



Košice, 30. April 2019

Dear Professor Cicero Moraes!

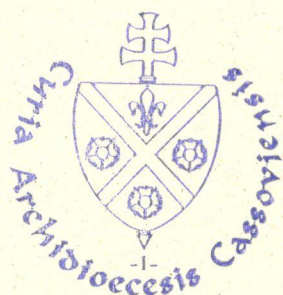
Let me thank you on my behalf and on behalf of the grateful Košice Archdiocese of Eastern Slovakia, priests and believers, for your substantial contribution to the work on the digital reconstruction of the faces of our Three Holy Martyrs from Košice: the canon of Esztergom, St. Mark Krizin and the Jesuits, St. Stefan Pongrac SJ and St. Melichar Grodecky SJ. All three were Catholic priests. They died during a turbulent period in our history after the outbreak of the Thirty Years War. At that time, battles for the royal crown and religion were fought in Hungary. They were murdered cruelly during the night of 7 September 1619 here in Košice. They were beatified by PopeSt. Pius X in Rome on January 15, 1905 and were canonized by PopeSt. John Paul II here in Kosice on July 2, 1995. For almost 40 years, the entire Košice presbytery has gathered on their feast to be inspired by their example. They are important for us as heavenly patrons, although none of them were Slovak; St. Marek Krizin came from Croatia, St. Stefan Pongrac SJ from the Hungarian-speaking part of Transylvania (now Romania) and St. Melichar Grodecky SJ from Sliezsko (now Poland). Similarly, in 863 our co-patrons of Europe came to our ancestors from Byzantium: our St. Constantine (Cyril) and St. Method were Greeks, but they preached the Gospel in the language of our people, who adored them and they became our national saints. A similar good example was also presented by the Three Košice Martyrs, and this country became their eternal home. There are six churches dedicated to these Three Martyrs in our archdiocese of Košice.

On the occasion of the 400th anniversary of the martyrdom of these saints, we were looking for a scientifically forensic way to give them back their faces. Different workplaces in Slovakia and abroad were considered. After everything, we came through God's direction to Jiří Šindelař and Martin Frouz from the Czech Republic, who had already developed a good working relationship with you. Today, we are pleased that it was you. Based on scientific methods and procedures, you have returned the true faces to our three saints. It was touching for everyone on Tuesday, April 30th, to look at them directly. They are no longer unclear or unknown to us; they are no longer just relics and bones, but old good friends of our past who are living in the heavenly homeland. The team of scientists was led by my archivist and a member of the Slovak Academy of Sciences professor Peter Zubko, and comprised three anthropologists from Comenius University in Bratislava, Dr. Silvia Bodorikova, Dr. Michaela Dörnhöferova and Michal Poljak; the agenda was provided by my personal secretary, Dr. Jozef Kmec. We are very grateful to all of them for their work.

Professor Moraes, the result of your work is an encouragement and a new breath of inspiration for us at this difficult time. We see that modern scientific practices can be beneficial to the spread of the Gospel. In addition to the primary spiritual significance for Catholics, this work also has secondary cultural and historical significance: it connects several countries and peoples of Central Europe - the native lands of the saints, but also the regions in which they lived, studied, performed as priests and eventually died. They were born for us in Košice and now they have been born symbolically again in Košice for this land. We appreciate your expertise, anthropological and digital skills, because all of these experiences are beneficial for the Catholic Church and forensic science as well. Throughout all of this, we admire your personal story and personal engagement, enthusiasm for work; we also thank your family for their understanding.

Dear Professor, we wish you God's grace and blessings in your work which will undoubtedly benefit many countries and nations of the world in strengthening the Catholic faith and the Holy Catholic Church. May God reward you (Pan Boh zaplat')! I assure you of our prayers for you and your family.

With my blessing,



✠ **Mons. Bernard Bober**

Archbishop of Košice – Metropolitan Archbishop