
Czech Republic: bell ringing in Prague to commemorate 9,000 bells requisitioned and melted down during World War II

Since yesterday, Sunday 28 August, Prague has a memorial commemorating the 9,801 bells that were seized and melted into weapons by the Nazis in Bohemia and Moravia during World War II. As reported by Radio Prague, the commemorative bell was produced in the historic Grassmayr Bell Foundry in Innsbruck and weighs 9,801 kg. The project “#9801” was initiated by the Sanctus Castulus Association, which in recent years has given new life to several churches in Prague through restoration and renovation interventions. According to the Sanctus Castulus Association, 90% of the church and tower bells in public places were stolen and plundered by the German army during the Second World War. The requisition order was published on 26 November 1941 and the bells were collected up to the summer of 1942 to be taken to Germany for melting. The commemorative bell that has just been unveiled will be displayed until the end of September on the Smetana embankment, in the city centre, where the bells were first shipped to Germany 80 years ago. It will then be moved, in 2024, to another location on the Vltava river near the famous Charles Bridge, and will be rung on special occasions. The bell rings with a particularly low F0 tone and bears the inscription “Peace on Earth” chosen in the light of the war in Ukraine. The bell “reminds us of this cultural loss” and, the promoters said, “thousands of silenced voices are replaced by the lively and powerful voice of a bell”. Since ancient times, bells have always played a social role: “We are convinced that the voice of bell #9801 will help people not to forget what unites us and not to surrender”, the Sanctus Castulus Association remarked.

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