

OPPONENT'S REPORT
Of
Doc. Šimon Marinčák, Ph.D.
To Promotion as Professor

I have known doc. Šimon Marinčák ever since he was a student here at the Pontifical Oriental Institute, Rome, where he finished his licentiate in Oriental Ecclesiastical Sciences in 1998 and the doctorate in Byzantine liturgical music in 2003. He studied under the adverse economic conditioning of post-1989 and, indeed, had to write his doctoral thesis largely at a distance from PIO's insuperable library. Even then he studied under demanding professors such as Christian Hannick, Miguel Arranz and Robert F. Taft, so that I admire his unrelenting search of excellence and tenacity in spite of so many exterior handicaps, inspired by his great love of Byzantine liturgical music. I remember that the Slovak Rector Cyril (now Archbishop) Vasil, SJ and myself, as dean, discussed the possibility of co-opting him to teach here at the PIO, which partly because of his command of Slavic languages and his mastery of Byzantine music made him much desired.

Later on, I got to know doc. Šimon Marinčák, Ph.D. as director of the Fr Lacko Spirituality Centre of the Jesuits, where, besides being a researcher, he was an organizer. Having invited me to hold a conference several times, I was always amazed how frictionless these Symposia he organized were - from the selection of speakers and the consequent choice of themes, to the thorough overview of the details of a faultless execution. Equally smooth was working with him as an editor of books which bring together such a rich palette of ideas and diverse methods in a coherent whole. Among his administrative skills, his command of several modern languages doubtlessly stands him in good stead.

As editor-in-chief of the *Encyclopedic Dictionary of the Christian East*, I could rely on him for help, especially on a particularly lengthy and intricate article on Liturgical Music in the various Byzantine Churches. With his help, an article which seemed destined to be scrapped turned out to have just the right bounce to keep interest in it alive.

I have heard him talk, but recently I read an article of his on "Pilgrimage and para-liturgical music in the eparchy of Mukačevo". The way he marshalled the arguments convinced me. His research focuses mainly on topics related to liturgical music, either directly or indirectly. He is an author of important inputs within the history of music ("Paths of Byzantine Music in Czechoslovakia - An Overview of the Past Two Hundred Years," "Chorus angelorum. Uno sguardo alla partecipazione attiva dell'assemblea liturgica e alla funzionalità del coro," "The Byzantine Musical Tradition and its Implementation among the Slavs of the Carpatho-Ruthenian Basin. A Historical Survey," "The Transmission of Byzantine Melodies to the Slavic World from Selected Sources," "Shaping Elements of Early Slavic Christian Music"), liturgy as the closest ally to music ("Pilgrimage and Para-Liturgical Music in the Eparchy in Mukačevo," "La liturgia della missione cirillo-metodiana: le fonti e le interpretazioni," "Post-Communal Sticheron in the Byzantine-Slavic Liturgical Formularies: Musical and Liturgical Aspects"), but also indirect texts ("Exhortation to Rulers in the Context of Theocracy," "Pseudo-Zonaras: Early Slavonic Witness to 16-17 Century Liturgical

Practice in the Eparchy of Mukačevo," "Byzantine liturgical legislation in the old Hungarian kingdom in the 16-18 centuries," "Eastern Catholic Reflections on Liturgy and Ecclesiology from East-Central Europe," "The Eastern Rite Catholic Church in Slovakia," "Popular Beliefs and Christian Liturgy in the Slavic Milieu before Mongol Invasions – Examples from Administrative and Ecclesiastical Documentation"), or strictly liturgical articles ("Fasting Traditions in the Eparchy of Mukačevo," "Fonti e risorse della tradizione liturgica bizantina carpatica dell'eparchia di Mukačevo" "Development of the Rite of Communion within the Ruthenian Tradition in Slovakia in 17-19 Centuries,").

Last but not least, dealing with him over the years shows him to be steady in his relations, with a great love of Eastern liturgy, and most of all of Byzantine Liturgy, and especially Byzantine music. Besides he has shown a keen penchant for collaboration, and not only organization, friendly, capable of making his point without the pressure we associate with certain politicians. Friendship, for him, seems to be an absolute priority. Consequently, I wholeheartedly endorse his candidacy to be an ordinary professor of theology.

Rome, 27.03.2025


Edward G. Farrugia, SJ

Professor emeritus of the Pontifical Oriental Institute, where I taught from 1981 to about three years ago.

Twice dean of the Faculty of Eastern Ecclesiastical Sciences of the PIO (2004-2001), and Pro-Dean in 2005-2006 when an emergency arose

Lecturer at the old Pontifical Gregorian University for many years.

Lecturer at the Moscow Jesuit Institute of History and Theology, for four or five years

Lecturer at the Innsbruck Faculty of the Franz Joseph University for two years

"Incaricato", i.e. entrusted with a theme, and lecturer at the Pontifical Lateran University for about twenty years, including in recent years, for about four years in ecumenical theology

Invited Professor at the University of Malta for many years

Editor of the monograph *Orientalia Christiana* of the Pontifical Oriental Institute 2004-2024

Consultor of the Congregation for the Eastern Churches (1994-2000) and for the same Dicastery (2024-)

Member on Boards such as St Ephrem's Theological Journal and the first Catholic several volume Russian Encyclopedia ed. by the OFM

Member of the Joint St Irenaeus Catholic/Orthodox Ecumenical Working Group (2005-)