

Richard Puza was born on 17 August 1943 in Klagenfurt (Carinthia/Austria), studied law at the University of Graz and received his doctorate in law in 1965. From 1966 onwards, he was an assistant at the Institute for Canon Law at the Faculty of Law of the University of Graz, where he got his habilitation in canon law in 1972.

Since the beginning of the winter semester 1978/79, he was substitute professor of Canon Law at the Catholic Faculty of Theology at the University of Tübingen and at the same time was appointed associate professor of history of canon law and state-church relations at the Graz Faculty of Law in 1979. Finally, on 27 November 1980, he became the first non-priestly lawyer as full professor of canon law at the Catholic Faculty of Theology at the University of Tübingen. He held this position until his retirement in the summer semester of 2011.

During this time, he served four times as dean of the Faculty of Catholic Theology. He was particularly interested in promoting international networking of his faculty. This commitment ranged from coordinating the EU-student exchange programmes ERASMUS and SOKRATES, partnership agreements with, for example, the Islamic theology faculties in Istanbul and Çanakkale to his visiting professorship in Pavia, Palermo, Paris and Straßburg.

Since 1989, he has regularly organised specialist conferences on current issues of canon law in collaboration with the Academy of the Diocese of Rottenburg-Stuttgart. In 1998, he founded Nomok@non, the first online journal for law and religion.

He held many positions within his Church. Puza was an advisor to the Diocesan Synod of Rottenburg-Stuttgart in 1985/1986 and Adiutor Secretarii Specialis at the Synod of Bishops in Rome in 1987, which focused on 'The Vocation and Mission of the Laity in the Church and in the World'. He was a diocesan judge at the Episcopal Officialate in Rottenburg and was appointed by the Bishop of Rottenburg-Stuttgart as a member of the Diocesan Council and the Commission on Sexual Abuse by Clergy.

Among his numerous publications, his Catholic Canon Law, which is widely used in German-speaking countries and has been published in two editions in the "Uni-Taschenbücher" series, should be particularly highlighted.

As a particularly active member of the European Consortium for State and Church Research, Richard Puza has written a number of articles for both conference proceedings and the European Journal for State and Church Research. In 2004, he organised the annual conference in Tübingen on the topic 'Religion and Law in Dialogue: Covenantal and Non-Covenantal Cooperation between State and Religion in Europe'.

We mourn with his family, especially with his wife, who accompanied him to many events and to whom he gratefully dedicated the Tübingen conference reports 'for her loving care and constant support'.

Richard Potz