerks].⁹¹ Sisters of Charity of St. Vincent de Paul, Slovenian branch, about 200 of them, took over the service of nurses in the Belgrade Hospital.⁹² In 1926, Bosnian Franciscans finished the building of the convent in Belgrade, and began to build a new parish church of St. Anthony of Padua. The new church was consecrated in 1931, when there was a celebration of the 700th anniversary

⁸⁷ "Imenovanje konzistorijalaca", *Nedjelja*, 12 April 1925, p. 5.

⁸⁸ "Beogradska katolička župa", *Katolički list*, 24 June 1926, p. 358.

⁸⁹ "Katolici u sjevernoj Srbiji", *Katolički list*, 7 February 1929, p. 76.

⁹⁰ "Milosrdne sestre sv. Vinka", *Katolički list*, 16 August 1928, p. 432.

⁹¹ "Iz katoličkog života u Beogradu", *Katolički list*, 4 January 1934, pp. 10-11.

⁹² "Iz katoličkog života u Beogradu", p. 10.

of the death of St. Anthony of Padua.⁹³ Franciscans also took over the role of popular missionaries in the new archdiocese, as well as management of the new parish in Kraljevo, where the new Church of St. Michael Archangel was consecrated in 1933.⁹⁴ French Assumptionists built a chapel in Belgrade and they were entrusted with the new parish of Blessed Virgin Mary. The construction of the great new church dedicated to Blessed Virgin Mary began, but it was never finished.⁹⁵ French Assumptionists also in 1928 started to build an institute for the education of Catholic female youth in the parish, which was supposed to be an obligation of the Sisters of the Assumption, which already had a kindergarten and a shelter for girls there. New institute was supposed to serve for upbringing and education of young Catholic girls, and also have girl's school and girl's boarding school. The institute was opened in the beginning of 1929.⁹⁶ Among other things, the Assumptionists also took care of 600 Catholics, who worked in the mines in Bor, and who were mostly Slovenians. The Assumptionists held regular masses for them, celebrated sacraments and taught the catechism in the Sunday school.⁹⁷ Slovenian Lazarists built the Church of SS Cyril and Methodius in Čukarica,⁹⁸ and in 1934 Jesuits built the Church of St. Peter, which could receive 1.200 believers.⁹⁹ Rodić issued a license for the opening of the Institute of the Daughters of Charity on August 25, 1925.¹⁰⁰ Outside Belgrade, the Churches were built in Smederevo, Šabac, Bor, Zaječar, and Ravna Reka. The chapels were built in Valjevo, Leskovac, Aleksinac and Kragujevac.¹⁰¹ The hospital chapel of Holy Cross was built as well, and Rd. Alojzije Plantarić was appointed as the chaplain.¹⁰² The construction of the Church in Bor was financed by French government, since it had a concession over mines, primarily for its workers and personnel who worked there.¹⁰³ As the archbishop, Rodić organized the Catholic parishes in Serbia. From the above, it is evident that in Serbia, within a few years, many

⁹³ Arkandeo Grgić, "Crkva sv. Antuna u Beogradu", *Katolički list*, 10 October 1929, pp. 529-530; "Nove župe u Beogradu", *Katolički list*, 10 March 1927, p. 131.

⁹⁴ "Posveta katoličke crkve u Kraljevu", *Katolički list*, 30 November 1933, p. 211.

⁹⁵ "Prošlost nadbiskupije Beogradsko-smederevske", p. 214.

⁹⁶ "Osnutak katoličkog djevojačkog konvikta", *Katolički list*, 29 March 1928, p. 163.

⁹⁷ "Duhovna pastva katoličke dijaspore u Srbiji", *Katolički list*, 9 April 1931, p. 190.

⁹⁸ "Blagoslov temeljnog kamena nove katoličke crkve", *Katolički list*, 22 August 1929, p. 452.

⁹⁹ "Iz katoličkog života u Beogradu", p. 10.

¹⁰⁰ Cf. Vinicije Lupis, "Družba kćeri milosrđa i Blato na Korčuli", *Crkva u svijetu*, 49 (2014), no. 3: 339.

¹⁰¹ "Prošlost nadbiskupije Beogradsko-smederevske", 214; "Gradnja katoličke crkve u Kragujevcu", *Katolički list*, 22 November 1934, p. 584.

¹⁰² "Iz katoličkog života u Beogradu", p. 10.

¹⁰³ "Katolici u sjevernoj Srbiji", p. 76.

churches and chapels were built for the needs of the increasing number of Catholics. He founded the consistory for priests and often went on pastoral visits to the parishes of his archdiocese. He took special care and interest in clerical youth and sent about ten young men to various seminaries and theological studies. Except for caring about the Catholics in his archdiocese, Rodić organized also spiritual care for soldiers at garrisons. Every year he would hear confessions of soldiers for a week, and during Lent were organized the *Dušobrižničke ekskurzije* [Excursions of the Curator of Souls].¹⁰⁴ Archbishopal Christmas Mass in 1932 was broadcasted by the Belgrade radio, and Holy Masses were organized for all Catholic believers and celebrated in 32 places all around Serbia – at schools, halls and private apartments.¹⁰⁵ Due to a suggestion of Friar Petar Vlašić, he encouraged his consistory to maintain permanent connections with 10.000 Croats in Romania.¹⁰⁶ He also organized Catholic catechism in schools, so that in 1930 there were 1.416 pupils from Primary Schools, and 639 pupils from High Schools, and this program was led by three catechists.¹⁰⁷

In 1930, the Belgrade Archdiocese counted 70.000 Catholics, and was divided on two deaneries: Belgrade and Niš. In Belgrade itself there were four parishes: the parish of Christ the King, with 20 000 believers, Franciscan parish of Saint Anthony with 7.000 believers, the parish of Blessed Virgin Mary with 5.000 believers, which was held by French Assumptionists, while the Lazarists managed the parish of Saint Cyril and Methodius, which have had about 2.000 believers. The parishes were founded and churches were built also outside Belgrade: the Church of Sacred Heart of Jesus in Niš, the Church of St. Anne in Šabac, the Church of St. Joseph in Kragujevac, the Church of St. King Louis in Bor, the Church of St. George the Martyr in Zaječar, the Church of St. John the Baptist in Smederevo. Of religious communities, Assumptionists held two parishes, Lazarists one and Franciscans four: St. Anthony in Belgrade, Niš, Smederevo, Šabac. The members of these orders were active in schools as catechists. Sisters of Charity from Zagreb were active in Belgrade, developing extremely broad educational and medical service, but also Slovenian Sisters of Charity and French Sisters of the Assumption, which were managing the French school.¹⁰⁸

¹⁰⁴ Cf. Srećko Majstorović, *Ivan Rafael Rodić-prvi beogradski nadbiskup*, p. 50.

¹⁰⁵ “Božićne mise”, *Glasnik beogradske nadbiskupije*, 2 January 1933, p. 2.

¹⁰⁶ Cf. Srećko Majstorović, *Ivan Rafael Rodić-prvi beogradski nadbiskup*, p. 51.

¹⁰⁷ “Vjeronauk u školama”, *Glasnik beogradske nadbiskupije*, 1930, p. 3.

¹⁰⁸ Cf. Petar Vlašić, “Katolicizam u Srbiji i kat. katedrala u Beogradu”, *Katolički list*, 27 March 1930, pp. 152-154.

Even during the first years of Rodić's management of the Belgrade Archdiocese, the Catholics in Serbia were highly organized. Rodić himself was very active on all fields of ecclesiastical life. He also participated in the Eucharistic Movement from its beginning, which spread among the Croats in the early twentieth century. He was not only a member of the standing committee for organisation of Eucharistic Congress, but also participated in them. In 1912, he participated in the Eucharistic Congress in Vienna, in 1932, as already the archbishop, he was on the Congress in Chicago, in 1932 he was in Dublin, and in 1938 in Budapest.¹⁰⁹ He personally organized the Eucharistic Congress in Veliki Bečkerek in 1934.¹¹⁰ He was a strong advocate for organizing the Croatian pilgrimage in the Holy Land, and so in 1931, he himself traveled there as on the head of Croatian pilgrims. On this occasion he encouraged the construction of the altar of Blessed Nicholas Tavelić and its beatification. He also went on the pilgrimage in Lourdes in 1928.¹¹¹ Except for organizing the new archdiocese and arranging the ecclesiastical life of the Catholics within, Rodić frequently represented the archdiocese on various festivities abroad and at home. He travelled to Rome *ad limina* on several occasions. In 1925 he participated in the celebration of the jubilee of the Croatian Franciscan Province of SS Cyril and Methodius, and then in 1927 he was present at the Fifth Unionist Congress in Velehrad, and afterwards he visited the sanctuary in Jasna Gora in Poland. Then in 1931, as it was already mentioned, he led a Croatian pilgrimage in the Holy Land and participated in the Diocesan Eucharistic Congress on Trsat, where he read the papal *breve* about the elevation of the Trsat Church on the rank of minor basilica.¹¹² He was a member of the Academy *Regina Apostolorum* in Sarajevo, *Matica hrvatska* in Zagreb and *Matica srpska* in Novi Sad, as well as a member of the Croatian Hillwalking Society in Zagreb.¹¹³

From the very beginning, Rodić wanted to build a representative cathedral in Belgrade, which would match the number of Catholics in the new capital. There were many suggestions about the location, but each one of them failed. The archbishop and his advisors decided to build a magnificent cathedral, the plans were ready, and the archdiocese even managed to purchase sufficiently large construction site. However, the Great Depression which occurred in the late 1920s and 1930s, also affected out the Kingdom of Yugoslavia. Archdiocese was in a disastrous financial state, due to enormous costs for the con-

¹⁰⁹ Franjo Pipinić, "Nadbiskup o. Rafael Rodić zlatomisnik", p. 320; AFSP, Osobni fond nadbiskupa Rodića, b. 1.

¹¹⁰ Cf. Srećko Majstorović, *Ivan Rafael Rodić-prvi beogradski nadbiskup*, p. 48.

¹¹¹ Franjo Pipinić, "Nadbiskup o. Rafael Rodić zlatomisnik", p. 320.

¹¹² Srećko Majstorović, *Ivan Rafael Rodić-prvi beogradski nadbiskup*, pp. 54-55.

¹¹³ Srećko Majstorović, *Ivan Rafael Rodić-prvi beogradski nadbiskup*, p. 55.

struction of the Institute *Crisinum* in Zagreb on the expense of the Administration of Banat, where resided students of theology and seminarists from the area of Banat, but also due to deficient way of conducting bussiness and unsuccessful organisation of the lottery aimed towards the fund-raising for the construction of the Belgrade cathedral. The archdiocese was literally on the verge of bankruptcy: the banks threatened to confiscate and sell Church assets.¹¹⁴ Although the lottery was not successful in raising the money necessary for the construcion of the cathedral, it still ended well financially. However, the debts of the boarding school (*Crisinum*) have been increasing and resulted in the fact that Rodić pawned the Archbishop's Palace itself. He even asked King Alexander for help, suggesting that he might buy the boarding school and give it as a present to the city Zagreb, for a student dormitory.¹¹⁵ Already in 1933, the debts were more than 14,000.000 dinars, and their repayment should have been made only by going in new debts.

The failure of building a Catholic cathedral in Belgrade also shows the attitude of the state government towards the Catholic Church in Yugoslavia. Although in the Kingdom of Yugoslavia Catholic and Orthodox Church were for the most part financed from the state budget, Orthodox Church was in a more privileged position. This is most evident in this failed attempt to build a Catholic Church in Belgrade, as well as in the fact that the government refused to help the Archdiocese to get out of debts. The building of the Catholic cathedral was supposed to be a proof that Catholic and Orthodox citizens were equal. The funds which were necessary to build a cathedral and to cover their debts, was insignificant comparing to those which the Orthodox Church received. So, for example, the Serbian Orthodox Church received an one-time state aid of 70,000.000 dinars in 1925.¹¹⁶ Since Rodić was so indebted in the country, he tried to get a loan abroad, but with no success. In 1936, the *Praštediona* [First Croatian Savings Bank] decided to hand over a lawsuit to the court, and to demand executory right on the building of the archdiocese. The archbishop took his last move and asked for help from the head of the Yugoslav government, Milan Stojadinović, who refused his request, as did so many before him.¹¹⁷ The only move left for Rodić was to leave his service. He asked

¹¹⁴ Cf. Robert Skenderović, "Crisinum i lutrija-dva neuspjela pothvata beogradskog nadbiskupa Rafaela Rodića (1924.-1936.):" 167-174; Franjo Emanuel Hoško, Trsatski franjevac Ivan Rafael Rodić-prvi beogradski nadbiskup, pp. 181-199; "Prošlost nadbiskupije Beogradsko-smederevske", p. 212.

¹¹⁵ Cf. Robert Skenderović, "Crisinum i lutrija-dva neuspjela pothvata beogradskog nadbiskupa Rafaela Rodića (1924.-1936.):" 174.

¹¹⁶ Cf. Ivan Mužić, *Katolička crkva, Stepinac i Pavelić* (Zagreb, 1997), p. 30.

¹¹⁷ Cf. Franjo Emanuel Hoško, Trsatski franjevac Ivan Rafael Rodić-prvi beogradski nadbiskup, p. 198.

the Holy Father to resolve him of his duties as the Belgrade Archbishop, and in December of 1936, he left Belgrade. The Holy See appointed him as the titular Archbishop of Philippopolis (Plovdiv). His position of the Archbishop of Belgrade was filled by Doctor Josip Ujčić.¹¹⁸

The last years of his life Rodić spent in Kostajnica and Požega. After leaving his service, he settled in Kostajnica, where he resided until April 26, 1937. In the statement which he gave to the correspondent of Belgrade *Politika* [Politics] he stated that he was drawn by the silence of the convent and the beauty of these areas, as well as the friendship with his former student, Father Feliks Gretschel, who was on the head of the house.¹¹⁹ His speech during the celebration of the Pope's Day was cited in *Hrvatska straža* [Croatian Watch]: *Hrvatska straža: Naročito je vrijedno istaknuti veoma lijep i značajan govor preuzv. g. o. Rodića, koji je rastumačio i označio sve odlike papinstva u prošlosti i sadašnjosti i iznio u nekoliko crtica život sadašnjeg Sv. Oca Pape Pija XI. Čim se govornik pokazao na govornici dupkom puna dvorana svijeta burno ga je pozdravila pljeskom* [It is especially valuable to emphasize very lovely and significant speech of this Eminence, Father Rodić, who tried to explain and marked all the characteristics of the Papacy in the past and present, and presented briefly the life of the current Holy Father, Pope Pius XI. The speaker was greeted with a big applause by the hall filled with people, as soon as he showed up on the stage].¹²⁰

In the end of April of 1937, he moved in his hometown of Požega, in the Franciscan convent. The journalist of the *Katolički list* [Catholic Journal] wrote in 1943 about the Archbishop's stay in Požega: *On i danas u visokoj starosti po svim župama požeškog kraja obilazi župe i svakom zgodom pomaže braći svećenicima propovijedanjem, ispovijedanjem i različitim drugim funkcijama* [Even today, in his advanced age, he is visiting all parishes in the Požega region, and at every opportunity helps to his fellow priests by preaching, hearing confessions and performing various other functions].¹²¹ Rodić visited parishes of the spacious Zagreb Archdiocese and dispensed the sacrament of confirmation to many people during seventeen years of his stay in Požega. He especially continued to do this after the end of the Second World War, when it was forbidden for Zagreb bishops to leave Zagreb. Rodić, on the request of the Archbishop Stepinac, in 1948 dispensed sacrament of confirmation in six Slavonian deaneries, which task lasted for two full months.¹²²

¹¹⁸ "Promjena na beogradskoj nadbiskupskoj stolici", *Katolički list*, 14 December 1936, p. 641.

¹¹⁹ "Kako živi nadbiskup Rodić", *Politika*, 2 December 1937, p. 5.

¹²⁰ "Govor nadbiskupa Rodića", *Hrvatska straža*, 9 (1937) 38: 24.

¹²¹ Franjo Pipinić, "Nadbiskup o. Rafael Rodić zlatomisnik", p. 320.

¹²² Srećko Majstorović, *Ivan Rafael Rodić-prvi beogradski nadbiskup*, p. 76.

Ivan Rafael Rodić passed away on April 27, 1954, in the Franciscan convent in Požega.¹²³

Ivan Rafael Rodić – Franziskaner und Erzbischof von Belgrad

Zusammenfassung

Der Franziskaner Ivan Rafael Rodić war der erste Erzbischof von Belgrad (1924.-1936.). Neben diesem fordernden Dienst übte er auch in der Zeit, bevor er Erzbischof wurde, wichtige und anspruchsvolle Dienste innerhalb der franziskanischen Gemeinschaft innerhalb seiner Provinz, aber auch auf der Ebene der Kirche im kroatischen Volk aus. Unter anderem war er Professor für die biblischen Fächer an der theologischen Fakultät in Baja, Teilnehmer der Reformbewegung des Franziskanerordens in Kroatien, der erste Kustos der neu gegründeten Franziskanerprovinz St. Cyrill und Metod (diesen Dienst übte er zweimal aus), Guardian in Zagreb, Varaždin und im Kloster Trsat, sowie Provinzdefinitor und anschließend Provinzial von 1912 bis 1918. Er erneuerte Kirchen in Zagreb, Ilok und Wien. Er war Redakteur der homiletischen Zeitschrift *Dušobrižnik* (*Seelsorger*). Er organisierte den Dritten Orden auf der Ebene von Kroatien und Bosnien-Herzegowina neu und vereinte ihn zum Bund des Dritten Ordens. Er ist der Begründer der Gemeinschaft St. Raphael und er begann auch mit der organisierten pastoralen Sorge um kroatische Auswanderer in Kanada und in den USA, wo er gleichzeitig auch der erste kirchliche Visitator war. Er nahm an der Kroatischen katholischen Bewegung teil und wurde in deren Leitung gewählt. 1923 wurde er zum apostolischen Administrator des Banat ernannt, ein Jahr später auch zum ersten Erzbischof von Belgrad. Als Erzbischof organisierte und ordnete er das Leben der Katholiken auf dem Gebiet seiner Erzdiözese indem er neue Pfarreien errichtete, von denen er einige an Ordensgemeinschaften übergab; er ermutigte das katholische Schrifttum und die Entstehung katholischer Vereinigungen. Er unternahm erfolgreich den Aufbau eines pastoralen und administrativen Lebens in der Erzdiözese Belgrad. Er trat von der Funktion des Erzbischofs zurück, als es zu einem finanziellen Kollaps kam, der durch den Bau des Konvikts des seligen Chrisinus in Zagreb und wegen eines erfolglosen Glücksspiels, mit dessen Hilfe er die finanziellen Mittel für die Errichtung der Kathedrale in Belgrad aufbringen wollte. Nach dem Rücktritt wohnte er in den Franziskanerklöstern Hrvatska Kostajnica und Požega, wo er im Jahr 1954 verstarb.

¹²³ AHFP, Osobnik, D-18; AFSP, Osobni fond nadbiskupa Rodića, b. 4; AFSP, Osobni fond nadbiskupa Rodića, b. 1.

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