

Monument to Prague Archbishop Beran unveiled

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Prague, Dec 7 (CTK) - Prague Archbishop Cardinal Miloslav Vlk yesterday unveiled a monument to the late Prague Archbishop Cardinal Josef Beran outside the Catholic Theological Faculty building and blessed it.

Vlk said Beran, who died 40 years ago, was an outstanding figure of Czech history and a symbol of the resistance against the Communist totalitarian rule.

"At the time when our country started to be swamped with the deluge of hatred and lies of Communist ideology while many contemporaries failed to see the tremendous danger, Beran clearly saw it with his intellect," Vlk said.

"He stood up firmly and with determination against the danger, with his whole being, before the eyes of church and the general public in order to defend the spiritual values of good, love and truth," he added.

Vlk said the blessing of the statue meant that the church was giving it to the public homage.

The statue depicts a kneeling priest outside an open gate made of stone. The ceremony was attended by over 100 people.

Beran became Prague archbishop in 1946, after he returned home from the concentration camp in Dachau, to which he was sent after the assassination of Deputy Reich-Protector of Bohemia and Moravia Reinhard Heydrich in 1942 by Czechoslovak paratroopers.

After the Communist coup in 1948, he refused to bow to the Communist regime. One year later, he was detained by the secret police and held in the Prague Archbishopric Palace for two years.

In 1965, Beran was appointed a cardinal, but the Communist regime forced him to leave Czechoslovakia.

While in Rome, Beran joined the activities of the Second Vatican Council.

After he died in Rome in 1969, following a wish of Pope Paul VI he was interred in St. Peter's Basilica, in which almost exclusively popes are buried.