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»Mass for the Homeland«: (Just) a Religious Ceremony or a Religious, Diplomatic and Statehood-Strengthening Activity?¹

»Maša za domovino«: (zgolj) verski obred ali versko, diplomatsko in državotvorno dejanje?

Abstract: In this article, the author analyses the overlap between the religious and the diplomatic/political aspects in the practice of celebrating masses for the homeland. The purpose of this article is to establish to what extent the diplomatic and political component is present in this practice, and how the homeland mass practice is understood in the Slovenian political context. For this purpose, the author analyses two aspects: the structure of masses for the homeland and the presence of diplomatic and political elements in the ceremony, and the attitude of young people towards the practice. The latter is relevant particularly because young people will become political decision makers in a few years. Their current views will then be reflected in the positions of their political parties.

Key words: mass for the homeland, politics, diplomacy, music, cooperation between Church and state

Povzetek: V članku avtor analiza presek med versko in diplomatsko-politično razsežnostjo maše za domovino. Namen članka je, ugotoviti, kako navzoča je pri mašah za domovino diplomatsko-politična razsežnost oziroma kako so maše za domovino razumljene v slovenskem političnem kontekstu. Avtor zato analizira dvoje: najprej strukturo maš za domovino in navzočnost diplomatsko-političnih prvin, ki se najdejo v okviru teh maš, nato pa tudi odnos mladih do maše za domovino. Ta odnos mladih je pomemben predvsem zato, ker bodo mladi v nekaj letih postali politični odločevalci. Njihova sedanja stališča se bodo pretopila tudi v stališča političnih strank, katerih člani bodo.

Ključne besede: maša za domovino, politika, diplomacija, glasba, sodelovanje med Cerkvijo in državo

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1. Introduction

The relationship between the Slovenian Catholic Church and state² has been highly turbulent ever since the consolidation of consciousness regarding the existence of the modern Slovene nation in the late 19th century.³ Historians usually point out the formal break-up between »religion« and »nation« to the time and work of Bishop Anton Mahnič, whom poet Simon Gregorčič wittily named »the storm from Kras« (Pirc 1990, 109–126). But there are more examples from recent history. One that often goes overlooked is the establishment of the Slovenian Society of St Cecilia (1876), which strived for higher quality of church music. The society was modelled on the German one, which argued for a realignment of church music with the framework set by the Council of Trent, particularly the part on removing from the church anything lascivious and impure that had been mixed in the organ music or singing. This meant encouraging a reintroduction of Gregorian chant and singing modelled on Palestrina's *Missa Papae Marcelli*. While this initiative may have been welcomed in other parts of Europe, it ignited in the Slovene lands a discussion on whether introducing Cecilian-style singing went against the political emancipation of the emerging Slovene nation and undermined its national character. Part of the blame can be attributed to Anton Foerster, *regens chori* of the Ljubljana Cathedral and representative of the Society of St Cecilia in Ljubljana, who partly due to a poor decision and partly due to his stubbornness performed almost all of the sung parts of the 1879 Midnight Mass in the Cathedral in Latin.⁴ An indication that the genie was out of the bottle and outside church walls was the heated argument between Cecilian sympathisers and advocates of old practices in the papers *Slovenski narod*, *Slovenec*, *Novice* and *Brencelj*, which was the most aggressively anti-Cecilian. Liturgical singing had turned into a national issue. In fact, as portrayed in the media of the time, it was no longer about liturgical singing, but rather a struggle between Slovenehood and Germanhood (Alešovec 1879, n. p.). This was also a result of the Cecilians claiming it was not related to the national issue, and arguing that a return to Tridentine roots was indicated by Franz Xavier Witt himself, »on whom Pius IX hath bestowed the title of the doctor for his great merit in church music« (Aljaž 1880, n. p.). However, this argumentation only produced the opposite effect, shifting the debate even more into the realm of nationality and nationhood.⁵ The Cecilian dispute lasted four full

² Two interesting articles between the state and Church were published in 2019 in *Bogoslovni vestnik*. See: Nguyen et al. (2019); Vaupot (2019).

³ We must stress here the consolidation of this national consciousness, since one should note that, on the other hand, it was the Catholic Church with its activities and support to mass gatherings and reading societies that contributed greatly to faster development of the modern Slovene nation in its initial phase.

⁴ According to Kajfež (1998, 42), the argument spread so much that even costermongers in the market would yell »Layson, layson!« after Foerster (in reference to *Kyrie Eleison*).

⁵ A noteworthy view in this respect is that of friar Stanislav Škrabec, an important linguist, who wrote in the periodical *Cvetje z vertov svetega Frančiška* that it would be wise to consider requesting from the pope to allow Slovene as a liturgical language. This would not only enable celebrating mass in Slovene but would also make the whole debate about having to sing in the liturgical language irrelevant.

years, with after-tremors returning occasionally all the way until the symbolic (Arbeiter 2019) surrender of the Cecilians, embodied in the publishing of the song collection *Rihar renatus* by Franc Kimovec in 1908.

Regardless of the initial tensions, the Slovene nation remained in a tight grip of (political and religious) Catholicism until the Second World War. The occupation and partition of Slovenia, as well as divergent positions within the Catholic Church,⁶ only strengthened the division, while the final break came with two events: when the Catholic Church failed to oppose the creation of anti-resistance militias and the Slovenian Home Guard, on the one hand (Mlakar 2003),⁷ and when the Communist Party took over the fight against the occupying forces, on the other (Mozetič 2012; Hančič 2015). At that point, it became clear that nothing in Slovenia would be as before.

The post-war order with the Communist Party at the helm of the state was not favourable to the Catholic Church. The breaking of relations between Yugoslavia and the Vatican (Ambrožič 2006), the exclusion of the Faculty of Theology from the University of Ljubljana (Gabrič 2003; Petkovšek 2019b, 482), the burning of Archbishop Anton Vovk and other events were only signs that the authorities wanted to twist the arm of the Church into cooperation under their terms – the Catholic Church in Slovenia was to be subject to the state and work in line with its dictates (Griesser-Pečar 2015). Because the Church refused to yield, the relationship encountered many ups and downs (Lampret and Rožič 2017; Griesser-Pečar 2017; Pacek 2017; 2018; 2019). The thawing of relations in the late 1960s, which came in the wake of the Second Vatican Council and closer ties between Yugoslavia and the Holy See (Ramšak 2019), gave a temporary impression that the relations between the Slovenian Catholic Church and the state would start improving. But the feeling was short-lived. After the crackdown on the Yugoslav Spring in the 1970s, the relations between the state and the Catholic Church cooled down again, and the atmosphere only started improving again in the mid-1980s. In 1986, Jože Smole, the head of the Slovenian branch of the Socialist Alliance of Working People of Yugoslavia (SZDL), wished all believers a Merry Christmas,⁸ followed the same evening by the Archbishop of Ljubljana, Alojzij Šuštar. Three years later, in 1989, Christmas was reintroduced as a bank holiday in Slovenia.⁹

The democratic elections held on Palm Sunday, 8 April 1990 indicated that the culture war would finally come to an end, and that maybe the Church and state/

⁶ This refers to the differing reactions of the heads of the Catholic Church on the territories under Italian and German occupation, although we must acknowledge that the approaches of the two occupiers were also different, and the conditions cannot be considered completely the same.

⁷ Here, the heads of the Ljubljana Archdiocese followed the encyclical *Quadragesimo anno* of Pope Pius XI, which stressed that Communism was incompatible with Catholic teachings (and had to be fought).

⁸ Christmas was no longer an official holiday after 1952, and the Christmas message earned Smole the nickname Father Christmas.

⁹ Smole is also said to have worked for making Reformation Day, celebrated on 31 October, a bank holiday, which was achieved in 1991 with the Public Holidays and Work-off Days in the Republic of Slovenia Act.

nation would finally find a common language. A similar atmosphere prevailed regarding the reconciliation ceremony held on 23 July 1990 at Kočevski rog, a site of post-war mass killings by Communist authorities. However, things took a different turn when Slovenia declared independence in 1991 and directly afterwards. The first incident occurred already at the time of declaring independence, when the sound system did not work when Archbishop Metropolitan Šuštar was blessing a linden tree, a national symbol.¹⁰ But the relationship between the Church and state became increasingly tense again when the new Constitution of the Republic of Slovenia was being drafted. Here, the Catholic Church took issue with two articles, in particular Article 7 (separation of Church and state) and 55 (freedom of choice in childbearing). While the Catholic Church had to oppose the latter by definition, as it runs contrary to its fundamental principles (Catechism of the Catholic Church, nn. 2273 and 2323), the Catholic Church saw the Article 7¹¹ as a continuation of the relationship between the Church and state under Communism, since it could be interpreted in a negative rather than positive sense – as a »positive separation of religious communities and state« (*laïcité positive/libérale*) – which »does not allow responsible cooperation and communication when it comes to commonly and unanimously identified issues in the interest of general wellbeing« (Roter 1996, 80).

An attempt of turning the tide, from negative to positive *laïcité*, was also envisaged in the Agreement between the Republic of Slovenia and the Holy See on Legal Issues (2004). This concordat set the framework for cooperation and lay the ground for more specific subordinate agreements covering different social issues. But nothing has happened in this area to date (Mihelič 2015; Macuh and Raspor 2018; Strahovnik 2017).

What has changed, though, is the attitude towards the Catholic Church, which is becoming increasingly complex.¹² Of course, the deteriorating relationship between the state/nation and religion also affects their daily coexistence, as well as highlighting what separates the two spheres rather than what connects them.¹³ In

¹⁰ As is common in Slovenia, many theories developed around this, including conspiracy theories. The official explanation is that it is unclear what happened to the microphone. (Vrtovec 2016, 128) However, the archbishop's secretary of the time, Dr Anton Jamnik (now auxiliary bishop of Ljubljana), wrote in an interview for the public broadcaster RTVSLO: »When the bishop stepped to the microphone for an address and prayer, the microphone, which had been working perfectly just seconds ago, was turned off. The archbishop's address and prayer were thus muted.« (Jamnik 2011)

¹¹ Article 7 of the Constitution should be read in conjunction with Article 41, which states: »Religious and other beliefs may be freely professed in private and public life. No one shall be obliged to declare his religious or other beliefs.«

¹² Among the possible reasons often quoted by the public are issues such as denationalisation, educational activities of the Catholic Church, a low level of trust between the state and the Catholic Church, the failure to reach subordinate agreements envisaged by the concordat, limited cooperation between the state and the Catholic Church in other areas, lack of acknowledgment for the past role of the Catholic Church in the development of the Slovene nation and state, as well as media coverage. For more information on the role of education in the Catholic Church: Petkovšek (2019a)

¹³ An interesting example, painting a somewhat different, more positive picture of cooperation between the state and the Catholic Church, is the answer to a question by MP Jože Tanko adopted at the 30th regular government session on 9 May 2019.

this sense, the recent years have brought numerous writings, analyses and views that move away from the positive understanding of *laïcité* and towards an intersection of models 3 (the state rejects religion in general) and 4 (the state is indifferent towards religion and churches) according to Roter's classification (1996, 76).¹⁴ This can lead to frequent ideological clashes, intensified culture war and unwillingness to cooperate between different institutions that should be working for the benefit of the citizens and the state (Strahovnik 2017; Martinjak Ratej 2016).

This extended and (somewhat) polemical introduction was needed because of the topic analysed in this article: the intersection of diplomatic/political/national and religious aspects in the practice of celebrating masses for the homeland. Masses for the homeland are a religious ceremony performed »for the benefit of the state«. ¹⁵ At these masses, believers pray to God for the homeland/state, to protect it, give it wise leaders, ensure the wellbeing of the population, etc. (Krajnc 2014). In Slovenia, homeland masses have been »celebrated as a public religious service since the Republic of Slovenia became independent« (Urad za stike z javnostjo SŠK, No. 1079/13),¹⁶ and the first president in office to attend one was Dr Janez Drnovšek in 2003 (Petrič 2019).

Since these masses are attended by a notable share of the political and diplomatic stage,¹⁷ we can say that we are dealing with an intersection of statehood-building and religious aspects. This intersection is reflected in three parts: the formulas prescribed in the Roman Missal for praying for the nation/state, the sermon, and the choice of music used in such a service to support the homeland/state and religious aspects. This article aims to analyse two issues. First, we will look for specific features of masses for the homeland (from structure, to musical programme, etc.). Second, we will use primary research to determine the attitude of the younger generation to the practice of masses for the homeland, and whether the youth understand it as a potential source for building and strengthening statehood.

For this purpose, we will attempt to answer the following two research questions:

R1: What is the structure of masses for the homeland? (Or more specifically: How do religious and state-related elements, e.g. the national anthem, occur during masses for the homeland, and is this in line with the rules on music in the Catholic Church?)

R2: Can masses for the homeland serve as a source for building and strengthening statehood, and can the practice in Slovenia be understood inclusively (as a religious and state-related matter) or exclusively (as a strictly religious matter)?

¹⁴ On religion as a »basis« for the state: Svetlič (2016).

¹⁵ The purpose of the state should lie in ensuring order and realising the common good (Catechism of the Catholic Church, nn. 1897–1902; 1918–1920).

¹⁶ This, of course, does not mean that the practice started then, but rather that the masses became a public event. Before that time, any expression of religious beliefs was strictly confined to the private life of each individual.

¹⁷ According to the Slovenian Bishops' Conference and the Archdiocese of Ljubljana, masses for the homeland at the Ljubljana Cathedral are usually attended by at least ten foreign diplomatic representatives (Petrič 2019; Kraner 2019).

The research combines quantitative and qualitative methods. Part of the analysis will employ historical analysis, another part the method of in-depth semi-structured interviews with people preparing homeland masses, while yet another part will use the empirical method of a survey conducted among students.

2. The theoretical framework of masses for the homeland

The 1992 Slovenian version of the Roman Missal (still in use) offers formulas for state- or nation-related opportunities for which a special mass can be celebrated. Under Masses and Prayers for Various Needs and Intentions, section II (For Civil Needs), we can find formulas for the following needs and intentions: For the Nation or State (17), For those in Public Office (18), For a Governing Assembly (19), For the Head of State or Ruler (20), For the Progress of Peoples (21), For Peace and Justice (22 A, B), For Reconciliation (22.a) and In Time of War or Civil Disturbance (23). The formulas differ in content, some include an Entrance Antiphon, a Collect, a Prayer over the Offerings, a Communion Antiphon and a Prayer after Communion, while others only include a Collect (see Table 1 for details).

INTENTION	Entrance Antiphon	Collect	Prayer over the Offerings	Communion Antiphon	Prayer after Communion
For the Nation or State	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES
For those in Public Office	NO	YES	NO	NO	NO
For a Governing Assembly	NO	YES	NO	NO	NO
For the Head of State or Ruler	NO	YES	NO	NO	NO
For the Progress of Peoples	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES
For Peace and Justice	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES
For Reconciliation	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES
In Time of War or Civil Disturbance	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES

Table 1: *Structure of content according to intention of mass (civil needs). Source: Own analysis based on the Roman Missal (Rimski misal 1992, 792–799).*

The table shows that the Roman Missal in use in Slovenia features full specific liturgical formulas for the masses for the nation or state and masses referring to the development of peoples and the future of a nation/state, while it only has a specific Collect when it comes to masses for state leaders or political assemblies, that is for personalised masses (referring to a specific person or group).

However, when it comes to masses for the homeland, we must also look at the intersection of the secular and religious elements, like performing the national anthem, flying the national flag in church, collaboration with protocol officials, etc. All these are state-related or political elements that merge with the religious in a mass for the homeland.

When it comes to music, masses for the homeland are still a religious ceremony, so the religious aspect prevails over the political one. Consequently, masses for the homeland must observe canon 1210 of the Code of Canon Law that »only those things which serve the exercise or promotion of worship, piety, or religion are permitted in a sacred place; anything not consonant with the holiness of the place is forbidden«. This canon also underlies all ordinances on church music issued in the last century, as well as all instructions derived from this ordinance. A ground-breaking document in the area of church music was *Tra le Sollecitudini*, a Motu Proprio promulgated by Pope Pius X in 1903. Under General Principles on church music, he wrote (1903):

»Sacred music should consequently possess, in the highest degree, the qualities proper to the liturgy, and in particular sanctity and goodness of form, which will spontaneously produce the final quality of universality. It must be holy, and must, therefore, exclude all profanity not only in itself, but in the manner in which it is presented by those who execute it.«

A similar view on the role of church music is reflected in the encyclical *Musicae sacrae disciplina* by Pope Pius XII (1955), where paragraph 31 states:

»The dignity and lofty purpose of sacred music consist in the fact that its lovely melodies and splendor beautify and embellish the voices of the priest who offers Mass and of the Christian people who praise the Sovereign God. Its special power and excellence should lift up to God the minds of the faithful who are present. It should make the liturgical prayers of the Christian community more alive and fervent so that everyone can praise and beseech the Triune God more powerfully, more intently and more effectively.«

The connection between church music and liturgy can further be found in many other analyses and sources. Current Pope Emeritus Benedict XVI wrote in a 1980 treatise (Ratzinger 2005, 166), when he was still the Prefect of the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith, that music may only be part of liturgy if it is sacred. This means that in church only such activities should be performed that are related to services, and music should only be performed in the context of its purity and sanctity.

3. Masses for the homeland in Slovenia

A mass for the homeland is celebrated in the Ljubljana Cathedral, the informal *Mater et Caput* of church life in Slovenia, twice a year.¹⁸ Ahead of Statehood Day,

¹⁸ Masses for the homeland are also celebrated in other churches, but for our analysis the one in the Cathedral of St Nicholas in Ljubljana is the most important because it is attended by political figures and members of the diplomatic corps.

celebrated on 25 June, the mass is organised by the Slovenian Bishops' Conference, and the one marking Independence and Unity Day (26 December) is prepared by the Archdiocese of Ljubljana. The main celebrant is usually the president of the Slovenian Bishop's Conference, but it can also be another diocesan bishop or the apostolic nuncio.¹⁹ Representatives of the social and political life and members of the diplomatic corps are invited to attend the mass, high state officials, members of the European and Slovenian parliaments, representatives of the Slovenian Armed Forces and the Slovenian Police, court presidents and representatives of other religious communities in Slovenia (Orthodox, Evangelical and Muslim). The invited guests are seated in accordance with the rules of protocol, although this may be much more difficult than with the usual meeting halls due to the specifics of the liturgical setting (Petrič 2019; Kraner 2019).

In terms of structure, the mass for the homeland is divided into two parts: the pre-mass part and the mass part. The pre-mass part normally starts with an *Entrata Festiva*, usually performed on the organ, and a ceremonial procession to the altar. When the main celebrant reaches the altar, the *Entrata festiva* closes. This is followed by Slovenian and European anthems performed by the Brass Quintet of the Slovenian Armed Forces, after which the main celebrant kisses the altar and the mass itself begins with the entrance chant.

The first part of the mass, the Liturgy of the Word, is prepared by the main celebrant (who chooses the reading, usually the one regularly foreseen for that particular day)²⁰ and the members of the Military Vicariate.²¹ The latter prepare the Universal Prayer, incorporating the following intentions: (1) for the needs of the Church, (2) for public authorities and the salvation of the whole world, (3) for those burdened by any kind of difficulty, (4) for the local community or the homeland, and (5) for all the departed who contributed to independent Slovenia (Kraner 2019; Petrič 2019). The Liturgy of the Eucharist follows the prescriptions of the Roman Missal, and the only variation is in terms of music, where at least one hymn is to be sung by the assembled during this part of the mass.

Turning more closely to the music performed at masses for the homeland, we can see that the aspect of the state in music can be identified in the performance of both anthems (the Slovenian and the European one), while the music in the liturgical part is mainly religious, and only rarely bears any reference to the state/nation.²² This can be confirmed by analysing the musical programmes of (June) masses for the homeland, performed by the Slovenian Philharmonic Choir since

¹⁹ In 2019, marking the centenary of the reunification of Prekmurje with the rest of Slovene ethnic territory, it was celebrated by Dr Peter Štumpf, the Bishop of Murska Sobota.

²⁰ Normally there is only one reading.

²¹ Interviews with the people involved have confirmed there have never been any problems in the cooperation with members of the Slovenian Armed Forces, the Slovenian Police, the Protocol of the Republic of Slovenia, etc.

²² The choice of music is prepared by the conductor of the choir singing at the mass but needs to be approved by the Slovenian Bishops' Conference (for the mass in June) or the archbishop's secretary (for the mass in December).

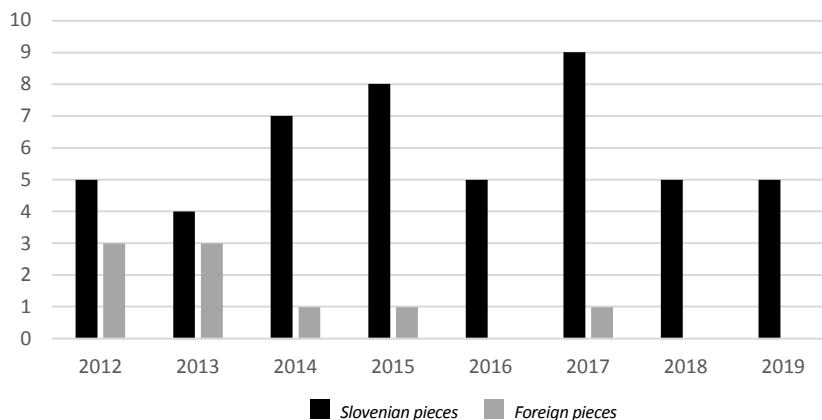


Figure 1: Performed musical pieces by origin. Source: Analysis based on programmes of *Zbor Slovenske filharmonije* (2019).

2012. This analysis shows that:

- a. the choir performed mostly works by Slovenian composers, while the foreign composers performed in this period were Rachmaninov, Bach, Elgar, Mendelssohn Bartholdy and Mozart (Figure 1);
- b. the programme changed every year, so the musical pieces did not repeat (with the exception of Alojzij Mav's *Bodi nam pozdravljena* and Hugolin Sattner's *Marija, če gledam tvoj mili obraz*);
- c. the choir also performed works by contemporary authors, including Damijan Močnik, Andrej Makor, Ivan Florjanc and Andrej Misson.

As for the masses the Slovenian Philharmonic Choir performed, in 2012 *Missa canonica* by Iacobus Gallus, in 2013 *Slovenska maša v čast sv. Cirilu in Metodu* by Matija Tomc, in 2014 *Slovenska maša v B-duru* by Ubald Vrabec, in 2015 *Missa brevis et simplicita* by Damijan Močnik, in 2016 *Tisoč let je že minilo* also by Močnik, in 2017 Mozart's *Orgelsolo messe*, in 2018 Močnik's *Maša v čast sv. Martinu Tourskemu*,²³ and in 2019 *Missa III. In honorem Sacratissimi Corporis Christi* by Stanko Premrl (Table 1).

	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019
Latin	YES	NO	NO	NO	YES	YES	YES	YES
Slovene	NO	YES	YES	YES	NO	NO	NO	NO

Table 2: Language of the sung mass Source: Analysis based on programmes of the Slovenian Philharmonic Choir (2019).

²³ This mass won a Slovenian competition marking 1700 years of birth of St Martin of Tours.

Table 2 above shows that in the analysed period 37.5 % of the masses were sung in the Slovene language and 62.5 % in Latin. When it comes to hymns and other songs, we can observe a reverse trend, as more than 90 % of them are sung in Slovene. But it is also important to consider whether these songs are in any way related to Slovenhood, the state or nation, or whether they are merely religious. Based on the programmes of the Slovenian Philharmonic Choir, we can see that they are mostly religious. Of all the hymns and songs that have been performed, three could be ascribed a partly mixed religious and state/nation-related character: Premrl's *Pozdravljena, Mati dobrega sveta* and *Poglej na nas z višave*, and *Marija skozi življenje* by Ignacij Hladnik. The latter has a national aspect because it has gained the status of an »unofficial national religious anthem« among Slovene Catholics rather than due to its text. Here, conductors could be bolder in including more songs that include a national/state-related aspect along with the religious one, such as Mav's *V tvojo hvalo, Priprošnjica, Kako te proslavljajo naše planine* by Mav or Ciril Vremšak, *Odprta so sveta nebesa* by Franc Kimovec, *Ovenčana je naša Kraljica* by Anton Jobst and *Slovenska zemlja* by Jakob Aljaž.

4. Do we need masses for the homeland at all?: a survey among social sciences and humanities students

4.1 Introduction and methods

The survey on the practice of holding masses for the homeland,²⁴ consisting of two parts (one with closed-ended and one with open-ended questions),²⁵ was created in the online survey system 1ka on 30 November 2018, and after a testing period was open to students between 30 December 2018 and 31 March 2019. The total number of respondents was 412 (N=412), of which 36 % were men and 64 % were women. The average age of the respondents was 24 years ($\sigma=7.47$). According to the field of study, the largest group were students of economics and business (48 %), followed by theology (20 %), translation and interpreting (9 %), political science (8 %) and musicology (5 %). As for the areas where the respondents come from, 19 % of them live in Ljubljana, 33 % live in other urban areas, 16 % in the suburbs and 33 % in rural areas. Since parts of the survey were related to the worldview, we asked the respondents to position themselves on the political scale between left and right, where the methodological scale was adapted to the characteristics of the Slovenian political system (i.e. which political parties or values they represent do respondents identify with). The average value was 49.2 ($\sigma=24.10$), which puts the average respondent in the political centre. This is similar to the results of Slovenian pollsters Modus and Mediana, which are exactly at 50.²⁶

²⁴ The content of this survey was close to one conducted by David Kraner, although he focused on the social representation of the Catholic Church. For more: Kraner (2018).

²⁵ The survey included a total of 31 questions, dealing mostly with respondents' view on the music performed at state ceremonies, masses for the homeland and party meetings.

²⁶ A statistical data analysis also showed that this was an almost perfect normal generational distribution.

On this basis, we also wanted to analyse the worldview tendencies according to the field of study. The structure of the respondents does not indicate great differences that could be symptomatic for the Slovenian political space. On the left–right scale, students of political sciences and those at the Faculty of Arts tend to be more to the left and theology students more to the right, while students of economics and business are in the centre (Table 3).

Field of study	Arithmetic mean	N	Standard deviation
International relations/European studies	34.93	28	23.382
Translation and interpreting	35.71	31	21.715
Political science	36.67	6	12.111
Musicology	41.05	21	29.867
Other	46.78	23	21.067
Economics and business	52.04	142	23.163
Theology	60.88	60	20.497

Table 3: *Political position according to faculty/field of study (0=extreme left, 100=extreme right). Source: Own calculations.*

4.2 Review of empirical results

In Q27 and Q28, the respondents were asked whether they think masses for the homeland are needed and make sense. For 47 % of the respondents, the answer was affirmative, and 53 % said no. As expected, the practice of celebrating masses for the homeland was widely supported by theology students (83.6 % said yes), while they had the least support among translation and interpreting students at the Faculty of Arts (78.1 % said no). The practice is also mostly seen as unnecessary by students of economics and business, as well as international relations and European studies, but it is supported by a majority of musicology students. There was also a roughly even split in support by gender. Male respondents were split quite closely along the middle (49.6 % yes, 50.4 % no), but a slightly larger share of female respondents saw masses for the homeland as unnecessary (45.2 % yes, 54.8 % no). As expected, masses for the homeland have more support among the respondents from rural areas, and less among those who come from Ljubljana and other urban areas, with Ljubljana showing the lowest support (Figure 2).

In general, we can establish that students do not oppose the practice of masses for the homeland, but they do not see them as a potential source of statehood-building. In this respect, most of the respondents see masses for the homeland as a merely religious ceremony that is in the domain of the Catholic or Evangelical Churches and has no effect on the work of the state or its functions of political statehood-building. Those who do oppose the practice, mostly do so because of personal reasons/views or based on their interpretation of Article 7 of the Constitution of the Republic of Slovenia (»I see no reason for mixing the Church in state business.« »In Slovenia we have a separation of the religious and secular.« »A modern state is a secular one.« »The Church should be separated from the state and state ceremonies.«).

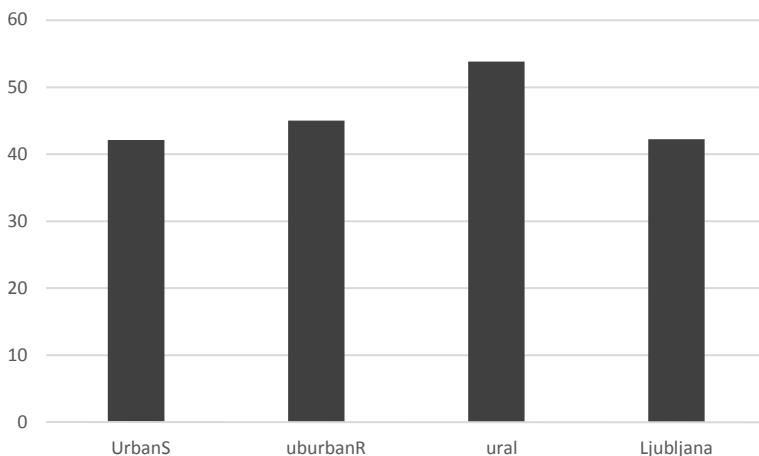


Figure 2: Support for masses for the homeland according to area of residence (in %). Source: Own depiction.

Some did not even know masses for the homeland exist («I'm not religious, and I didn't know this exists.»), while some are indifferent to the practice («Let them pray if they want to.» «Praying never hurts.» «Why not? If people are convinced it helps and it's not hurting anyone?»). But on the other side, the supporters of this practice also base their support on their personal views («I'm religious, so I want to pray for my homeland.» «Everyone has the right to support their country and homeland in their own way, and religious people also do this through prayer and worship services.» «Such things [the homeland] should be laid before God too.»). The answers to the open-ended questions that are interesting from the perspective of statehood and its strengthening include those highlighting that masses for the homeland are not necessarily understood as a merely religious ceremony, but can also serve as an element of national cohesion, of building and reinforcing statehood or a common identity, and a source of internal and external soft power. This shone through particularly in the statements that made a connection between masses for the homeland and the nation/state («Religion is also part of the Slovene culture, and this is part of the Slovene nation.» «Even though I'm not religious myself and stand firmly behind the secular concept, I believe masses for the homeland make sense for those who believe in God.» «Catholics and Lutherans make up a large portion of the Slovene nation (and culture), so we also need to respect this way of fostering Slovenehood.» «Patriotism is a binding element among believers too.» «[Masses for the homeland] encourage a sense of connection. Everyone can contribute to a good atmosphere in the country in their own way. Believers do it with prayer.» «They are important to the community of people who belong to a particular Church, so they should also be respected by those of us who don't attend them.»). However, some of the respondents are also of the opinion that masses for the homeland are harmful for the state and statehood, since «the Church shouldn't be bolstering nationalistic sentiments in

the country,« »masses for the homeland divide citizens, believers and non-believers,« »the Church is manipulating with masses for the homeland,« »I don't relate nationality with religion, that's why they are harmful.« Nevertheless, there were many more respondents who actively or passively support the practice of masses for the homeland than those who actively oppose it.

5. Conclusion

At the beginning of this discussion, we set two research questions, which we attempted to answer with this research. The first research question focused especially on the presence of religious and state/statehood-related elements in masses for the homeland. We have established that the structure of masses for the homeland separates completely the secular and the religious parts. The secular takes place before the main celebrant kisses the altar (the main celebrant waits at the altar until both anthems are finished), and the religious part starts with the kissing of the altar and the entrance chant. Although the two spheres are separated, a partial mix of state-building and religious aspects can be observed in the sermon, the Universal Prayer (prepared by the Military Vicariate) and in the choice of music performed during the mass. For the most part, the music is mainly religious, but occasionally the conductor also chooses hymns/songs that include a particular nation-related topic. In general, we can conclude that masses for the homeland do not diverge in any way from the prescriptions on the use of music in the Catholic Church, or from the instructions on liturgy.

The second research question referred to the statehood-building aspect of masses for the homeland. Here, we should point out that masses for the homeland are a combination of religious and state-related elements, despite being mainly a worship service. This notwithstanding, the prayers are dedicated to an organisation (the state) that is outside the jurisdiction of the Church, which by definition makes masses for the homeland a mix of state-linked and religious aspects. This is also evident from the list of invited attendants, which includes not only the highest political decision makers but also members of the diplomatic corps, who report on this event back to their own capitals. Masses for the homeland are thus an activity that strengthens the state's political statehood externally. Finally, the fact that masses are not merely a matter of religion is confirmed by the answers from the survey presented here. The respondents largely see masses for the homeland as related to the state, although their value judgements on this relationship depend on their worldview and attitude to the Church.

All this leads to the conclusion that masses for the homeland have the potential to foster statehood if they were developed and directed in coordination between the state and the Catholic Church. However, this can hardly be expected, at least in the near future. In the heated political atmosphere that has not been tempered for years, the state and the Catholic Church are growing further and further apart. The state does not deal with masses for the homeland, or simply

takes a passive stance towards them, while the Catholic Church places them too little in the sphere of statehood-building and keeps them in the sphere of religion. Therefore, this is a missed opportunity for fostering statehood, both internally and externally, which would have been beneficial for both actors.

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