



CHRONICLE OF THE
CATHOLIC CHURCH
IN LITHUANIA
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CHRONICLE OF THE CATHOLIC CHURCH
IN LITHUANIA No. 67

A Translation of the Complete Lithuanian Original
LIETUVOS KATALIKŲ BAŽNYČIOS KRONIKA Nr. 67
Documenting the Struggle for Human Rights
In Soviet-Occupied Lithuania Today

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COVER:
Father Jonas Kastytis Matulionis, see p. 13

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Introduction

In 1940, when the Soviet Union occupied Lithuania by force, 85.5% of the country's more than 3 million inhabitants were Roman Catholic, 4.5% Protestant, 7.3% Jewish, 2.5% Orthodox and 0.2% of other persuasions.

In the two archdioceses and four dioceses were: 708 churches, 314 chapels, 37 monasteries, 85 convents, three archbishops, nine bishops, 1271 diocesan priests, 580 monks, of whom 168 were priests. Four seminaries had 470 students. There were 950 nuns.

Nuns cared for 35 kindergartens, 10 orphanages, 25 homes for the aged, two hospitals, a youth center, and an institute for the deaf-mute.

On June 15, 1940, the Red Army marched into Lithuania; the independent government was replaced by a puppet regime.

On July 14-15, rigged elections were staged. On July 21, with the Red Army surrounding the assembly house, the new People's Diet "unanimously" declared Lithuania a Soviet Socialist Republic.

On June 25, 1940, the Church was declared separate from the state, and the representative of the Holy See was expelled.

Parish lands were confiscated, clergy salaries and pensions were cut off, and their savings confiscated. Churches were deprived of support. Catholic printing plants were confiscated, and religious books destroyed.

On June 28, 1940, the teaching of religion and recitation of prayers in schools was forbidden. The University's Department of Theology and Philosophy was abolished, and all private schools were nationalized. The seminaries at Vilkaviškis and Telšiai were closed, and the seminary at Kaunas was permitted to operate on a very limited scale. The clergy were spied upon constantly.

On June 15, 1941, 34,260 Lithuanians were packed off in cattle-cars to undisclosed points in the Soviet Union. After World War II, the mass deportations resumed and continued until 1953.

Vincentas Borisevičius, Bishop of Telšiai, was arrested on February 3, 1946, and condemned to death after a secret trial. Before year's end, his auxiliary, Bishop Pranas Ramanauskas, was also arrested and deported to Siberia. Bishop Teofilus Matulionis of Kaišiadorys and Archbishop Mečislovas Reinys of Vilnius were deported

to a Siberian labor camp. Archbishop Reinsys perished in prison at Vladimir, November 8, 1953. By 1947, Lithuania was left with a single bishop, Kazimieras Paltarokas, of Panevėžys. He died in 1958.

In 1947, the last convents and monasteries were closed, their communities dispersed, and all monastic institutions were outlawed.

After Stalin's death in 1953, there was a slight improvement in the religious situation. Bishops Matulionis and Ramanauskas were allowed to return to Lithuania, but not to minister to their dioceses or to communicate with the clergy or laity.

Bishop Ramanauskas died in 1959, and Archbishop Matulionis in 1963.

In 1955, two new bishops were appointed by Rome and consecrated: Julijonas Steponavičius and Petras Maželis. Steponavičius has never been permitted to administer his diocese.

Bishop Vincentas Sladkevičius, consecrated in 1957, was kept under severe government restrictions until 1982. In 1965, Monsignor Juozas Labukas-Matulaitis was consecrated in Rome to head the Archdiocese of Kaunas and the Diocese of Vilkaviškis. Two new bishops were consecrated in 1969: Bishop Romualdas Krikščiūnas was appointed Apostolic Administrator of the Diocese of Panevėžys, and Bishop Liudvikas Povilonis was appointed auxiliary to Bishop Labukas, and succeeded him after his death in 1979.

In 1982, Bishop Sladkevičius was permitted to return to his diocese as Apostolic Administrator of Kaišiadorys. Father Antanas Vaičius was named bishop and Apostolic Administrator of the Diocese of Telšiai and the Prelature of Klaipėda.

Relaxation of pressure on religious life soon revealed that the Lithuanian people were still deeply religious. It was decided in the mid-fifties to resume the attack. The principal means of attack would be unlimited moral pressure, since physical terror seemed only to strengthen and unify the faithful.

In 1972, the *Chronicle of the Catholic Church in Lithuania*, clandestinely published in that country, began to reach the free world at irregular intervals. Primarily intended to keep Catholics in Lithuania informed of the situation of the Church there, these Lithuanian *samizdat* also serve as a constant appeal to the free world not to forget the plight of a people struggling against overwhelming odds to defend their religious beliefs and to regain their basic human rights.

Rev. Casimir Pugevičius
Translator

Appearing since 1972
Read this and pass it on!
Reproduce it, if you can!

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ECHOES OF THE JUBILEE OF
BLESSED MYKOLAS GIEDRAITIS

When we look at the past, at the cradle of Church history, we frequently wonder with reason how such a weak Church left by Christ in the hands of uneducated village fishermen was able to withstand the storms of two millenia, when during the same time, many more clever, more talented, much more powerful empires created by human beings — kingdoms, states, various parties and organizations — crumbled and disappeared without leaving even a trace.

We will not be wrong in affirming that the strength of the Catholic Church on earth — that mustard seed mentioned in the Gospel — is the saints, her sons and daughters who are able to be perfect instruments in the hands of God. This is why Christ left as the cornerstone of His Church not the powerful of that time, but the Apostles, weak in the eyes of the world, with whose names the world holy is inextricably bound up — the holy Apostle Peter, the holy Apostle Paul, etc. The unbroken continuity of the saints in the history of the Church did not end with the Apostles. It was and is still handed on from generation to generation and from nation to nation.

On the eve of the 600-Year Jubilee of the Baptism of Lithuania we look at the road travelled by the Catholic Church in our nation. Once again we ask, what has been the decisive factor in the Catholic Church's survival in Lithuania throughout six hundred years down to our time when, with the support of powerful allies, Protestantism and Orthodox)') furiously tried to replace it, and today atheistic Communism tries? . . .

It is surprising how, under such conditions, the young and weak Catholicism of Lithuania — there was no theological seminary, there were not enough priests able to proclaim the word of God in a language understandable to the people — withstood the storm of Protestantism, when Protestantism was supported by the majority of the powerful nobles of Lithuania. The Faith was preserved by the simple folk who did not even have the wherewithal to have a good grasp of the teachings of Christ, or the time to become suitably familiar with it.

From the vantage point of time, we can confidently say that the survival of Catholicism in 15th century Lithuania against the storm of Protestantism was made possible by the fact that the nation in its first century of Christianity had holy persons whose spiritual nobility and beauty were instinctively sensed by our morally sound people.



Msgr. K. Dulksnys of Panevėžys, exiled Bishop J. Steponavičius, Bishop R. Krikščiūnas and Bishop V. Sladkevičius of Kaišiadorys at the closing observance of the 500th anniversary since the death of St. Casimir, Lithuania's patron saint. The government militia were present in front of St. Peter and Paul's Church in Vilnius throughout the day on August 26, 1984.

Holiness does not age and fade, it belongs to eternity. The sands of time cannot cover it over with the dust of oblivion . . .

So it is no wonder today, when the attempt is being made to root out the Faith from our nation, replacing it by force with atheism, that it is the desire of the believing public to commemorate solemnly the 500-year jubilee of those honorable sons of our nation, Saint Casimir and Mykolas Giedraitis. Last year, they tried as much as they could to play down the celebration of the Jubilee of Saint Casimir, and even more this year, the commemoration of the 500-Year Jubilee of the death of Blessed Mykolas Giedraitis.

It is painful that the atheists succeed in misleading even some of the faithful. In connection with Blessed Mykolas Giedraitis, sometimes one hears the following complaint: "The wish to commemorate this religious is strange and baseless! The only possible justification

might be that it is an archival curiosity! Perhaps he is great in the light of eternity (as if we did not know how to present him as an example to imitate). Let him rest there in Cracow, foreign to Lithuania and to us!"

It is suggested that we commemorate only those who distinguish themselves by great external activity: Bishop Merkelis Giedraitis, the founder of the first seminaries and one of the first Lithuanian literary lights who gathered young priests around him and urged them to write in Lithuanian; Bishop Motiejus Valančius, who sobered up Lithuania, organized the printing press in Tilžė (Tilsit), supported the book smugglers; Bishop Antanas Baranauskas, and others.

To these suggestions, one might reply in the words of the Gospel. "These you should have practiced without leaving the other undone". (Lk 11, 42) The example of those noble men of our nation is important for us today, but no less important is that of the humble Blessed Mykolas Giedraitis. Just why is this lame, sickly Augustinian Brother important to our Catholic Lithuania of the 20th Century? Why is he a threat to the plans of the government atheists of this age?

Let us open the little book by Bishop Valančius, *Givenimai Szwentuju Diewa (Lives of the Saints of God)*, published in 1868 in Tilžė, under the difficult conditions of the ban of the Lithuanian press. Let us read the biography of Blessed Mykolas Giedraitis by this great bishop of ours, defender of the Catholic Faith, in the context of the plight of the Catholic Church in Lithuania today. When we have no possibility of erecting new churches, establishing new seminaries and presses so badly needed, organizing welfare societies; when our externally visible activities are limited by the atheists to freedom to pray, or to their way of thinking the recitation of prayers, there remains the most important item of all: according to the example of the saints to erect in our own hearts and the hearts of our countrymen, the indestructible living Church.

Does not the example of the life of Blessed Mykolas Giedraitis become, in those conditions, exceptionally dear and close to us? In his biography we find that during early childhood, having become an invalid for life as a result of serious illness, this little prince of ours, who had not yet studied any theology or Christian philosophy, undaunted by the monastery, when contemporaries would jeer at his lameness, used to repeat, "I thank you, God for the illness and the weakness of body, by which you protected me from greater misfortune. Being a prince, I could have easily become vain, and could have become a spiritual invalid. But now you have saved me!"

By contrast, a certain woman of our time who had lost the Faith, in a hook of atheistic propaganda aimed at the public, agitates as follows. "All my life, I believed so fervently. I constantly asked in prayer for one thing for my family, health. So why did this imaginary God not hear my prayer? Why did he take my children away from me: one in the bloom of youth and the other hardly having begun to live? How many ill and lame people there are, confined for whole years to their bed, asking God to send them death, but they suffer and go on living. Why is this so? Where is justice? Not a single religious picture remains in our home. God has disappeared from our home for all time. . ."

It is sad that we who are nourished by six hundred years of Christian tradition are sometimes not able to look at the painful events of today in as Christian a way as did Mykolas Giedraitis, who grew up in a province of 15th-Century East Lithuania, still redolent of paganism. With his deeply Christian wisdom, he is demolishing even today the allegations brought against our religion by the atheists.

Today in Lithuania, state-supported atheism can tolerate only a "brick and mortar ministry" — concerned only with the wooden or masonry church, while every priest or active layman daring to demonstrate any deeper concern for the living Church in the souls of people, especially in the hearts of young people and children, is labeled a religious extremist or state criminal hampering the development of "normal" relations between Church and state. This and similar attitudes being proffered to us by the atheists not infrequently find their way into circles of priests loyal to the atheistic government, while individuals who loyally foster the living Church are called "activists", dogs-in-the-manger, troublemakers and the like.

In this contemporary context, the words of the Blessed Mykolas Giedraitis bequeathed to us through the pen of Bishop Motiejus Valančius, ring especially true: "Fathers, live in unity and fear of God! Love the Lord and love one another. Keep the rules of the order; through your moving sermons lead people to goodness. May not a single hour slip by without working for the salvation of souls!"

The example of heroic humility left us by the Blessed Mykolas Giedraitis is especially practical in our circumstances. Being of noble descent, he becomes a humble brother in a monastery. Having completed higher studies with a baccalaureate, he remains the lowliest of church workers — a sacristan. When people, hearing about his wonderful supernatural gifts (prophecy and healing) flood him with

requests, he calls himself a sinner and asks his admirers to pray that God would be merciful to him.

How necessary this virtue is for us, living as we do in an atheistic environment, where one who wishes to remain a loyal child of the Church must renounce all thought of higher position, or worldly career! You are unfit for even the most routine duties of a teacher, if you wish to be a Catholic openly practicing your faith.

What is used to tempt one onto the road of atheism? If your children faithfully go to church, participate actively in the services, they will ruin their future, there will be difficulties applying for higher studies, etc. The weak, those tempted by recognition and success, succumb.

Real Christian humility is needed if one wishes to resist incessant temptations of this nature. With those who have no taste for pride, self-love and high position, the atheists do not know how to carry out successfully their work of "atheistic expository and propaganda". There is no way to frighten humble people; for their Church and their Nation, they are willing to take up the cross — of oppression, persecution, shame and ridicule. . . .

As in the last century, the Lithuanian village book smugglers, denying themselves, not seeking honors or high position and untempted by the favor of the Czar's government, defended the Lithuanian Catholic press, so too today the future of the Catholic Church and of our Nation will be successfully defended by those who, imitating the humble Blessed Mykolas Giedraitis and our unknown hero book smugglers, do not ask how they will be rewarded on earth for their sacrifices and loyalty to God and country, but do whatever the conscience of a Catholic Lithuanian dictates. It is such people that the disseminators of atheism fear. Such people understand and follow the way of the Servant of God, Mykolas Giedraitis, and hold him in high esteem.

Giedraičiai (Molėtai R a y o n)

May 2, 1985, was cold and rainy. Notwithstanding the unpleasant weather, people gathered in the church of Giedraičiai where the altar of Blessed Mykolas Giedraitis is.

Before the services, a large group of youths dressed in national costume and of girls wearing white dresses came into the church which was decorated with wreaths and flowers. They were all carrying flowers. The young people knelt at the church door, and praying, went on their knees to the altar of Blessed Mykolas Giedraitis. The young

generation of Lithuania, gathered from various cities and towns, placed flowers on the altar of Blessed Mykolas Giedraitis as gifts of love and respect.

Thus did the faithful begin to celebrate the 500-year Jubilee of the death of Blessed Mykolas Giedraitis. Officially, celebration of the jubilee was discouraged.

Zealous priests delivered sermons urging the people to prepare for the jubilee. The faithful distributed pictures of Blessed Mykolas Giedraitis, and one after another, typewritten booklets appeared about the life of the blessed. An excerpt from the dissertation of the Polish priest Andreus Gerard us Dyls, about Mykolas Giedraitis, had reached Lithuania, followed later by the entire dissertation. Speedily, a prayer to the Blessed Mykolas Giedraitis proliferated, which many pledged themselves to recite daily throughout the jubilee year. For the moment, devotees gathered in his hometown (or not far from it, since his birthplace is not definitely known), praying with great enthusiasm to the blessed to intercede for Lithuania and its Church. Sermons were preached by Fathers Zenonas Naviekas, Rokas Puzonas and Ričardas Repšys.

After the services which lasted a long time, those who had come were reluctant to disperse: the youth recited at the altar the prayer to Mykolas Giedraitis, sang hymns and recited religious verse. That day the pastor, Father Vilius Cukuras, was celebrating the tenth anniversary of his priesthood and the faithful congratulated him.

When the celebration was over, government officials accosted Father Cukuras. Coming from as far away as Vilnius, they intimidated and threatened him. They blamed the pastor for planning the commemoration, and for allowing "reactionary" priests to deliver sermons; allegedly the young people had sung the old Lithuanian National Anthem. Nor were the officials pleased by Maironis' *Lietuva brangi* (*Dear Lithuania*) which has become the unofficial anthem of Lithuania. They demanded that no more such commemorations take place.

Prayer to the Blessed Mykolas Giedraitis

*O Blessed Brother Mykolas,
humble flower of the Giedraitis line,
Which came to bloom at the foot of the Cross,
newly planted in the land of our fathers
Obtain for us a firm and active Faith!*

*Humble and patient Brother, marked from childhood
with the Cross of suffering and humiliation,
And having accepted it with sincere love
as the greatest gift.
Teach us to love humility which is so lacking
in the spirit of contemporary mankind.*

*O wise man of learning,
who remained a servant all your life,
Obtain for us true wisdom, so that we might understand
that everything in the world is passing
And the greatest honor is to seek in all things
God, our one eternal goal.*

*O miraculous healer of the sick,
cure the soxds of your fellow Lithuanians,
And of all people, sick and burdened iwith impurity,
drunkenness, infidelity and other vices,
So that they might not perish forever.*

*Respected prophet of the future,
look at the land of your birth,
And obtain for Lithuania a bright,
truly Christian future!*

*Pray for us, Blessed Mykolas, that we might greet
the 600-year Jubilee of the baptism of our nation
Newly reborn, and determined to follow
in the footsteps of the saints.*

Obtain more saints for Lithuania!

*Five hundred years have been unable to cover over
with the dust of oblivion,
Your virtues which have merited for you
the honor and brightness of the blessed.*

*Be a shining example for us, so that we too,
imitating your humility, patience, self-control,
Spirit of prayer and zeal,
might gain eternal happines.*

Amen.

T H A N K Y O U !

The faithful people of Lithuania thank His Holiness, Pope John Paul II, for honoring fellow countryman Mykolas Giedraitis, in his letter to the participants in the jubilee celebration in Cracow.

We humbly place at the Holy Father's throne our request that our fellow countrymen Mykolas Giedraitis and Archbishop Jurgis Matulaitis, would be proclaimed saints as soon as possible, in keeping with the circumstances.

Catholic Lithuania

A LETTER TO THE EDITORS OF THE C H R O N I C L E

(Let Us Stop and Think)

Almost two thousand years ago, the greatest betrayal of a man took place. A man betrayed his brother, a sinner his Redeemer, a disciple his teacher, a creature his Creator. The very manner of betrayal, the kiss of Judas, has left us a deep, symbolic meaning for all time. By kissing, one expresses one's love, attachment, gratitude and friendship, one's dedication and joy. The kiss of Judas did not express a single one of these emotions. It was the traitorous kiss of hypocrisy, pride, vanity and envy; and of fallen mankind. It was a repetition of the sin of Adam, when man's pride, fired by envy, could not stand the primacy and greatness of God.

Brothers and sisters in the faith, at a time of penance and recollection, let us look inward, reflecting on our relations with Christ, with our brothers in faith and calling with our nation and our Church. Let us throw open the doors and windows of our soul, and see whether the spirit of Judas does not lurk hidden in the corners of our soul, awaiting the opportunity to overcome and enslave us completely. To Satan, the earthly merits and titles of a person are not important: he is interested in the human soul. His plan is have mankind fall down and worship him, fear him and serve only him. To attain this goal, all means are acceptable to Satan.

He comes to us as a friend and companion, protecting us from various mishaps, as the most sincere advisor and helper. He comes as wealth, as high position, and hierarchical advancement. He comes as cold, practical thinking, as so-called wisdom, as fear of losing one's freedom and temporal well-being. Finally, he comes "as a contradic-



Throng of people attended the closing ceremonies of the 500th anniversary since the death of St. Casimir, Lithuania's patron saint at SS Peter and Paul's Church on August 26, 1984. Soviet authorities attempted to interrupt a St. Casimir observance earlier that year at which church loudspeakers for thousands of Catholics unable to fit inside the church were turned off on official order.

tion to perceived Truth , as servile submission to evil and complete blindness to goodness and beauty.

Satan so confuses and obfuscates the mind that a person begins to consider love of Truth and Justice and resistance to evil as a crime, because all this displeases Satan. How accurately the playwright Kazys

Saja portrayed this in his *Devynpėdžiai* (*Nine-Foot*), in which people have stopped laughing and singing because this is what their idol, a calf, wanted.

Even our service of God and the Church of Christ must be in keeping with the will of the Evil One. It seems to us, blinded by the snares of the devil that even submission to Satan must promote the honor of God and the welfare of the Church and the faithful. Judas did not directly wish the death of Christ, and only later saw the terrible results of his wicked betrayal.

Do we not in similar fashion lightly enter into slavishly submissive pacts with the Prince of Darkness, hoping to outsmart him? But in return for our deceit, he wreaks vengeance, and then it becomes difficult for us to talk about health when there is an evil growth in our soul.

Have we not in such a weak and servile way submitted to the requirement that undesirable outside influences order the internal affairs of our Church?

Is it not our fault that the seminary, the catechization of children, the publication of religious literature, the limitation of priests' pastoral activities, the choice of candidates for the ecclesiastical hierarchy and many other serious tasks have fallen under the control of the secular government?

Do we not sometimes refuse to accompany the faithful with a cross to the Holy Hill (This is possibly a reference to the Hill of Crosses—Trans. Note) or advise them, if it is heavy, to drop the cross?

Is it not we who are afraid to utter aloud the names of our brothers, the prisoners of conscience, the honorable Fathers Alfonsas, Sigitas and Jonas Kastytis? We are afraid to urge one another to pray for them, because this is displeasing to the Prince of Darkness.

Is it not we who, for various — to our way of thinking—diplomatic-excuses, carry on unequal dialogues with persons of questionable conscience, and later complain that they deceived us?

Is it not we who purposely mislead the Holy See regarding the current plight of the faithful of Lithuania, or at least obfuscate the truth?

Is it not we who purposely mislead the Holy See regarding the current plight of the faithful of Lithuania; or at least obfuscate the truth?

Is it not we who urge people not to speak about the present, not to see the wounds and sorrows of our Church?

Is it not we who give our brothers and sisters erroneous advice, sowing panic, and serving the interests of the Church's enemies?

Is it not we. . . ? Yes, Lord, it is we! Your redeemed children, your brothers and sisters, your disciples. We who walk along side you, but do not recognize you. We who have wanted to shake off the sin of Adam and the spirit of Judas by just our own efforts, forgetting your words "Without Me, you can do nothing."

We, Lord, have allowed the merchants and hypocrites to establish themselves in your house. We are the ones who flee your cross, even though we promise to carry it with you.

If they persecute and calumniate us, you, Lord, have promised us an ample reward in heaven; but while I was putting off trusting in your promises, others become concerned about me. In the words of one contemporary poet, they suggested to me:

*"Position, money, recognition. . . and great honor —
All will be offered to you this night
At a comparatively infinitesimal price —
At the price of the Faith by which you have been living,
At the price of the faith which has given you nothing,
Without wounds, without worry or hurt. . . ."*

And I agreed, since they reminded me:

*"You know what awaits you tonight,
If you calmly renounce it all. . . ."*

Of course, his warning unsettled me somewhat:

*". . . But do you know what awaits you,
If you take all this?. . . ."*

On your redemptive journey, You, Lord, did not make use of any diplomatic maneuvers, you did not submit to the blandishments of the evil spirit, you did not fall down and worship your tempter, even though he promised you all the riches, joys and pleasures of this earth. We, however, forgetting the spirit of the first Christians, and their dedication to you, often easily agree to offer incense to the strange idol.

Following the road of Christ's suffering, believing in the action of the Holy Spirit, the forgiveness of our sins in the hope of eternal life, let us not be blind and deaf to the redemptive invitation: "Come

to me, all of you." We often pray that our nation's son, Archbishop Jurgis Matulevičius, would soon be proclaimed a saint, but we do not wish to understand his words, "How blessed to be a common rag, cleaning even a small corner of the Church . . ." Like Saint Francis at one time, we still do not understand the call, "Rebuild my collapsing Church!"

And yet, there are many wonderfully beautiful examples of those who having fallen, are able to get up again; having strayed from the way of righteousness with tearful eye, a deep sigh for foolish straying, find it once again.

Lord, we want to be with You! Come help us! With the ray of your divine light, disperse the shadows of Judas' spirit. Having washed away the dust of the by-ways, and having cleaned out the corners of our sold, we wish once again to be at your table and to hear your voice, "I am the Living Bread! I am the Way, the Truth and the Life! Follow Me!"

THE KGB TERRORIZES FATHER JONAS KASTYTIS MATULIONIS

Vilnius

On June 19, 1985, Father Jonas Kastytis Matulionis was released from the Smolensk Camp under amnesty. By a happy coincidence that day, in the Church of Saint Michael, Father Stanislovas Valiukėnas was celebrating the fiftieth anniversary of his priesthood. Just before the principal Mass, a worn-out Father Matulionis, who had just returned to Vilnius, entered the church. He had often sung in Saint Michael's Church back in the old days, and was well liked by everyone. Father Matulionis, so recently a prisoner, sang during the solemn Mass, just as he used to. Many of the faithful were surprised: The voice was familiar. . . . Father Matulionis . . . But no . . . He is in prison . . . It really was he . . .

Since the priest is seriously ill, they certified him in camp for invalid category number one. Besides, the article on which he was sentenced was covered by the amnesty, so they let him go.

After the solemn Mass when many had already left, the former prisoner, father Matulionis, exhausted, emaciated but with a shining countenance, came out to the altar. Approaching the altar, he kissed the ground and, thanking God for the gift of the Faith and the gift of the priesthood, and the people for their prayers, he began to offer

Mass. Sensitive to all, and prone to weep at the misfortunes of others, Father Matulionis stood at the altar, emanated but not broken. The people in church wept, the tears flowing spontaneously and unchecked. The women and children wept, the men brushed tears away uninhibited, old ladies grieved silently. No words were necessary. Everyone saw what the devastation wrought by Soviet prison camp means. And he had only been there eight months...

After the gospel, the priest uttered just a few thoughts, but every word of his rang true from experience: "If people really believed in God and loved Him, there would be no camps, and the horror which I saw would not exist," said Father Matulionis. He recalled Father Alfonsas Svarinskas, Father Sigitas Tamkevicius and all those suffering for the Faith, urging the people to pray for God's blessing, strength and freedom for them. The young people who had assembled to celebrate the jubilee greeted the returned prisoner joyously. After Mass, many still wished to meet Father Matulionis and talk with him; but the priest promised to visit everyone later, since he had to report to the militia then, and get at least some rest. He said, "There will be time, we shall meet. I want to visit and console my sister and relatives. They have suffered much."

On Sunday, June 23, Father Matulionis visited Kybartai. Young and old greeted their priest on his return, while he thanked them for their prayers and promised to visit everyone again soon.

Barely a week passed and it was reported that Father Jonas Kastytis Matulionis had been arrested.

On June 26, about noon, as the priest was preparing to celebrate Mass at home, two unknown men came into his apartment, and accosted the former prisoner, demanding to know why he had not registered. Father Matulionis asked the uninvited guests to introduce themselves. The men who had come in produced identification — KGB agents! When the priest explained that his papers were being put in order, and that he had already been to the militia (and everyone knows that in the Soviet system, no one can register in a day), the chekists ordered him to dress and come with them to explain himself. The KGB allowed the housekeeper to pack him food for a day, saying that the first day, no one would give him any. It was obvious that Father Matulionis was being arrested again. Many still hoped that it was a misunderstanding, a mistake; it would be cleared up and they would release him. But the days passed while he sat in the Lukiskis Prison. Once again, he was with criminals!

They told his family that there would be no new trial, since he

had already been convicted; why they had rearrested the barely released priest, they never explained. Only one of the chekists retorted. "He hardly managed to get back when he arranged a new demonstration." Can it be that the warm welcome of a returning priest in the faithful is considered a criminal "demonstration"?

Can there be a greater mockery — to let one have a taste of freedom and without even letting one rest and recuperate, return him extremely exhausted, actually barely alive, to the nightmare of camp?

THE PROTESTS DO NOT ABATE

To: The Prosecutor of the Lithuanian SSR

From: The Priests of the Archdiocese of Vilnius

A P e t i t i o n

On January 18, 1985, the Supreme Court of the Lithuanian SSR sentenced Father Jonas Kastytis Matulionis to three years of imprisonment after finding him guilty of severe disruption of the public order, according to Par. 199 of the LSSR Criminal Code.

On the evening of November 1, 1984, Father Jonas Kastytis Matulionis, together with the faithful, went from the church of Kybartai to the nearby cemetery, to pray for the dead. On the day for honoring the dead (All Souls' Day — Trans. Note), throughout Lithuania, even the civil government organizes processions to cemeteries. The faithful, together with the priest under sentence, went to the cemetery in orderly fashion without hindering either traffic or factory work. Hence, there is no basis for considering the procession "severe disruption of the public order". Moreover, even the LSSR Constitution, Art. 48, guarantees freedom of parades along the street.

Sentenced at the same time to two years of imprisonment was young Romas Žemaitis, who had assisted in the services as an usher. He was convicted of resisting a representative of the government, pursuant to LSSR Criminal Code, Art. 201. Here is what happened: During the procession, Chairman Gudžiūnas of the Executive Committee of the City of Kybartai, wanted to approach Father Jonas Kastytis Matulionis to talk with him. Žemaitis gave a signal with his hand, letting it be understood that it was not fitting to chat at that time. Chairman Gudžiūnas could have expressed his warnings before

or after the services. Thus, there is no basis for considering the aforesaid action of Romas Žemaitis as resistance to government representative.

Meantime, Chairman Gudžiūnas interfered with the carrying out of religious ceremonies even in the cemetery, demanding that Father Matulionis order the people out of the cemetery (LSSR Criminal Code, 145).

We therefore request you to nullify this decision of the LSSR Supreme Court for both of those sentenced, keeping in mind, moreover, that Father Matulionis is a sick man, an invalid of Group II.

Vilnius, March 29, 1985

Priests of the Archdiocese of Vilnius. Fathers: 1. Algimantas Keina, 2. Vytautas Pūkas, 3. Stasys Markevičius, 4. Jonas Boruta, 5. Jonas Vaitonis, 6. Jordanas Šlenys, 7. Česlovas Taraškevičius, 8. Josifas Aškelevičius, 9. Domas Valančiauskas, K). Edmundas Paulionis, 11. Kazimieras Gailius, 12. Marijonas Savickas, 13. Stasys Puidokas, 14. Juozas Verts, 15. Steponas Tunaitis, 16. Leonas Savickas, 17. Vytautas Jaskelvičius, 18. Donatas Puidokas, 19. Jonas Lauriūnas, 20. Kazimieras Žemėnas, 21 IV Aldas Čeponis, 22. Ignas Jakutis, 23. Antonas Filipčik, 24. Mykolas Petravičius, 25. Jonas Kukta, 26. Antanas Simonaitis, 27. Alfredas Kunjšauskas, 28. Vladas Černiauskas, 29. Alfonsas Merkys, 30. Donatas Valfukonis.

31. Alfonsas Petronis, 32. Albertas Ulickas, 33. Jonas Kardelis, 34. Antanas Andriuškevičius, 35. Antanas Valatka, 36. Kazimieras Kindurys, 37. Mykolas Žemaitis, 38. Vaclovas Aliulis, 39. Aleksandras Kaškevičius, 40. Algis Kazlauskas, 41. Petras Purlys, 42. Stanislovas Kakariėka, 43. Petras Tarvydas, 44. Konstantinas Molis, 45. Vladislovas Novickis, 46. Juozas Urbonas, 47. Alfonsas Tamulaitis, 48. Stanislovas Valiukėnas, 49. Kazys Meilius, 50. Petras Daunoras, 51. Justinas Saulius, 52. Bronius Sakavičius, 53. Kazimieras Pukėnas, 54. V. Verikas.

The faithful of Lithuania keep appealing to the Prosecutor General of the LSSR with expressions of protest, demanding the release of the two wrongfully arrested men: Father Jonas Kastytis Matulionis and young Romas Žemaitis, and the release of the two priests already in the second year of their imprisonment: Alfonsas Svarinskas and Sigitas Tamkevičius.

Here are a few texts of statements:

"The painful news has reached us. Once again, a priest who has

zealously served God and people has been arrested, the associate pastor of the parish at Kybartai, Father Jonas Kastytis Matulionis, and a believer from the parish of Kybartai, the youth, Romas Žemaitis. We ask you please not to disobey the Constitution of the LSSR, not to persecute our religion, and as soon as possible to release the priests who have not committed any crime: the assistant pastor of the parish of Kybartai, Father Jonas Kastytis Matulionis; our pastor, Father Sigitas Tamkevičius; the pastor of the parish of Viduklė, Father Alfonsas Svarinskas and the zealous young believer of the parish of Kybartai, Romas Žemaitis, and other prisoners suffering for the truth."

"Please release the wrongfully arrested priest of the parish of Kybartai, Father Jonas Kastytis Matulionis and the young believer of the parish of Kybartai, Romas Žemaitis, as well as those in prison for the second year for zealous fulfillment of their duties: the pastor of the parish of Viduklė, Father Alfonsas Svarinskas and the pastor of the parish of Kybartai, Father Sigitas Tamkevičius.

"We consider the arrests of priests and zealous believers as a persecution of religion and ridicule of our most sacred beliefs."

November 9, 1984, the Associate Pastor of Kybartai, Father Jonas Kastytis Matulionis, was apprehended, and on November 12, the altar server, Romas Žemaitis. Similarly sentenced to ten years of imprisonment were the Pastor of Viduklė, Alfonsas Svarinskas and the Pastor of Kybartai, Sigitas Tamkevičius.

For our homeland Lithuania, that is an unspeakably great pain and loss, especially in these times when there is already a shortage of priests. Therefore, we the faithful of Lithuania come to you, Prosecutor, demanding that you release the unjustly accused and sentenced priests and all others imprisoned for their faith. We also demand a cessation to the terrorizing and persecution of other priests zealously and courageously working in Lithuania, as well as the faithful.

Signed by the faithful of the following parishes:

Aleksotas (Kaunas) — 415	Būdviėtis — 568
Alytus II — 4013	Druskininkai — 740
Bagotoji — 148	Gelgaudiškis—433
Balbieriškis—214	Girdžiai — 228
Birštonas—248	Griškabūdis—433
Iguva — 130	Igliauka — 138

Daukšiai—165	Panevėžys — 4315
Garliava — 606	Pilviškiai—600
Gardašiai—152	Prienai — 2107
Gižai — 135	Riečiai — 810
Gudeliai — 101	Sangrūda — 405
Išlaužas—79	Seirijai — 513
Kaimelis — 334	Skardupiai — 105
Kalvarija — 1587	Šeštokai—352
Kasių Rūda — 266	Šunskai—147
Kučiūnai — 240	Utena — 1825
Leipalingis — 404	Veisiejai — 987
Lukšiai—830	Vilkaviškis—675
Mirolavas — 1500	Z. Panemunė — 81
Panemunė—1339	Kalvarija — 1584
Pažėrai — 168	Kapsukas — 4257
Plokščiai—54	Kriokialaukis — 495
Raudondvaris — 810	Lazdijai — 1306
Rumbonys — 542	Liškiava—337
Santaika — 302	Meteliai — 165
Sintautai — 242	Pakuonis — 149
Šakiai—2437	Patilčiai — 152
Šlavantai—268	Plutiškės—43
Tabariškės—172	Punia — 98
Valkininkai — 112	Rudumina — 565
Viduklė — 350	Sasnava — 590
Viškio - Rūda—132	Simnas — 1524
Kalesnykai — 450	Skriaudžiai—111
Kapčiamiestis — 347	Šilavotas — 78
Krikštonys—339	Šventažeris — 272
Kudirkos Naumiestis — 674	Ūdrija — 632
Lakėčiai — 40	Veiveriai — 112
Marcinkonys — 110	Zapyškis—18
Paluobiai — 81	

FROM THE COURTROOM

In March, 1985, the trial of Vladas Lapienis took place in Vilnius. The defendant's wife, Elena Lapieniene was not informed of her husband's trial officially. Having learned of the impending trial on her own and coming to the courtroom, she found it full of people,



Vladas Lapienis

with no space available. An extra chair was brought for Mrs. Lapieniene, and placed where the view and hearing would be impaired.

The Prosecutor of the trial was Murauskas; the accused rejected counsel. The trial lasted one day. At the beginning, the evidence, which constituted seven volumes, was read. It was read so quickly and quietly that nothing could be heard in the courtroom. Lapienis was accused of anti-Soviet propaganda and calumny.

Witnesses in the case were Miss Ona Dranginyte, a resident of Kaunas, in whose home Vladas Lapienis was arrested (See *Chronicle*

No. 66 — Trans. Note) and the teacher, Juozas Puodžiukas. Witness Dranginytė explained that she did not know Lapienis had been sought by the militia; and why he was coming to see her, she had been unable to ascertain in time. Puodžiukas was a witness for the prosecution, affirming that Lapienis kept his books in his yard shed and suggested reading them. The court needed only one witness to be able to find the defendant guilty of anti-Soviet propaganda.

As Lapienis was making his final remarks, KGB agents obstructed his wife in various ways so that she might hear as little as possible of her husband's speech. The defendant, despite constant interruptions by the judge, spoke for about ten minutes. He said: "The greatest proof that human rights are being abused in the Soviet Union is the fact that I am on trial. According to international agreements, I should not be tried, since I've done nothing wrong. Joyfully I go to prison for Christ and our nation."

During the trial, Lapienis remained very calm.

The court sentenced Lapienis (a 79-year old man) pursuant to the **Criminal** Code, Art. 68. Id, to four years of labor camp and two years exile. The convicted man joked that the court thus was prolonging his life on earth, since it would be awkward to enter eternity without having completed the sentence, that is, in debt to the state.

During the visiting period, Lapienis remained internally calm. When his wife complained that she does not sleep nights, and often weeps, he gently comforted her, "Why do you weep? If you really can't stand it, and have to weep, weep during the day and at night, sleep peacefully.

A KGB agent sitting near them constantly interrupted their conversation. When the visit was over, the woman wanted to kiss her husband, but the chekist interposed himself. As they parted, Mrs. Lapienienė blessed her husband.

Before leaving the visiting room, Lapienis repeated to his wife the words of the hymn, "With Jesus I too take up my cross, which the hand of the Lord has given me, I'm determined to carry it patiently every day, and I will offer myself on it daily as a sacrifice."

FROM THE CHRONICLE ARCHIVES

On August 1, 1976, the feast of Saint Dominic, the church of Palėvenė (Kupiškis *Rayon*), celebrated its 300-year jubilee. The sermon on the occasion was preached by Father Pranciškus Masilionis,



Father Pranciškus Masilionis

who had served at this church. He mentioned briefly the history of the church in Palėvenė; the Dominican Friary founded there, and the school and library they ran, and he described other churches and schools like those of Palėvenė — Pažaislis in Kaunas; SS Peter and Paul, Saint Michael and the Bernardine Church in Vilnius; Tytuvėnai, Linkuva and Kražiai. These were centers of art and learning which had a decisive influence on the formation of the country's attitudes and customs:

"All this prepared the Lithuanians for those struggles and sufferings which awaited them later. All this nourished and strengthened

the Lithuanians in their most difficult times. All this encouraged the Lithuanians to hold out and struggle for freedom. All this aroused in Lithuanians feelings of admiration, self-confidence and even a healthy self-esteem. And now, they are treasures of our nation, given to us by our ancestors, inviting us to hold on to our faith and love of our "fatherland," said Father Masilionis.

The preacher reminded his listeners that one of those who attended the church in Palėvenė and studied in the school run by the friary was the famous Lithuanian architect, Laurencijus Stuoka Gucevičius. Touching on the difficulties of the church of Palėvenė (throughout its 300-year history), Father Masilionis vividly recalled the fire which happened to the church in 1958, and the problems with *rayon* representatives and with the office of the Commissioner for Religious Affairs in connection with the reconstruction of the church. Following is an excerpt from the sermon:

"...In conclusion, may I remind you of what we have experienced in common with you. I remember the fire and the problems until the roof was reconstructed. At that time, you showed unusual kindness. Your faith and goodness surprised even the neighboring clergy. To all of you, I am very grateful."

"At that time, the church committee, with its chairman, secretary and treasurer, the choir and adoration society, among whom were a good number of our beautiful young people, performed yeoman service. I recall very many good individuals and families who helped in all sorts of ways. I trust that you will continue to help the church so that this beautiful and dear mother of ours might be loved as before. . . ."

On July 10, 1958, the roof of the friary caught fire at the chimney on the church side near the church. The roofs were of wooden shingles, old and very dry. A strong wind blew in the direction of the church. The church is high; it cannot be climbed to extinguish a fire. A crowd gathered, I asked one boy to climb up on the church and quickly throw down from the tower windows church documents and old books which had little value. The boy threw down some of the things, and that which he threw down became scorched and were further damaged.

By the time the firemen arrived from Kupiškis, and with them the *rayon* leadership, the friary was almost gone. Some men almost beat up *rayon* Chairman Paplauskas for telling the firemen to extinguish the dying friary fire and not allowing them to save the church. The fire paid no attention to the firemen, devouring more and more

of the church roof. I brought the Blessed Sacrament out to my apartment. There was danger that the roof would buckle, so I took out the liturgical vessels and appointments. The zeal of the salvagers did some damage: one powerful man ripped out the tabernacle to salvage it, others tore down about four stations of the cross, merely destroying them, while others jumped up and grabbed the chandeliers to salvage them, but only broke them up. Seeing it all, I told them not to do so. They stopped bringing out the tabernacle and tearing out the stations of the cross, but they demolished the chandeliers.

The fire was getting close to the tower. The large windows of the tower had been open for many years. Crows and magpies used to bring twigs for their nests in the spring. Below, on top of the tower arches, was a great pile of twigs. There also lay a dead crow. It was impossible to clean them out, neither down through the opening behind the wall nor upward through the windows which were high, perhaps ten or more meters above.

The good bell-ringer, Juozas, chopped an opening in the masonry and one on the Lėvenas side. Then he hauled out of the tower sixteen large wagonloads of twigs! This was a benefit which had not for seen. Meantime, the fire approached the tower, and the flames like golden serpents crawled through the windows and were licking at the wooden supports of both great bells.

I asked the men to save the bells, but the hose was too short and the firemen from Kupiškis, were unable to do anything. It looked as though there was no hope: the bells would fall, cave in the tower arches and break. We were afraid that the church roof would also collapse. I asked all the people to leave the church, and locked the door. But what was I to do with the bells? I couldn't do anything. As I left the church I saw that the wooden bell-supports were already burning. Tongues of fire were glowing. A little while longer and the bells would be falling.

Suddenly, into the churchyard raced another engine company. They were wearing helmets like soldiers of old. The first one barely into the churchyard shouted, "Where's the problem?"

I replied that it was the bells in the tower, but in the belfry it was equally dangerous for people. The firemen immediately rushed to extinguish the fire. The bell supports were burning. Some of them were burned through and sagging. It was dangerous for the bells and for the firemen. However, they were able to extinguish the fire. But the danger of collapse was not past because the supports were badly damaged.

This church was an artistic monument. For the preservation of artistic monuments, there is a committee. It has a power greater than that of the communal farm, the district; *rayon* or regional governments. It is responsible directly to the Council of Ministers. There was a local division of it, and perhaps it still is in Šiauliai. Palėvenė is in the region of Šiauliai.

The next day I tore off to Šiauliai, to the aforesaid division, and they immediately sent a specialist. Engineer-Architect Nistelis. He checked everything and told us what had to be done to prevent the bells from falling until they were restored. He did not say that the church should be closed. The men immediately took care of everything.

We moved back into the church and began holding services there. In Vilnius, the Committee for Preservation of Monuments has a special shop. I immediately contracted with it. They sent a man to draft renovation plans, and allotted material. Bishop Paltarokas and representatives of the Committee for the Preservation of Monuments advised me to go to Commissioner for Religious Affairs Pušinis to ask for more material. Pušinis spoke in a strangely pleasant and saccharine manner. He heard me out when I told him that we were having services in the church again. No sooner had I left than Pušinis ordered the Kupiškis, *Rayon* to close down our church. The second and third day after I arrived home from Vilnius, the Vice Chairman of the Kupiškis, *Rayon* came to see me; he was a Russian. If it had been Paplauskas, it would have been worse. To the Russian, I complained that we had no place to hold services. I asked him to allow us to do so in the sacristy. He, being sensible and seeing that there was no danger to life, left us the sacristy. Departing, he locked the church doors and took the keys with him.

In the sacristy, at the door to the church, we set up an altar of sorts. The sacristy keys were in our possession. The renovation work began. In the churchyard, lumber was piled. *Rayon* Chairman Paplauskas and the *Rayon* Party Secretary, who had come from the Village of Aščiagaliai in the same parish of Palėvenė, became very angry. They scolded me, threatening me with imprisonment. The Party Secretary even became hysterical. In the churchyard, the workers assembled the rafters and had to hoist them up onto the church . . . I asked the *rayon* for the keys, since the steps to get onto the roof of the church were only from the tower, which was also locked. The *rayon* would not accede to my request. They told me to go to Vilnius to see Pušinis.

I went to Vilnius to see Pušinis and told him what was the matter. He called Kupiškis, saying, "Open the church! Let them pray!" and he told me to go home. When I arrived home, I went for the keys. Once more, the *rayon* would not give them to me. They demanded a document which no one had given me. I went back to Pušinis. Once more, it was the same story. I don't know how many times I went to see Pušinis and it was always the same story. The workmen made themselves a long ladder, climbed up on the church roof and began to haul up rafters and whatever else was needed. After some time, the men once again asked for the church keys, because from church, it is easy to climb into the tower, and from the tower, it is not difficult to climb up onto the roof. Once again, I went to Pušinis. Once at the beginning he asked me, among other things. "Where do you pray now?"

Not sensing the trick, I replied, "They left us the sacristy because there is no room elsewhere. That's where we pray." I had hardly returned home and finished Mass when *Rayon* chairman Paplauskas himself showed up and sternly ordered everything to be taken out of the sacristy. He disregarded my explanation and entreaty. How to save the situation? Where to turn? I said to myself, "I'm going to telephone the bishop, and ask him, what to do."

I took the sacristy key and hurried out. The public phone was then nearby. It was difficult to make connections with Vilnius, and I had to wait. Suddenly, Paplauskas appeared in the doorway and said, "I've sealed the sacristy! Just try to break it open. . . ." and he left.

The sacristy key remained in my possession. I went home and found the sacristy sealed, but unlocked, so I locked it. Remaining in the sacristy were the Blessed Sacrament, all the sacred vessels and altar breads, wine, books, my overcoat and my assistant's breviary. My assistant was substituting for me, because I was suffering from tuberculosis.

The churchyard of Palėvenė is enclosed by a masonry wall. In it are fourteen niches for stations of the cross. The niches are shallow. The Dean and Pastor of Kupiškis, lent me everything necessary for one priest to hold services and bury the dead. We set up an altar in one niche of the masonry wall. They had held two candles. It was more difficult when the wind blew, since then the Blessed Sacrament was in danger. In those cases, we used to cover it with the pall. On Sundays I used to preach right there, and after Mass, I used to go in front of the sacristy and kneel down, since behind the doors was the Lord, and we used to sing *Šventas Dieve (Holy God)*. During Mass,

the choristers and congregation also used to sing. When there was a funeral, we used to set the casket right there in the churchyard. Its roof was the beautiful sky. I used to hear confessions sitting on a chair.

We struggled along in this way for two months; the weather was good. But with the coming of September, the weather became cooler. In the morning, grey fog would envelop our church like incense. What was going to happen next? Autumn was at our door. The workmen kept asking for the keys and we had begun to run out of material. In Vilnius, men from the Committee for the Preservation of Monuments and its workshop advised me to go to Pušinis and ask him in writing for material and for the church key. I thought that this would only make matters worse, because he would again form a committee, on which would be people from the first committee. After considerable persuasion, I gave in.

I wrote Pušinis a second request that he form a committee, ascertain the condition of the church and return the keys. In Vilnius, I also dropped in on one of the members of the aforesaid committee. Suddenly, he received a call from Pušinis. Pušinis began to criticize me to an employee, who did not know me: "That pastor is terribly lazy. Just think, I told him to submit a request in writing and we would open the church. But he refuses! Obviously, he's lazy! If I were the *rayon* chairman, I would take a fence picket to him!" I was standing very near and could hear everything, while the employee looked at me and smiled. Pušinis' anger seemed strange to him, too.

When I returned from Vilnius, the churchyard was swarming with many men, led by *rayon* officials. It was the new committee to check the condition of the church. In the center of the churchyard stood a man who was not getting involved, but only smoked incessantly. I was told that it was someone from Vilnius, specially sent from the Commission for the Preservation of Monuments. I later learned that there really had been a man from Vilnius, but that he had been sent to the Kupiškis *Rayon* regarding tractors! The lie was invented to give the commission greater weight. The men of the commission, all sorts of little men chosen to make a greater impression and lend an air of importance, climbed everywhere and poked into everything. Finally they left.

From everything, it was clear that for our church, it was the end! There was a serious danger that it would be demolished. That same day, I left for Vilnius to go to the Commission for the Preservation of Monuments for assistance. In Vilnius, the offices were already closed. That evening, I went to see an important engineer. Not finding

him home, I waited outside his house until midnight. Where was I to put up for the night? With great care, I paused for a moment before the bishop's door. I had not made a mistake. Immediately, I was admitted and pleasantly received by the Chancellor, Canon Bronius Antanaitis.

It was useless to try to see anyone on Saturday. On Sunday, I was supposed to be in Panevėžys, and to preach there. In return, the pastor at that town, then still Canon Dulksnys, promised to set aside the entire collection for the erection of a church. I was still hoping to meet someone from among responsible persons before Monday, since on Monday, I thought, the Commission from Kupiškis, *Rayon* would send Pušinis their report, the latter would give an unfavorable answer and it would be all over with our church. To my way of thinking, it was essential to head off this misfortune, but I did not know that the report had already arrived and the Commission for the Preservation of Monuments had already been informed. I did not understand how the *rayon* could do it so quickly.

I hurried, but they were quicker. On Saturday, I got nowhere and no one helped me. The bishop did not get involved in such matters. The chancellors merely helped one to see Pušinis or his secretary, code-named *Audronaša (Stormy)*.

It was a beautiful early Sunday morning. In Panevėžys they were observing the Feast of the Nativity of Mary. That's where I should have been. I made excuses for myself, saying that the pastor was a gentleman, would understand and would not get angry. What was I to do?

Unexpectedly the idea occurred to me: The church is an artistic monument. It belongs to the Commission for the Preservation of Monuments! The Commission has a jurisdiction greater than that of the *rayon* or of the department. So the conclusion was clear; I must go to them and say, "This church is under your control. You yourselves make up a commission, go there and on the spot check everything. If you find that the church is in danger of collapsing, restore it! If it is in good shape, allow us to hold services in it and let the workmen proceed!"

On Monday, working in the office were people who were important to me. My idea met with approval from the monument protection people. They immediately recommended that the chief inspector go and check everything. With him to Palėvenė came also a young engineer, to draw up the plan for the monastery roof, because the monastery, too had been damaged by fire. So the committee formed

itself. I suggested that we leave Vilnius in time to arrive in Kupiškis before 9:00 AM, since after 9:00 AM the *rayon* leaders go out to the communal farms.

Early on Tuesday, we were already in Palėvenė, since the road goes through there. The engineers found the church still sealed. At 9:00, we were already in Kupiškis. At once we found the two *rayon* leaders, Paplauskas and the Party Secretary from Aščiagaliai, whom I mentioned earlier. There is no way they wanted to give up the church key. The man from Aščiagaliai kept asking for the papers, and checking them over again. The inspector said, "Why are you fighting with the church. That's not your job. Your job is to worry about the communal farm. To undermine the church, there is Commissioner Pušinis. "

Whether anyone was listening to him or not, the man from Aščiagaliai kept criticizing and blaming me for interfering with the communal farm, and he told me that I would not be eating the tasty bread of Kupiškis much longer. Finally the *rayon* leaders gave us the keys, and we left for Palėvenė with Paplauskas and the man from Aščiagaliai hurrying after us to Palėvenė.

The members of the commission were already going to inspect the church when the man from Aščiagaliai suddenly accosted them and demanded papers. This behavior on their part seemed very strange. The commission removed the seal on the entrance and climbed up the tower onto the church roof. They were followed by the man from Aščiagaliai. An argument ensued, the man from Aščiagaliai affirmed that the church walls were of unfired brick. They had crumbled from the blaze. The walls were going to collapse!

The commission, after making its inspection, replied that, "The walls have become fire-hardened. There is no danger!"

The man from Aščiagaliai continued to argue, "You can see the crack in the church wall. The tower is leaning to one side, and the church to the other. It's dangerous\to life and limb!"

As a matter of fact, the church roof, perhaps as a result of the war, had had a crack across it, but according to the expert, such a crack is not dangerous. The committee, after making its inspection said, "It could support a tank! There really is no danger that it would collapse."

The *rayon* chairman remained silent. I stayed with him and explained that we get along well with the collective farm. I wanted very much to be with the commission, but I purposely remained with the chairman because my assistant priest had, about a month previously, deftly twisted back the string from the seal, we had opened

the sacristy and removed the ciborium with the Blessed Sacrament, and everything we needed. Then my assistant priest had carefully replaced the string and there remained no significant trace of what had been done. I was afraid lest the chairman would check the sacristy doors which he himself had sealed, and notice something suspicious, so I stayed with him and tried to keep him talking. But the chairman did not move from the spot, and waited sullenly for the commission to climb down. When the commission returned, the chief inspector said, "You can open the sacristy yourself."

I replied, "The *rayon* closed it. Please open it so that you might not blame me for it later.

In the meantime, I had unlocked the sacristy door. The inspector, in opening the door, pulled off the seal and went in, with me close behind. Behind me, the man from Aščiagalai fairly flew in and disregarded by everyone, but clearly and suddenly upset, repeated, "There is no danger here! There is no danger here! Really, the walls here are a meter thick and of hardened masonry. There is no danger here!"

Yet it was precisely on account of this "danger" that they had ejected us from the church and from this sacristy! In the sacristy, they drafted a report to the effect that the church had been inspected, that it was in no danger of collapse, and that services could be held there. They gave instructions that we should not ring the bells until they were repaired. They left me a copy. The *rayon* representatives were shocked. They both kept quiet. The commission went to check the fire-damaged monastery where the office of the communal farm was. Later, people said that the communal farm leaders had been quite nervous since the monastery premises were in great disarray.

I accompanied the visitors as far as the gates of the monastery enclosure. After the inspection of the Friday before, as I already mentioned, carried out with deceiving solemnity, the *rayon* government had immediately reported to Vilnius that the church in Palėvenė was in a precarious condition since the tower was leaning to one side and the church itself to the other. Now the *rayon* government kept silent, and this was not all. After perhaps a good half-year, the architects of Lithuania had a meeting. A representative of the Office for the Preservation of Monuments in his speech complained that there are *rayons* whose leadership not only fails to help preserve monuments, but even interferes with their repair. As an example of such a *rayon*, he mentioned the *Rayon* of Kupiškis, which interfered with the repair of the church in Palėvenė.

But the *rayon* would not calm down. . . . It could still go after the workers on the communal farm, and it did. It announced that it would check in the barns the hay reserves of those communal farm workers who went on weekdays to help out on the repairs to the church. And that help was necessary! There was a law at the time, and perhaps still is, to the effect that nine-tenths of the allotted land parcel was earmarked for grazing, and only one-tenth could be mowed by the communal farm worker for winter hay. People used to do just the opposite, grazing one-tenth and mowing nine-tenths for the winter. Thus, everyone was guilty. The government knew it and threatened, "Whoever goes on a work day to help out at the church will have his hay reserve checked. If an overage is found, all of the hay will be confiscated.

So people went to help out, not on work days, but on holidays. When it was time to lay the shingles, the roof was full of people after services, like bees around honey. It finally ended as follows: the church roof was rebuilt, the rotten wooden cross on the belfry was replaced with one of iron. The iron stations of the cross in the churchyard were replaced or re-set, and in place of the cross on the great bells which had been damaged by fire, there was now an iron cross. It remained only to mount two rather original iron ornaments in the gates. They remained to be mounted because the one who made them was late with his work. The livestock hand, Guoba, kept promising. Finally, he came with his son, erected a work table, took down the gate archway, and had begun to mount the ornaments which were supposed to be on either side of the cross (they are still there), when two men showed up in the churchyard and said, "I am the Kupiškis *Rayon* architect, and this man is from Vilnius, from the Commission for the Preservation of Monuments. By what right is this restoration taking place? Do you have a permit?"

I replied that we had a general permit. The architect angrily said, "Stop working immediately, you are not allowed to make repairs." How could such an educated man, an architect, a high official, lie? I believed him. I asked livestock hand Guoba to put everything back as it had been, and not to continue with the repairs. After all this, they ordered me out of Palėvenė and took away for awhile my permit to work as a priest.

Sometime later, the chairman of the Commission for the Preservation of Monuments himself, a young man, came to inspect Palėvenė.

Reverend Father Jonas Uogintas, the new pastor, said, "Your office sent over a man on such and such a date. He came with the *rayon* architect who then forbade me to complete small repairs on the churchyard gate."

The guest, after reflecting, replied, "No, we sent no man at that time!" So the Kupiškis *Rayon* official dishonorably lied! It seems that petty spies had informed the *rayon* about the repairs on the gate and *rayon* administrators had sent their architect to Palėvenė to stop the work by lying. The work was completed by Father Uogintas, the new pastor of Palėvenė. Soon after, the man from Aščiagalai was relieved of his duties, reportedly for speculation in flour from the bakery, and Chairman Paplauskas is dead.

OUR PRISONERS

Klaipėda

At the beginning of 1985, two men from Klaipėda accused of illegal commerce, Murauskas and Janulis, were arrested. In Gargždai, in private quarters, they had printed holy cards for Christmas and Easter, as souvenirs of Baptism, Confirmation and First Communion, and the Way of the Cross sung in Samogitia. The arrested are being held in Vilnius prison.

Sergei Kovalev, back from exile, writes: ". . . I returned from Magadan in the beginning of December. Within two weeks I was already officially accused by the local militia as an offender against passport regulations, and even as a vagrant, although I never spent three full days at home. Even my wife is a dangerous transgressor of the law — she allowed her unregistered husband to spend the night. I live in Kalinin. The house is in the village. I have my own corner which I take care of, and am in the process of repairing. After much trouble, I have finally obtained employment. For a month now, I have been working as a night watchman at construction sites. My current address is:

170007,
Kalinin oblactnoy,
2-aya Hovozavodskaya ul. dom. 114
Kovalev, Sergei Adomovich

April, 1985



Sergei Kovalev in exile, Magadan region, March 1982, with wife and daughter. He was sentenced in December, 1975, in Vilnius for disseminating the *Chronicle of the Catholic Church in Lithuania*.

Mordovia

On June 13, 1981, Docent Vytautas Skuodis, in a letter to Chairman Leonid Brezhnev of the Presidium of the Supreme Soviet, USSR, and to the Prosecutor General A.M. Rekunkov, of the USSR, explained logically that he will express his beliefs by hunger strikes on the following days: June 15, the day on which the Lithuanian state lost its sovereignty; October 30, USSR Political Prisoner Day and December 10, International Human Rights and Basic Freedoms day. Docent Skuodis has announced that he will fast on one designated day a week until he receives a satisfactory response from the Central Committee of the Communist Party of Lithuania to a letter in which, based on documents of international law, he has explained that the Regulations for Lithuanian Religious Associations are illegal.

Recently, in the camp in Mordovia, hunger strikes have become "the worst disrupters of discipline", for which prisoners are put in punishment cells and the camp prosecutor claims that to torture prisoners in solitary confinement and punishment cells for proclaiming



Vytautas Skuodis

hunger strikes is a completely normal thing, in keeping with the principles of the code for USSR corrective work camps and with the norms of Soviet law in general.

On October 30, 1984, Docent Vytautas Skuodis, "for announcing an unjustified hunger strike", was locked in a punishment cell for ten days and nights, five days and nights of which he was completely without food. In September, the camp administration transferred Docent Skuodis from the laundry to work as a dishwasher and janitor in the dining hall, without the right of having days off or celebrating holidays. Lately most letters and postcards addressed to Skuodis have

not been reaching him. Petitions and complaints written by the prisoner to the highest authorities concerning similar arbitrariness on the part of the camp administration do not leave the camp or are sent to the camp prosecutor for "investigation and response".

Mordovia

Galina Ivanovna Barac, a Hungarian woman, born in Transcarpathia, was employed until 1977 on the history faculty of the State University of Moscow. Her husband, Vasili Barac, is an engineer, a specialist in computers and a former officer of the general staff. In 1977, on account of unwarranted KGB persecution, Vasili Barac was three times subjected to compulsory "treatment" in psychiatric hospitals and suffered paralysis of the right side from aminazine injections.

Galina and Vasili Barac resigned from the Communist Party, renounced Soviet citizenship and asked permission to emigrate to any non-Socialist country. Politburo member Grishin personally spoke with Galina Barac as a former Communist, and promised to allow her to emigrate. Galina Barac was transferred from the faculty to the gardening division of the same university at a salary of 70 rubles. Her husband was unemployed: it was not until a year later that he obtained employment in a laundry as a laborer.

In August 1982, Vasili Barac went on emigration matters to the City of Rovno, where he was beaten unconscious by KGB agents. For ten days, Galina did not know where her husband had disappeared. Vasili Barac proclaimed a hunger strike, demanding that for his arrest, a warrant be issued (he fasted thirteen days). After thirteen days, they took him to Rostov-on-the-Don, where, in a secret trial they sentenced him to nine years of strict regime labor camp.

Vasili Barac is confined in the camp at Perm. Galina Barac came from Moscow to Rostov-on-the-Don to find out when her husband would be tried, but she was arrested on the spot and like her husband was sentenced in a secret trial to six years in a strict regime camp and three years of exile. When they brought her to camp, Galina was not given clothing for almost a month, even though she had been stripped almost to her underwear. In 1983, Galina Barac went on long fasts five times (fifty-eight days altogether). From June 9-19, 1984, she was confined to a punishment cell.

Galina Barac suffers from rheumatism and arthritis, and cannot take medication. Her spectacles were returned to her, but lately they are too weak. Her husband's letters hardly ever reach Galina Barac. Her petitions to the prosecutor receive no replies and no relatives

come to visit. Vasili and Galina Barac have been vilified in a number of newspapers. Both are believers — Pentecostals. In one letter, Galina Barac writes:

"Everything will be as God wishes, for man proposes but God disposes. Besides, what can man do to us if God is with us, for we know that for those who love God, who are called by His will, all things work together for good. Let us live with God, Pray for us! God bless you!"

NEWS FROM THE DIOCESES

Vilnius

Upon examination of the 1985 *Catholic Calendar-Directory*, one notices certain mistakes and discrepancies from last year's *Catholic Calendar-Directory*. For example, in the list of bishops in Lithuania, there is no mention as there was earlier of their function. (Also the administrators.) This is noted only at the beginning of the list of clergy of each diocese. Bishop Julijonas Steponavičius is mentioned only in the list of clergy in Žagarė, and his title as Apostolic Administrator of Vilnius is not mentioned, even though last year he was mentioned briefly in the general list of bishops in Vilnius, Lithuania. This was done at the direction of Commissioner for Religious Affairs Petras Anilionis.

The list of judges of the Archdiocese of Vilnius should include the name of Father Donatas Valiukonis — as a matter of fact he is functioning, but in the list given in the *Calendar* he is not mentioned. Anilionis most probably dislikes him because he interfered with the uncanonical elections to the Priests' Council of the Archdiocese of Vilnius.

In the *Liturgical Prayerhook* published in 1984, the late Father Pranciškus Masilionis is not mentioned as the author of the hymn, "*Radau bičiulį*" ("*I Found a Friend*") Father Masilionis also has never been liked by the atheists.

Vilnius

On June 28, 1985, Commissioner for Religious Affairs Petras Anilionis invited the bishops and administrators of dioceses to Vilnius. The Commissioner himself spoke to them angrily and aggressively. The first topic which Anilionis touched upon was the choosing of candidates for the seminary in Kaunas.

The state, "has the right to interfere because the Church functions

within the state", Anilionis emphasized at the beginning of his talk. A number of the candidates proposed is unsuitable. In proposing candidates, one must pay attention to their political orientation, how their parents behaved during the German occupation and post-war years (The parents of candidates entering now were then, in most cases still teenagers or children. — Ed. Note) to make sure that they were not extremists. "For instance," Anilionis continued, "on the occasion of a first Mass at Father A. Balaišis' in Saločiai, one of the speakers said, 'A priest must not only recite prayers, but also be a fighter for Church and country!' Which do you wish to have?" Anilionis ironically asked the bishops, "priests or fighters?" (Here one recalls the warning of Christ regarding those who only pray: "Not everyone who says, Lord, Lord will enter into the Kingdom of Heaven". — Ed. Note)

Anilionis recited a whole litany of candidates to the seminary who, according to him, were unsuitable, e.g., Julius Sasnauskas, who had been active in Antanas Terleckas' and Father P. Masilionis' groups, and had been sentenced in 1980; (He did not even have the opportunity to submit his application to the seminary. — Ed. Note). Saulius Kelpšas, organizer of anti-state activities (Last year some seminary professors tried to accuse him of activities against the spiritual authorities. — Ed. Note). Adolfas Teresius — Father Alfonsas Svarinskas' emissary.

Also called unsuitable were Kazimieras Stulgys, Vidmantas Striukas, Lionginas Virbalas, Jonas Vailionis and others, on account of their acquaintance with zealous — in the words of Anilionis, extremist — priests. "Let the bishops not talk with or ordain such men. This is a personal reminder to Bishop Sladkevičius, who has ordained many such candidates to the priesthood. In the future, this will not be tolerated!

"As many illegal priests as are ordained, by that number the quota of seminarians-admitted that year will be decreased. The bishops have to guarantee that future priests not be extremists. Those pastors who recommend extremist-oriented priests to the seminary must be disciplined. The quota presently established is thirty candidates annually. Don't believe Bishop Julijonas Steponavičius who claims that it was thanks to letters he wrote that the quota was increased.

"If extremist-oriented seminarians become the majority in the seminary, the question of closing the seminary will be raised," threatened Anilionis. "For instance, seminarians V. Liuima and A. Luote brought anti-Soviet literature to the seminary (i.e., Juozas Gir-

nus' books *Žmogus be dievo* — *Man without God* and *Idealas ir laikas* — *Ideals and the Times* — Ed. Note). For that, they were liable to seven years in prison, but we contented ourselves with expelling them from the seminary. (Orders in the seminary are to forbid seminarians to have typewritten material; for spiritual reading, only outlines of various disciplines and literature published during the Soviet era are allowed. — Ed. Note)

Anilionis expressed annoyance that unsuitable candidates were being proposed as instructors in the seminary, while "suitable" candidates (Father Bronius Bulika) are blocked by Bishop Sladkevičius. Allegedly, candidates recommended by the bishops: M. Petkevičius, Mintaučkis, J. Tunaitis and B. Strazdas are either old or ill or uneducated. Here Bishop Sladkevičius interrupted; for that he was sternly reprimanded by Anilionis. Father Vaclovas Aliulis, who is neither ill nor old nor uneducated was proposed. To that, Anilionis responded, "You do not know Aliulis! He does not know how to associate with seminarians, he will never be allowed into the seminary. Besides, he refused when the government wanted to send him to Spain, and now he has enough to do."

Anilionis demanded that the bishops not interfere in the seminary, in the education of seminarians or in deciding the suitability of seminarians for the priesthood and choice of instructors, saying that this was exclusively the business of the seminary rector. The seminary is an independent institution (Thus Anilionis requires that the bishops disregard Canon Law Nos. 253, 259 and 263 — Ed. Note).

The Commissioner expressed annoyance at the fact that the bishops do not stop the activities of extremists in Church life. For instance, Bishop Sladkevičius has not straightened out Father Rokas Puzonas and Bishop Vaičius, Father Vytautas Skiparis and Antanas Beniušis. In the church at Žagarė, a show was produced for the Jubilee of Saint Casimir. In Girdžiai, signatures were collected and in Viduklė, an anti-Soviet nest has been organized under the leadership of a woman. If this continues, it will be necessary to start closing churches.

Father Jonas Kastytis Matulionis has been re-arrested because in a sermon, he recounted his impressions from prison. As far as the Commissioner knows, Father Jonas Kastytis Matulionis was introduced to Kybartai by Father Algimantas Keina and Donatas Valiukonis. (This is an untruth, fabricated by Anilionis to set the bishops against these priests. Unfortunately, it worked: One of the hierarchs remarked at this point, "Oh, those activists!" — Ed. Note)

He complained that too much was being charged for officially published prayerbooks, e.g., in Joniškis and the church of Žvėrynas in Vilnius, but they do not want to pay into the Peace Fund. Speaking of the Peace Fund, the commissioner complained that the situation is tolerable only in the Archdiocese of Vilnius, where one parish collects 93.10 rubles. Things are bad in the Dioceses of Kaunas and Vilkaviškis where the average parish only collects 46.20 rubles. Panevėžys, 41.60 rubles; Telšiai, 40 rubles and Kaišiadorys, 35.30 rubles. In the opinion of the Commissioner, every parish should allot 100 rubles for the Peace Fund.

Anilionis scolded the bishops for not participating in the Fortieth Anniversary of Moscow's victory, April 17-19, organized by Patriarch Piman. Bishop Vaičius said, "Our representative, Archbishop Liudas Povilonis, was there." The archbishop said that he represented only himself.

Anilionis continued to berate the bishops, expressing dissatisfaction that Bishop Sladkevičius does not always inform him where and when he goes to which parish. He cast it up to the bishops that they submit pastoral letters to him too late for his examination; that is, censorship. Unexamined letters will not be allowed to go to the Vatican. If the Vatican makes reactionary commentaries about priests who have died, then telegrams concerning the death of priests also will not be allowed through. After the conference, the archbishop thanked Commissioner Anilionis "for this brainwashing".

Kaišiadorys

On May 28, 1985, Commissioner Petras Anilionis came to the Chancery of the Diocese of Kaišiadorys where he arranged "a conference" for the deans of the diocese, who had been summoned there. Anilionis was dissatisfied with the behavior of the pastor of Giedraičiai, Father Viktoras Cukuras, who, in the words of the Commissioner, arranged on May 5 in Giedraičiai a commemoration of the 500-year Jubilee of Blessed Mykolas Giedraitis. "Worse still," the Commissioner complained, "he invited extremist priests Rokas Puzonas and Kastytis Krikščiūkaitis who prevented the people from praying. . . The Lithuanian national anthem; *Lietuva Tėvynė Mūsų* ("Lithuania, Our Fatherland") was sung (the hymn was not sung — Ed. Note) and Maironis' *Lietuva Brangi, Mano Tėvyne* ("Dear Lithuania, My Fatherland") was sung. "Why," he asked, "is that necessary?"

Father Krikščiūkaitis gave an unsuitable sermon in Vepriai on Pentecost, telling the people that his parents had been exiled to

Siberia while he himself and gone hungry, grew up in an orphanage and became handicapped. . . "During the sermon, one must speak only about God," Anilionis explained to the deans.

The Commissioner criticized priests of Panevėžys and Vilnius for not coordinating their efforts in choosing Priests' Councils. "It is not good that people pray not only in church but also in the forest," said Anilionis. "Why did they have to make the Way of the Cross in the Vilnius Calvary? After all, the stations of the Calvary have long ago been demolished, so why walk around in the woods."

During the lecture, the Commissioner boasted to the deans that he knows who is in charge of the underground seminary.

Kaunas

On May 31, 1985, the deans of Kaunas and Vilkaviškis were summoned to a meeting with the Commissioner for Religious Affairs, Petras Anilionis. Anilionis stated that he would read a report about manifestations of extremism last year among the priests. Anilionis considers Father Rokas Puzonas and Father Antanas Jokubauskas as the greatest extremists. Allegedly, these priests, by their sermons — the one publicly telling how the KGB recruited him as an informer and the other, uninvited, singing the praises in the Churches of Saint Theresa and Saints Peter and Paul in Vilnius of the priests who had been sentenced — are themselves asking for prison. The Commissioner promised that arrangements for them to wind up in prison would be made. "Just think," said Anilionis, "Father Puzonas preached to people who came to Vėpriai for Pentecost to receive the Holy Spirit, not about the Holy Spirit, but about himself."

In the opinion of Anilionis, the Jubilee of Saint Casimir went by not badly, there was no great fuss, except for the uproar caused in the Church of SS Peter and Paul by the extremist. A Jokubauskas and his cohorts. "During the incident, a surplice was torn, and that is state property," affirmed Anilionis.

In his talk, the Commissioner touched upon diocesan Priests' Councils: In his opinion, in the dioceses where there is a strong hand, all is well. Allegedly, it was only because of a weak hand at the helm that in the Diocese of Panevėžys, two councils materialized while in the Archdiocese of Vilnius, as many as three.

Speaking of Father Jonas Kastytis Matulionis, Anilionis affirmed that he had, by his behavior, been asking for labor camp. (It is strange that after his arrest, some priests spoke in the same words.)

The Commissioner blamed Father Juozas Gražulis for publicly urging the faithful to sign a petition to defend the arrested priests.

The Commissioner ridiculed the underground seminary. "What kind of seminary is it: is not Father Antanas Šeškevičius the entire faculty?" said Anilionis.

The deans, for the most part, remained silent. After the lecture, there were refreshments for all.

Kretinga

In the spring of 1985, the office of Petras Anilionis sent its representative to Kretinga to give a lecture to members of church committees. The lecturer ridiculed mature people for relinquishing to children and youth "places belonging only to them" — the duties of altar servers. According to him, it was embarrassing even to see how at the tinkle of a bell in the hands of children elderly people fall to their knees. In the opinion of the lecturer, old people should serve at Mass and not "kids"

Telšiai

On June 4, 1985, the diocesan deans and vice deans were summoned to the diocesan chancery at Telšiai on instructions from Religious Affairs Commissioner Petras Anilionis. Anilionis, speaking about the Priests' Councils of the Dioceses of Vilnius and Panevėžys affirmed that priests do not agree among themselves, that there were several elections to the Priests' Councils, and so in these dioceses an abnormal situation developed: in one there were two and in the other, as many as three.

The Commissioner stated to the deans that in electing Priests' Councils, that the pastor of Šeduva (Diocese of Panevėžys) acted contrary to Canon Law and urged others to do so. According to information in the possession of the Commissioner, Canon Antanaitis accompanied to Aušros Vartai (Gate of Dawn) in Vilnius Father Antanas Jokubauskas, who spoke from the pulpit during the festival uninvited.

It is in the Diocese of Telšiai, comparing it with other dioceses, that there are the greatest number of parishes without priests. Anilionis dared to explain to the deans that the bishops of Lithuania had agreed in advance to leave one diocese without priests so that they might be able later to proclaim abroad that it was the fault of the government that there was a shortage of priests in the diocese. When Father Palšis asked why the priests arrested without cause were not released, the commissioner retorted that "they asked for it" and so, they would not be released.

Biržai

In the spring of 1985, the church committees of twenty from the *rayon* were summoned to the Biržai *Rayon* Executive Committee for a talk. They were addressed by a lecturer sent from the Office of the Commissioner for Religious Affairs. The lecturer affirmed publicly by name that one priest working in the *rayon* has a mistress and a child. He said all this in spite of the fact that Soviet courts and even the Supreme Court of the LSSR never certified the aforesaid accusations for lack of witnesses. Strange logic: Those who doubt the basis for the sentencing of the priests are accused of being anti-Soviet and disrespectful of the law. (A couple of years ago, the representative of the LSSR Supreme Court, Ignotas, spoke similarly over television about those who themselves pray publicly for the priests under sentence and who urge others to pray for them.)

Nevertheless, by decision of the same Supreme Court, a lecturer is sent to various *rayon* to give official lectures.

This does a disservice to atheistic propaganda.

Šakiai

On April 2, 1985, committees of twenty of churches in the *rayon* were summoned to the Šakiai Executive Committee. The meeting was conducted by Vice Chairman for Religious Affairs, Olšauskas. At the beginning, the speaker said that he had been a judge for ten years, and in his career he had tried some cases in which it had been necessary to punish individuals for not keeping the law regarding religious cults, so he indicated that the purpose of the meeting was the need "to clear up all possible confusion so that there would be no unpleasantness in court".

Vice Commissioner Olšauskas was disturbed by priests who had completed the underground seminary, calling them "imposters" who had not completed their education and were without Orders. They were criminals of various sorts, many of whom had been in jail for breaking Soviet law or were even now serving sentences there. "And you go to confession to them!" said the speaker, wondering.

As an example, he used Father Jonas Kastytis Matulionis, sentenced for an All Souls' Procession. He recalled that there are times when pastors employ such priests as sacristans and organists, and then the latter work in church as priests. In such cases, not only the pastors would be punished, but also committee members, warned Vice Commissioner Olšauskas. He instructed them that committee members seeing a strange priest in church are supposed to check to

see whether he has a registration card and if he has none to put him out of church.

The church is the house of prayer, and you must be on guard lest the priests use it for spreading anti-Soviet propaganda, which often happens, the speaker continued, and he read a number of sermon excerpts taken out of context, in which statements are made against the arbitrariness of atheists (officials or teachers). Olšauskas called these vulgar attacks against the entire Soviet government. Among such priests, the lecturer mentioned the Dean of Ukmergė, Father Antanas Danyla, and the pastor of the parish of Josvainiai, Father Leonas Kalinauskas, saying that the faithful themselves were dissatisfied with them, and petitioned the bishop and Commissioner for Religious Affairs to remove them.

Olšauskas raged against Father Kalinauskas for allowing Petras Paulaitis, who had returned to Lithuania after long years of imprisonment, to speak in church. The Commissioner characterized Paulaitis as a hardened foe of the Soviet government. "You see what the priests turn your houses of worship into, and what they use them for — for spreading anti-Soviet agitation and as theaters for showing films: not long ago, a film was shown in the church of Šakiai, itself. "Are there no film theaters in Šakiai, or perhaps there is a lack of films?" Commissioner Olšauskas emoted.

The lecturer stated that priests can perform religious ceremonies only in church and in the cemetery, and are allowed to visit the sick in the hospital only in the event that there are separate facilities. For the catechizing of children and visitation of believers, priests, according to the assistant, will be punished just as strictly. Finally, using a catechism and the scriptures for help, the assistant commissioner tried to convince members of parish committees that all government is from God; therefore it is necessary to respect it and to obey its laws.

After such and similar commands and demands, the floor was opened for questions. Members of the parish committee would not agree that priests should be forbidden to teach children catechism. After all, that is what they had trained for, to teach us believers, while parents do not have enough time or knowledge and have forgotten much. . . "Why may religion be taught only by one who is not properly trained? How would it look if someone issued a law forbidding doctors to treat people, turning over the healing function to people who knew nothing about it?!" participants in the meeting asked the lecturer.

To this question, the lecturer shot back angrily, "Whether it

appears as a paradox to you or not is your business, but there is a law so it must be observed strictly, and if children began to be taught by such priests as Alfonsas Svarinskas, Sigitas Tamkevičius, Matulionis or others like them, they would teach those children who knows what. . . You yourselves have finished Middle School and you can very well teach your own children religion (As though in school there was talk, not against religion, but in favor of it), and if that's not enough for them, there is the seminary," Olšauskas replied to the member submitting the question.

The assembled faithful asked the assistant commissioner whether a grandmother may not teach her grandchild religion. The assistant commissioner shot back that no, only the father and mother have the right to teach religion.

From the audience came the question: "Is it true that priests, during their sermons, crudely attack the government as you said in the beginning of your talk? I never heard such things. Perhaps this is just something invented by the atheists? You yourself go to Šiluva and the Calvary of the Samogitians, so what kind of anti-Soviet propaganda was conducted there?"

"And what gives you the right to call firm evidence atheistic inventions? You can be sure that the law protects the rights and privileges of atheists as well as believers. So for such libel, you can be punished," Assistant Commissioner Olšauskas attacked the questioner.

Participants in the meeting, scandalized by such rudeness on the part of the assistant commissioner, began retorting from their places. . . One woman standing up, said, "If you atheists are so easily offended, why do you yourselves insult the believers? . . . Because my daughter went to church, her teacher stood her up before the class, called her a church-mouse, an old woman, backward, and afterwards, taking her to the faculty room, continued to taunt and threaten her. My girl came home weeping. By what right was this done?"

One man asked, "They pressured my son the same way, threatening that all roads would be blocked for him if he did not join the Communist Youth Organization. Do teachers have the right to act like that?"

When the meeting was over, a representative of the *Rayon* Executive Committee stated: "Now let us thank our speaker with a round of applause for conducting such an interesting and substantive discussion." But the participants in the "discussion" hurried out of the hall as if they had not heard the suggestion to thank the speaker.

Skuodas

On April 10, 1985, representatives of *rayon* church committees were summoned to the Skuodas *Rayon* for consultation. The lecture in the presence of Vice Chairwoman Mrs. Ložienė of the *Rayon* Executive Committee, district chairpersons and other government representatives was delivered by Kizas, a representative of the Commissioner for Religious Affairs. The speaker's purpose was to report on transgressions against the laws regarding religious cults, perpetrated in the republic during 1984.

Among transgressors of the law was mentioned Father Pudžemis, the parish priest of Mosėdis, in the *Rayon* of Skuodas, who during a sermon had urged the faithful not to read atheistic books. The lecturer crudely libelled the imprisoned priests Alfonsas Svarinskas, Sigitas Tamkevičius and Jonas Kaštytis Matulionis, calling the suggestion to pray for them a crime

Kizas furiously attacked priests who have completed the underground seminary, calling them false priests and imposters, and he demanded that parish executive organs forbid them to preach or perform other religious ministrations. He considered as crime the organizing of children's Christmas parties at church, processions to the cemetery on All Soul's Day, the collecting of signatures on behalf of the jailed priests, traffic in religious articles in churchyards, and even the explanation of religious truths during the sermon. Kizas mentioned a host of examples in which he considered every statement by a priest concerning offenses by atheists, teachers or government officials against the faithful to be abuse of the pulpit, and at the same time, a crude transgression of the law.

Vice Chairwoman Ložienė of the *Rayon* Executive Committee expressed embarrassment that only the evangelicals allotted a portion of their collection, to the Peace Fund, and urged other congregations to follow their example. The vice chairwoman admitted observing the funeral of the pastor of Truikinai, Father Konstantinas Petrikas, for purposes of spying, going to Šatės to investigate that children were not being taught religion in church, to watch services on November 1 (The Feast of All Saints' — Trans. Note), to see whether there would be a procession to the cemetery. Lecturer Kizas affirmed that only the parents themselves have the right to teach their children religion, and upon attaining majority, the young people can study in spiritual schools.

Here Kizas listed all the spiritual schools of the various faiths operating in the Soviet Union, of which just two are Catholic, the

seminaries of Riga and Kaunas, hypocritically stated that the number of students is set by the seminary administration and that the government helps in every way, providing the seminary with the necessary land, etc.

Kaišiadorys

On April 12, 1985, a meeting — briefing session — of parish committee members from the *rayon* took place at the Kaišiadorys House of Culture. The meeting was headed by a representative of the Commissioner for Religious Affairs and by the Vice Chairman of the *Rayon* Executive Committee, Kaubrys.

The speakers began the meeting with the standard talk about freedom of religion, and the broad freedoms of believers, which they immediately negated with an endless list of various prohibitions: "Children under the age of eighteen have no right to assist the priest at Mass or other services, sing in the choir, participate in processions, these things will be strictly monitored," said the speaker. He warned that those disobeying would be disciplined, but he did not specify who would be disciplined — the children, their parents or the pastors of the parishes.

Upon inquiry why minors were forcibly enrolled in the Little Octobrist and Pioneer organizations without even their parents' knowledge, the speaker angrily retorted, "This is not the place for politicking! That's not why we asked you here!"

Responding to some other questions, he explained that they do not know anything because everything is done from Moscow and the Vatican.

Kiaukliai (Širvintai R a y o n)

On March 22, 1985, Father Rokas Puzonas, pastor of Kiaukliai, was summoned to the Širvintai *Rayon* Office of the Prosecutor. Waiting for the priest in the Prosecutors Office was the Assistant Prosecutor for the Republic, Jurgis Bakučionis, who gave the priest another warning regarding infractions of the *Regulations for Religious Associations*. In the warning, Father Puzonas' "transgressions" were itemized: group catechization of children, the All Souls' Procession to the cemetery and "hero-worshipping particularly dangerous state criminals' .

It particularly displeased Prosecutor Bakučionis that Father Puzonas urged the faithful to pray for the sentenced priests Alfonsas Svarinskas, Sigitas Tamkevičius and Jonas Kastytis Matulionis, and

mentioned them in his sermons. The official was offended also by the exhibit in the church of Kiaukliai, with the above-named priests' photographs. "It is permissible to pray for them silently, but treating them as martyrs of the Church constitutes agitation against Soviet law. You thereby show that you want to follow in their footsteps." Bakučionis said.

Father Puzonas explained that the Catholics of Lithuania stand in solidarity with the men who have been sentenced, and that today it is the duty of every Christian to act the way the imprisoned priests acted.

After these words of Father Puzonas, Bakučionis took out two issues of the *Chronicle of the Catholic Church in Lithuania* and began trying to show that it is a publication libeling the Soviet system, and that the imprisoned priests published it, so that they have been sentenced justly.

"But they are now in prison, and the *Chronicle* is still coming out. This means that it was not they who were putting it out," Father Puzonas pointed out.

"They collaborated in the publication," the Prosecutor corrected himself. Having read a few excerpts from the *Chronicle* in which the present government is considered to be an occupational government, and the murder of Father Leonas Šapoka is treated as an act of vengeance of the part of the atheists, Bakučionis tried to show that this is not so. To the priest's question how it would be possible to catechize children without breaking Soviet law, Bakučionis replied that it is permissible to quiz them only one by one. Group catechization in the opinion of the prosecutor is already the nucleus of Catholic schools.

When the priest explained that the teaching of children is a direct duty of priests, and that over 500 priests and two bishops of Lithuania refused in writing to abide by the *Regulations for Religious Associations* and would never abide by them. Bakučionis stated that no one would pay any attention to that, and the *Regulations* would not be repealed.

Father Puzonas called the prosecutor's attention to the fact that the atheists brazenly break Soviet law, but no one punishes them for that. As an example, he mentioned that in the Kiaukliai elementary school, believing pupils are forced on Sundays to participate in various programs. Those who do not comply are summoned to the faculty room, interrogated and ridiculed. Believing children are enrolled in the Little Octobrist and Pioneer organizations and atheist groups

without ascertaining their wishes or those of their parents. Asked whether Soviet teachers have the right to do so, Prosecutor Bakučionis replied that no one has such a right, but he declared that this is merely the arbitrariness of this or that teacher.

Father Puzonas rejected this lie, saying that it is a universal phenomenon — believing youth are treated this way in all the schools of Lithuania.

To: The Chairman of the Taurage *Rayon* Executive Committee
Copies to: Commissioner for Religious Affairs, Peter Anilionis

The Apostolic Administrator of the Diocese of Telsiai,
Bishop Antanas Vaičius

From: The Committee of the Batakiiai Roman Catholic
Religious Community

A P e t i t i o n

On March 16, 1985, we sent you a petition asking permission to add an extension to the belfry of the Roman Catholic parish church of Batakiiai, so that the faithful would have at least tolerable conditions to participate in services. However, to date, we have not received a reply. We therefore remind you again that for fifteen years, we have not had suitable facilities for services. Often, especially on holidays and the occasion of funerals, we are forced to be outside during services in the rain, wind and cold. After all, we are praying in a belfry whose inside area is only twenty-five square meters.

We hear that *rayon* authorities allege there is a shortage of building materials. That is nonsense! First of all, we shall not need materials from government construction reserves, and if we did, it would be nothing compared to the scale of construction in the Tauragė *Rayon*. Second, building materials freely sold at building material warehouses would be enough for us. We request and we demand that you immediately send a clear, written reply to our petition of March 16, 1985. If we do not receive an answer within ten days, we will appeal to higher government levels.

We have become so exhausted in such abnormal conditions for fifteen years that we cannot but remind you that we will not give up until permission is received to build an extension to the belfry.

Do we, the faithful of the Roman Catholic parish of Batakiiai,

working conscientiously for the government in farm work and other labor, not have the right to have suitable facilities for services?

After all, we are requesting of our *rayon* officials not alms like beggars, but we are demanding that to which we have a right, which the USSR Constitution and other applicable laws guarantee.

Batakliai, June 11, 1985

Signed by 15 members of the Batakliai
Parish Council (The text is unedited. — Ed. Note)

To: General Secretary of the USSR, Dr. M. Gorbachev
The USSR Council of Ministers
Council of Religious Affairs, attached to the
USSR Council of Ministers

From: Representatives and Faithful of the Church Committee
and Faithful of the parish of Gargždai.
Klaipėda *Rayon*, Lithuania SSR

A P e t i t i o n

Esteemed Dr. General Secretary, we sincerely ask you for permission to add to the height of our church — a shed — so that forty years after the war, it would not look like a communal farm pig-sty, but like a real church in which there would be enough air, light and space. The Commission for Religious Affairs, attached to the Council of Ministers, gave us the following response to our request:

"Your petition regarding the reconstruction of the House of Prayer has been examined by the Executive Committee of the *Rayon* of Klaipėda. To decide the question, an appropriate commission was set up with representatives of the Health Department Epidemiology Section and of the Executive Organ of your community. The commission recommended installing a ventilator in your community's building. Department Director E.S. Galustian."

Regarding the commission, we have better information: It was a mistake: They visited the church-shed for three minutes and resolved the whole matter because it had already been decided not to allow the height of the building to be increased, but rather the will of Petras Anilionis. A commission must investigate everything thoroughly and record the facts. The representative of the Health Department

Epidemiology Section should have checked the cubic measurements, the ventilation and lighting, and considered how the ventilator would effect people. But they did nothing.

For we had already asked them earlier (September 22, 1983) in a petition to check everything and to present the facts so that we would have some basis for increasing the height of the church-shed, but the *Rayon* Executive Committee forbade them to do so. You can see clearly what kind of "competent commission" it was — just a fraud! We appealed to Klaipeda, and they informed us that in a public building there must be at least four meters per person, while in our church-shed there is only one meter of air. Hence, it is very difficult to breathe, people perspire and faint in summer, while in winter, the walls run with moisture.

In the ceiling of the church-shed are holes for a ventilation system, but they are of little help and the installation of a ventilator would be unwise, since it hums like a siren and nothing can be heard. That is how it works in the little church in Klaipeda. In ours it would be still worse, since it is a low-roofed shed. The ventilator would drive the people from that tiny little church. We therefore protest against the suggestion to install a ventilator; adding to the height is the only sensible solution.

If there was single representative of the church committee on the commission, he could not have been speaking for the whole committee and for thousands of the faithful, since he never consulted with the others. Therefore, we all protest against him: We have a democracy, not an aristocracy.

We request permission for adding to the height, not only on account of the breathing problem, but also on account of the building's appearance. At present, it looks like a communal farm pig-sty, while we need a building at least vaguely similar to a church. During the war we suffered: The Fascists burned down our tall church. The entire city was reconstructed while our little church remains as it was after the war.

We are now celebrating the fortieth anniversary of victory. That little permission would be just the gift of the government to us laborers in the fields and factories. A humane government would itself offer its workers better living conditions. The Soviet Constitution emphasizes, "The Communist party of the Soviet Union exists for the people and serves the people (Par. 6)." Adding to the height would not constitute construction of a new church. The roof is supported by columns. They need only to be extended, and one pair to be

raised, most likely, reinforcing them from the outside with bricks: the foundation does not have to be touched at all.

Not to allow the extension of the columns means not to show your workers any good-will, when there is so much talk about freedom of religion and humaneness.

Honorable Dr. General Secretary, we ask you sincerely to show us some humaneness, let us raise the roof of our church-shed.

Enclosure: Photograph of the church-shed of Gargždai.

Gargždai

April 14, 1985

Our address:
LSSR 235840
Klaipėdos Ray. Gargždai
Tilto 1
Bažnytiniam Komitetui

Signed by 651 of us, for thousands

The parish of Gargždai had a tall wooden church, but in the beginning of the war, the Germans burned it down. The faithful built a temporary church out of a shed. Determined to erect one of masonry, they made a great quantity of large cement bricks. Until now, however, it has been not only impossible to erect one of masonry, but the Communist government does not even allow them to raise the roof of the shed, even though thousands of the faithful have repeatedly been requesting permission for several years. They request neither building material nor financial assistance, but only a permit, but even this they are not granting. In this way, they show what kind of freedom of religion it is which they loudly proclaim and what kind of humanism. This could all be seen from the petitions of the faithful.

To: The Lithuanian SSR Council of Ministers

From: The Church Committee and Faithful of the Parish of Gargždai,
Rayon of Klaipėda

A P e t i t i o n

On August 19 of this year, we addressed a petition to you asking for permission to increase the height of our church-shed. We received

a notice that Commissioner for Religious Affairs Petras Anilionis had not considered the petition sent to him by you, and that he had forwarded it "according to competence" to the Klaipeda *Rayon* Executive Committee. He did the same with the petitions from Moscow.

Learning that he had left the disposition of the entire case to the Executive Committee of the Klaipeda *Rayon*, we went in small groups at least ten times (61 persons in all) to request permission to see the Chairman, and especially the Vice Chairman. He promised to summon the Commissioner for Cults, told them to wait and not to leave; and kept procrastinating. When the petition did not arrive, we went back. Vice Chairman A. Leita told us verbally that he is not giving a permit because they don't have the materials. "You can write all the way to Moscow, and there will still be no permit!"

Every living being fights for its existence and that is what we are doing, because life forces us to: we need air, light and a decent church, not a low shed. We therefore come to you again requesting a permit. Even the Vice Chairman of the Council for Religious Affairs attached to the Council of Ministers of the USSR, seeing our church-shed, said that it is no church, and that it should be remodelled.

We ask not for building materials, but only for a permit to raise the roof; building material we have, as we wrote in our last petition. We would raise the roof at our own expense. So why not allow your workers to arrange things for themselves more comfortably? Now, our little shack looks like an American Negro ghetto next to the multi-storied government building. Is it not a shame to treat believers so?

The Soviet Constitution specifies: "Officials must, at regularly scheduled intervals, consider the suggestions and petitions of individuals, respond to them and take the necessary measures" (Par. 49).

And who is considering our petitions? One jurisdiction passes it on to another, and everything goes around in a circle: The Executive Committee of Klaipeda, receiving through Commissioner Petras Anilionis our petitions returned from all levels, once more calls upon the Commissioner to decide the matter even though he has turned everything over to them, "according to competence".

When did we receive a considered reply in writing within a set time? It looks as though we were without rights. Some believers, therefore, are even saying, "Lets not ask for permission to raise the roof; they'll take away what we have, just as they took the church in Klaipeda," while the Constitution in Par. 49 states: "Every citizen of the USSR has the right to submit to government organs suggestions

for improving their function, and to criticize shortcomings in their work."

We believe that the LSSR Council of Ministers has more power than the Executive Committee of the Klaipėda *Rayon*, and so we respectfully ask you to give some attention to our request and allow the roof of the church-shed, which you see in the photograph, to be raised.

We will not repeat our arguments for raising the roof since we set them forth in our last petition, August 19, 1985. That petition, signed by 1094 persons, we enclose together with the photograph. And now, only the representatives of the church committee and of the faithful sign on behalf of thousands.

Gargždai, December 12, 1984

Signed by 495 Believers

Marcinkonys (Varėna *Rayon*)

On January 29, 1985, the late pastor of the parish of Marcinkonys, Father Nikodemas Pakalka, was being buried, after having worked in the parish forty-five years. In order that children and youth would not participate in the priests funeral, work teams and similar programs were organized at the Middle School at Marcinkonys. Especially active was Teacher Severina.

Vilnius

On April 28, 1985, in the Church of Saint Michael, the fortieth anniversary of the death of Father Alfonsas Lipniūnas was being commemorated. The faithful gathered for Mass. Father Lipniūnas' relatives, acquaintances and no small number of youth from various places in Lithuania came. During the solemn Mass, Father Vaclovas Aliulis told those assembled about the life of Father Lipniūnas, his work, his activities, characteristic personality traits: strong faith, ardent love of neighbor and undying enthusiasm, even in the most difficult moments of life. After Mass, the youth recited prayers for the occasion, sang a few hymns and placed flowers on the altar.

When the memorial service was over, one of his friends distributed photographs of Father Lipniūnas to those who had participated.

Šiauliai

On March 15, 1985, the Hill of Crosses was badly vandalized. The statue of the Sacred Heart of Jesus and the statue of Mary were

damaged. About fifty crosses and shrines were demolished and the glass in shrines and pictures was broken. And who can count the thousands of small standing and hanging crosses and rosaries which were set out in orderly fashion or tastefully hung from larger crosses, bearing within them people's pain or witnessing their gratitude? The night of March 15, they were ruthlessly scattered and trampled in the snow. (The Hill of Crosses is a popular religious shrine repeatedly razed by the government and restored by the people. See *Chronicle* No. 48 — Trans, note)

Žarėnai - Latveliai (Šiauliai Rayon)

On May 16, 1985, at Pentecost, a small group of about thirty devotees assembled in the vandalized little cemetery of M lėlaičiai. Villagers, intellectuals, children and the youth knelt on the earth excavated by bulldozers, which had already managed to adorn itself with new crosses, and prayed the Sorrowful Mysteries of the Rosary, sang the Litany of the Blessed Virgin Mary and hymns. After praying, one young man read these verses:

*. . . Here brooded Christ with His hands manacled,
in the poor home of wooden wayside shrines,
but they decided to take from Him His shelter
just as from the Lithuanian in strange surroundings far away
When steel tractors attacked the cemetery
crumbling the bones from parents caskets,
what the cossacks' sword had not cut down —
was finished by the blindness of their unworthy descendents.
The wooden sun-rays split beneath the sedges,
the hirelings of violence smashed the little shrines,
and sank the legacy of their forebears in the swamps.
And the martyrs of freedom mourned,
But wounded hearts again cultivate hope.
And the broken cross announces He will rise.
It urges us to love the dawn of the third day,—
Lithuanian will survive Siberian glaciers.*

As they gathered and departed, the faithful were closely watched and were photographed by four civilians, one of them K G B Agent Slankauskas, from Šiauliai. The K G B men showed no rudeness and kept their distance, approaching nearer only after people had finished praying and had begun quietly conversing.

At the foot of the largest cross, together with lighted candles, were placed the bones of those interred here, which had been dug up in bulldozing the cemetery. In among the broken-off trees arose re-constructed crosses, the symbols of Samogitian resilience, loyalty to the faith and to the nation. After singing *Marija, Marija*, the people dispersed.

Tryškiai (Šiauliai R a y o n)

During the night of May 2, 1985, unknown culprits tore up the Stations of the Cross in the churchyard of Tryškiai. The glass frames of the stations were pried open and some of them broken. The pictures were torn from the frames and scattered about the churchyard; they had been painted on canvas, copies of the Stations of the Cross by an Italian artist.

The Village of Geniai (Alytus R a y o n)

On January 15, 1985, a KGB agent showed up at the home of the Baciuškas family, living in the Village of Geniai. The chekists wanted to know where their son Algis worked. When the mother told them that he was working at the packing house in Alytus, the KGB agent said that he was working not only at the packing house, but also moonlighting distributing religious newspapers. The mother began weeping and repeated that it was not so.

"We know that he is a good worker, a believer; let him go to church and pray, just so he doesn't get involved in suspicious activities," the KGB agent told the mother. As he was leaving, the chekist threatened, "We'll round them up one by one!"

In the neighborhood, the KGB agent asked whether the Baciuškas family has relatives abroad, whether it received packages and whether the priests visit them often. At the communal farm office, the KGB agent stated, "We'll neutralize the Gražulises, and the same fate awaits Algis. It's just too bad that he's so young!"

Pabaiskas (Ukmergė R a y o n)

Before Easter, 1985, Chairman Boškevičius of the District of Pabaiskas told Secretary Janina Jankauskaitė of that same district to go to the church Easter morning and get at least an estimate of how many people participate in the services, how many automobiles are parked at the church and what the pastor will be speaking about in his sermon. Miss Jankauskaitė categorically refused to do so. Then the chairman went to his brother, Boleslovas Boškevičius a factory

worker, asking that he, participating in the services himself, would learn everything and report in writing. Boleslovas Boškevičius being a believer, did not carry out the chairman's commission completely.

Miroslavas (Alytus R a y o n)

On Easter, April 7, 1985, in the church of Miroslavas, the faithful collected signatures to a petition addressed to the Prosecutor of Lithuania, demanding that the priests Alfonsas Svarinskas, Sigitas Tamkevičius and Jonas Kastytis Matulionis be released, as well as others innocently sentenced for their religious beliefs.

As they were collecting signatures, Jurgis Grubliauskas, Chairman of the Miroslavas District, came into the churchyard. Calling aside those collecting signatures, the chairman pointed out to them that collecting signatures on behalf of the imprisoned priests and others is a crime. When the people collecting the signatures explained that defending priests who are innocently imprisoned is not a crime, but rather every decent person's duty, Grubliauskas left the churchyard. Some time later, Grubliauskas informed the *rayon* government by telephoning about those gathering signatures and he himself, returning to the churchyard, continued forbidding them to collect signatures.

Kaunas

On April 8, 1985, Miss Aldona Raižytė, teacher of Kaunas City Kindergarten No. 46, was relieved of her position: she had gone to work at the kindergarten just a few months earlier. Miss Raižytė had earlier been discharged from a Kaunas City kindergarten.

After a few weeks had gone by, a group of children and youths were standing around in the churchyard of Petrošiūnai after evening services. In the churchyard was Miss Raižytė also. Seeing the children, Mrs. Bužinskienė, Vice Chairwoman of the Panemunė *Rayon* Executive Committee of the City of Kaunas, introduced herself. After asking what they were doing there, she accosted Miss Raižytė, "How did you dare to get a job at the kindergarten with your ideology?"

Mrs. Bužinskienė accused Miss Raižytė of teaching the children catechism, threatened to file a complaint immediately, and began counting the children, but then quickly relented, only threatening to come back to church the next time with the militia... The vice chairwoman suggested to Miss Raižytė that after thinking things over thoroughly, she come to the Executive Committee; she told her to find work, but by no means in any children's institution. Miss Raižytė

thanked her for the advice and told her that if, on account of her religion, she could not work in her specialty, she would work as a charwoman in church.

Lithuanian, remember that:

Father Alfonsas Svarinskas
Father Sigitas Tamkevičius
Father Jonas Kastytis Matulionis
Docent Vytautas Skuodis
Viktoras Petkus
Vladas Lapienis
Romas Žemaitis
Jadvyga Bieliauskienė
Povilas Pečeliūnas
Gintautas Iešmantas
Julius Sasnauskas

and others wear the chains of a prisoner that you might be able to believe and live freely.

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