

The Pope appointed Dominik Duka, the Bishop of Hradec Králové as new Archbishop of Prague on Saturday, replacing Cardinal Miloslav Vlk who had resigned on the ground of old age. Duka will take up the post within the next two months, during a mass celebrated at St. Vitus' Cathedral. Cardinal Vlk has been one of the longest-serving Prague archbishops, having held the post since 1991.

Source: most Czech press

New Prague archbishop looks to settle disputes with state

ČTK I

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Hradec Kralove, East Bohemia, Feb 13 (CTK) - Dominik Duka, newly appointed Prague archbishop, wants first to be acquainted with the work of his predecessor Miloslav Vlk and later focus on the settlement of disputes between the state and church, Duka told journalists Saturday after his official appointment.

Duka said it was soon to resolve the question of property settlement between the state and church, but the issue was his "life-long evergreen."

"This relates to some extent to the unresolved issues that must be primarily settled by the government of the Czech Republic and the Czech state," said Duka, whose appointment was announced this noon.

"The unresolved situation is blocking the development of villages, towns and regions. We want such an agreement that would benefit the whole society, which means also churches and religious societies," Duka said.

Duka said he hoped he would help conclude an agreement between the Czech Republic and the Vatican and resolve the ownership of Saint Vitus Cathedral in Prague claimed both by the state and Catholic church.

Duka said he was only one of the many persons taking part in the issues.

"I believe this will be resolved while everyone will be satisfied. This will depend on the processes that have already been started," Duka said.

Duka said the church should turn to the young generation and conduct a brave and open dialogue as confirmed by its plenary session in 2005.

Duka will assume the office within two months.

"I will have to distinguish between the religious life in Prague and Central Bohemia, which is a special region drained by the capital. People often complain about living in an internal borderland," Duka said.

Duka was appointed the bishop in Hradec Kralove in 1998.

Unlike other countries, the Czech Republic has not yet concluded a concordat with the Vatican, largely over unsettled property problems from the Communist era.

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ČTK I

16 February 2010

Prague, Feb (CTK) - Dominik Duka who was appointed new Prague Archbishop on Saturday will take over the archdiocese on April 10, he agreed with Cardinal Miloslav Vlk whom he will replace in the post today.

The solemn mass will be held at Prague's St. Vitus's Cathedral in the presence of priests and the public at 10:00.

Vlk handed in his resignation in 2007 when he turned 75 as is usual in the church.

Pope Benedict XVI did not accept his resignation and asked him to continue in the post for another two years that expired last May.

In his meeting with Vlk today Duka placed emphasis on the continuity of development in the archdiocese, the Prague Archbishopric told ČTK.

"He pointed to the principle that is stressed in the preparation of students of theology for priesthood: not to change anything for a certain period," Prague Archbishopric spokesman Ales Pistora said.

Duka, who took over the key to the Archbishop's Palace, a collection of legal norms and a catalogue of the archdiocese, dined with Vlk.

"During the dinner they spoke about the tasks of the Prague Archbishop in general as well as about the tasks that will face the new Prague Archbishop in the foreseeable future," Pistora said.

"Archbishop Dominik Duka asked Cardinal Vlk to fulfil these tasks as the archdiocese administrator until he ceremoniously takes over the diocese," Pistora said.

He said Duka asked Vlk to be available for pastoral cooperation in the archdiocese.

Duka will go to the Vatican on June 29, the SS Peter and Paul holiday, to take over pallium, a special part of the Metropolitan's clothing, from the Pope.

President Vaclav Klaus, who received Duka today, said he believes Duka's appointment will benefit the Czech Republic as well as the church.

Duka said he wants to serve society and that he would like to contribute to people living "like at Christmas time" the year around.

Klaus congratulated Duka on his new post and pointed out that this is their first meeting.

Duka told journalists after the meeting that he believes in good neighbourly relations. He hinted to that the Archbishop's Palace is situated next to Prague Castle, seat of Czech heads of state.

Duka is close to Klaus. They used to meet regularly before Christmas at the presidential seat at Prague Castle.

They also attended together the traditional ascent of Snezka, the Czech Republic's highest mountain (1602 metres above sea level) in the Krkonose (Giant) mountains, east Bohemia, on the occasion of the St Lawrence pilgrimage.

Duka told journalists that he had talked with Klaus several times about relations between the church and state.

The dispute over the ownership of St. Vitus's Cathedral was not taken up today, Duka said.

"It is still too early, I do not yet know all details of the issue. But I will try for all citizens of the Czech Republic to know that the cathedral is in a way our cathedral, I mean a Czech cathedral," Duka said.

He said it is not only a church, but it is also a pantheon of the kings of Bohemia who wanted the church to serve a spiritual revival of the nation.

The state and the church have long been locked in a dispute over the cathedral's ownership. Last March the Supreme Court dismissed an appellate review filed by the church.

The church complained against a lower court's verdict that the cathedral with the adjacent land belongs to the state. Last May the church filed a complaint with the Constitutional Court.

Duka said he would not yet talk about his plans in his new post, but said improving relations between the church and society is his priority.

Duka said the church should also seek a new way of communication with people.

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