

The main topic of this study is the role of the lower echelons of the clergy in Czech society in the 1860's. Against a backdrop of the broader socio-political context, the study focuses on the Vicariate of Sedlčany, where the writer and patriotic priest Beneš Metod Kulda served as vicar from 1860 to 1870. The work deals with the identity of the ethnically Czech lower echelons of the clergy, their mentality and activities. Special emphasis is placed on how they coped with the liberalization of society, on their work in education and their attitudes towards national issues. The study depicts the mentality and activities of the clergy on the basis of specific examples, which can frequently be termed typical. At the same time, it describes unusual events that in some cases attracted attention beyond the borders of the vicariate itself. In conflict situations, the perspective of the clergy are also compared to the views of their ideological opponents. An analysis of the relationships and mentalities of the main actors reveals the multifaceted background of social life in the years when decisions were being made about the future direction of the Habsburg Monarchy and the Catholic Church.