

The Last Attempt

Budapest, 26th of June 2010

Dear Relatives,

Dear Piarist Order,

Dear Bokor,

And Everyone who is here today,

We have buried him! And here we are now on György Bulányi's burial-feast, on the feast which evokes Jesus' last supper. It is my duty now to make the farewell speech. Some of my friends have warned me to mind my words this time. I agree with them that now we should not speak about the insults suffered by the Deceased and by us, but about gratitude about gratitude that we owe to God, about gratitude that we owe to György Bulányi, our brother and our friend. But who is this man? And what did he want? What did he do?

1) Who is this man?

I asked the same question when I got to know him forty years ago, while we were having half a day's walks debating in the mountains of Buda. I found out that this man was a fantast, this man was not in his right mind.

He stated that the poor are blessed, that the common men are blessed, the meek are blessed. He explained that in richness there is no blessedness, in power there is no blessedness, and in violence there are only mountains of corpses, only pain and misery! I thought he was insane because I did want to belong to the rich, I wanted to get to the top in the Church, and, as a new of John of Capistrano, I wanted to provoke the people to crusade against Bolshevik dictatorship.

I was digesting this man's phantasms for three years until I realized that I had read the Beatitudes about the blessedness of the poor, the persecuted and the crying from the pulpit without any problem. At last, the image of the two fantast united in my mind, since Bulányi kept talking about Jesus, who's Gospel I was preaching day by day... I had to realize his truth because experience also proved that only the poor can truly give anything, the rich only give alms. Only common men can serve others honestly, the great are only servants by name (=minister), in reality they are flaunting in their ascendancy. And only the meek can assure peace, the aggressive can only fight.

I understood that the message of the Nazarene Carpenter's Son and that of his disciple, Bulányi, „the humble theologian,” is the dream of a **new world order**, which is God's dream. The world of men should not be built on taking away and spoliation but on giving, because if everyone gives, everyone receives something, and we neither have to oppress others, nor do we have to fight. Our world should not be built on power and domination, but „whoever wishes to be first among you shall be your slave” (Matth. 20:27). And the world should not be built on violence, because if I slap back at least as hard as I was slapped on my cheek, the number of those who hit will not decrease on Earth but will increase until the destruction of the world. Only the meek, those who do not hit and who are able to offer their other cheek, can save the earth. I understood the truth of the Beatitudes.

I understood, as well, that the Nazarene prophet and this Bulányi are the prophets not just of a new world order but, arising from it, of a **new world structure**. The system of domination, the inferior-superior, master-slave relations among people should be abolished; they should be replaced by brotherhood: „you are all brothers” (Matth. 23:8). The society of brotherhood should be established.

I understood the dream, the vision, and I became a slave to it. Because it is a theoretically clear and wonderful plan of God, God's world on earth! This is the very message of Jesus and only this can be the essence of Christianity.

But what does Bulányi want to do with this fantastic plan?

2) What does this man want?

I understood what he wanted, first of all, to wash away the disgrace, the shame of the Church. Since the fact that we have been there for 2000 years where we are now, it is not God's sin, it is not Jesus' sin, but mainly the sin of Christians who have not done everything to create a new world. In fact they have joined the rich, powerful, and violent systems usurping the name of Jesus, who was poor, small, and meek..

What else did Bulányi want? What the Italian novelist Papini already formulated at the beginning of the last century in his book, *Life of Christ* (1920): “...Jesus offers us his proof, the last one. The proof of love... The most daring one, the one which is the most inconsistent with our instincts...” Bulányi wants to push the last attempt. In the history we have already tried dictatorship, one man's dominance over everyone, we have already tried democracy,, which is the dominance of majority over a minority, but we have not tried yet Jesus' system when everyone serves everyone. This world turned upside down has to be set up – said Bulányi. The world spoiled by men has to be turned into the world planned by God! This is the last attempt.

Beautiful, imposing plan! His six volume work, nearly 1000 pages long, is created, the *Seek the Kingdom of God!*, then the *Church Order* essay, in which he outlined his dream about Jesus' love order instead of the canon law. Of course anyone can write about anything. This can also cause trouble, but who cares about six volumes or 1000 pages, it could also be 1000 essays, there is still enough room for them on the bookshelves or in the cellar. Bulányi makes no difference. Let's forget him!

The real trouble began when this man did not only dream and write, but wanted to realize this dream. The real trouble began when he found more and more fools who joined him. Yes, we joined him to save God's honour and to save the world as we can.

3) What did this man do?

We knew that human and social relations could not be rearranged with violence but we can start it by building from below.

A good world can only be built up by good men. We have to repent, we have to become better people, we have to follow Jesus' ideals. It is very hard in itself, but still not enough.

Men live in communities; the society is built up of communities. We have to continue with the communities: with the family and with the small community which is the link between family and society. We have to create small brotherly communities like Jesus' small group of twelve, starting in the Church which can later be a sign, the town built on a hill, an alternative social pattern for the world. This was Bulányi's desire until his death.

What he created was the Bokor network of small communities, which defines itself as an ethical renewal movement, and which celebrates its 65th anniversary this year.

By Vatican impulse and with the support of the Hungarian bishops, Bulányi started setting up small communities in 1945 so that the Church may survive in small underground groups during the dictatorship. For his activity, the totalitarian state recompensed Bulányi with death-sentence which was changed into life imprisonment. At last he got amnesty after spending ten years in prison, and he began to organize the small communities again.

We were either applauded or cursed because of our attempts to realize our ideals. We were upbraided for the money given to the Indian hungry, and then twenty-six young brothers of ours were imprisoned for refusing military service. They did not want to serve their country by swearing on killing people. We are sure that their sacrifice contributed to the fact that now there is no obligatory military service.

Unfortunately, his plan of serving in the Church failed. Saint Francis of Assisi is thought to be the saver of the Middle Ages, whose Lady Poverty program stopped the Church

running toward the gulf. Francis was lucky because while his enemies wanted his downfall, the old Pope Innocent III, allegedly because of a dream, kissed the barefooted Francis' feet in the Basilica of St. John Lateran and approved his movement (1210). Bulányi's dream of his Catholic Church could not come true because of the given historical situation, though there was a chance for the Church to follow the pattern of the Christians in the first three centuries and, under the persecutions in Hungary, to become a historically unique power: a confessional and testimonial Church.

We also have a chance today in the new regime, in the world of Mammon, in the dictatorship of Money. The realization of God's Kingdom, the world of love is not bound to place, time and institution. Anyone can realize it anywhere. We only have to follow Jesus' ideals, the ideals written into mankind by God, and we have to join forces with each other.

Our brother, György, searched for himself in his last years with an impatience of someone who was about to go home. He went everywhere where he was invited to. It was not his fault if his attitude and words were misunderstood. He was working on the realization of God's Kingdom to his last breath. With giant power of will, half-paralyzed, and physically dependent on others, but with full mental alertness he was still working until the very last hours of his life.

I began my speech with a personal confession, and I would like to finish it with another one with which, I think, all my brothers and sisters shall agree.

Our brother, György! We thank the loving God that He gave You to us as a blazing torchlight in a time of upheaval. We are sure that your name is written in the book of Life up there, and it will be imprinted in the coming generations' mind. We render thanks to your family where you came from. We thank the Order, which set you on your course and which received you into its caring love in your last years. We thank you each other: the „hundred times as much sisters and brothers” unified by your love into a flaming Bokor. Help us to keep this flame alive in us and in our children for ever! Help us never to forget: the very statement that the realization of God's plan with mankind is impossible, it is impossible.

[Kovács László]