

## THE TWO HUNDREDTH ANNIVERSARY OF THE BIRTH OF KAROL KUZMÁNY

In September 2006 the National Bank of Slovakia is preparing the issue of a commemorative silver coin devoted to the two hundredth anniversary of the birth of Karol Kuzmány, writer, Church dignitary, teacher, first deputy chairman of Matica Slovenská and one of the central figures in the national, literary and religious life of Slovakia in the 19th century.

Károl Kuzmány was born on 16th November 1806 in Brezno. After completing his theological studies, he worked as an assistant teacher and later as a professor at the Evangelical Lyceum in Kežmarok. He served as parish pastor in Zvolen and Banská Bystrica, lectured at the Evangelical or Lutheran Faculty of Theology of the University of Vienna (1849-1860), and became patental superintendent in Banská Bystrica. Finally, from 1863, he worked in Martin, where he was parish pastor and serving deputy chairman of the Matica Slovenská cultural organization. He engaged in the Slovak national movement beside the followers of Štúr. In 1849, he was a member of the delegation, which submitted to the Emperor Franz Joseph I a document stating the national and constitutional demands of the Slovaks. He actively participated in founding Matica Slovenská in 1863 and contributed to establishing the Slovak gymnasium in Martin. He wrote the theoretical work *O kráse* (On Beauty) in 1836, the poem *Běla* in 1836, the philosophical novel *Ladislav* in 1838, and 1836 to 1838 he published the literary magazine *Hronka*. He produced a proposal for the organization of the Evangelical or Lutheran Church in the Kingdom of Hungary. It was implemented in 1859 in the form of the Imperial Protestant Patent, and the majority of Church synods in Slovakia were organized according to it. He died on 14th August 1866 at Turčianske Teplice.

The National Bank of Slovakia held an anonymous competition to find an artistic design for the commemorative coin. Eight artists submitted ten works. The commission of the governor of the NBS assessed the proposed designs and recommended for production the proposal by the successful designer of Slovak commemorative coins, the Kremnica artist Mária Poldafová. Her design, which won

second prize, attracted attention especially thanks to the quality of the portrait, the purity of the sculptural work and the high level of compositional and creative stylistic harmony between the obverse and reverse. On the obverse, a square contains a depiction of an open book with a lime leaf in the centre. On the reverse, a square contains a portrait of Karol Kuzmány. Above is a facsimile of his signature and his ecclesiastical function – „superintendent“.

A second prize was awarded to Miroslav Ronai. The obverse side of his design bears the head of a young woman, intended as an allegory of the young Slovak nation and the Matica Slovenská organization. On the reverse is a characteristic portrait of Karol Kuzmány. The winner of the competition, Mária Poldafová also gained an upgraded third prize. The commission especially appreciated the quality of the portrait, which shows a high level of stylization.

With the coin devoted to Karol Kuzmány, the Slovak Republic joined the programme of „Common Issues of Europe“, in which various member states of the European Union participate. In 2006, it is devoted to European personalities. A common element of the issues is a mark representing a European star and the symbol of the euro. The mark was not part of the competition designs, but was added later by decision of the NBS. It is placed on the lower margin of the obverse side.

The commemorative coin has a value of 200 SKK, diameter of 34 mm and weight of 18 g. It has been struck from silver with a fineness of 900/1000 at the Kremnica Mint. On the edge is an incuse inscription from the beginning of a hymn: „KTO ZA PRAVDU HORÍ V SVÄTEJ OBETI...“ (Who burns for truth in holy sacrifice). The coin was struck in the number of 4,900 pieces of standard quality and 2,500 pieces of proof quality. A maximum of 5,000 standard and 17,000 proof pieces has been set. Proof coins will be struck up to this limit according to demand from foreign customers.

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**Photographs: Bedrich Schreiber  
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