

**CHRONICLE OF THE  
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IN LITHUANIA  
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IN LITHUANIA No 69

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**ON THE COVER: Bishop Antanas Vaičius of Telšiai preaching at the closing ceremonies of the Year of Saint Casimir at the Church of SS. Peter and Paul in Vilnius. Government interference sought to undermine public celebration of the 500th Anniversary of the death of Lithuania's Patron.**

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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 Teofilius Matulionis of Kaišiadorys and Archbishop Mečislovas Reinys of Vilnius were deported to a Siberian labor camp. Archbishop Reinys 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 believers 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

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**CHRONICLE OF THE CATHOLIC CHURCH IN LITHUANIA, No. 69**

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Lithuania ..... January 10, 1986

#### THE BETRAYALS DO NOT STOP

The faithful of Lithuania are insulted and pained by the constantly increasing number of Lithuanian clergy participating in the so-called Peace Conference in Berlin and other conferences similar to it -- even the celebration of the Victory of Moscow.

If those participating in this "peace" game were immature youths products of the Communist Youth League -- it would be possible to smile sadly and remain silent. Now it is impossible to remain silent, since the priests' so-called struggle for peace is nothing other than sheer hypocrisy and betrayal of the Catholic Church.

If these clergymen were really concerned about peace, they would look at this problem through the eyes of their own Catholic Church.

However, not one of these "fighters" or "peacemakers", as the people aptly characterize them, has shown any interest in the position of the Catholic Church on the question of peace.

The latter is set forth clearly enough in the encyclical, *Redemptor hominis*, par. 17 (6-p. 52-58). Every priest should inscribe deeply in his heart the encyclical's words - "At the basis of peace is respect for inviolable human rights; for peace is justice and war arises from infringement of those rights."

How are we to understand from this point of view the "defenders of peace"? They "defend" the kind of peace in whose name the Church of Queen of Peace in Klaipėda was closed, that peace which spits upon the right of hundreds of thousands of the faithful to participate in services, and upon hundreds of thousands of believers' signatures. Can a priest, the spiritual leader of the faithful, not understand this? If this is not betrayal, then perhaps it is myopia, senility, sclerosis or mental breakdown?

Whom do the so-called defenders of the Peace of Berlin represent? Who the hell sent them? Many go without even informing their Church leadership. The Catholic priests travelling abroad to defend "peace" are being sent by the Communists! Lithuanian priests are representing... Communists! This is an insanity probably unheard of in the history of the world!

Only small children are unaware of the fact that the Communists do not allow everyone to defend peace. The defenders of peace in Moscow were even put on trial. The Communists organize peace marches world-wide, but how viciously they attacked the Baltic Peace and Freedom Cruise. Why then do they send priests and even force them to participate in so-called peace conferences and other conferences? Because this is useful to Soviet domestic and foreign policy: they defend that policy which, proclaiming freedom of religion, "allows" the practice of religious cults, but does not allow those cults to put up buildings, does not allow them to restore those burned down, and even confiscates buildings, trying to weaken religion in all sorts of ways.

For instance, the faithful of the parish of Ryliškiiai, in the Diocese of Kaišiadorys, who after their church was burned down, prayed for decades in the cemetery, and were repeatedly ejected even from that place.



The cemetery of Žalioji is used for Mass because the church has converted into a mill.

The faithful of the parish of Žalioji, in the Diocese of Vilkaviškis, for their Masses under the open sky, the blizzards of winter play the accompaniment, while the church has been converted into a mill, and the government which continues to call itself the most humane in the world, pays no heed, pays no heed to hundreds of petitions, to tears...

The faithful of Batakiai in the Diocese of Telšiai, paid insurance on their church for decades, but when after a fire they applied for insurance compensation, Soviet officials ridiculed them, the money received for insurance was applied to rayon cultural needs, among them, atheistic propaganda. The ridiculing of the faithful of this parish is echoing throughout the world: They are allowed to pray only in the belfry where, during funerals, only the casket fits, while the faithful participating in the funeral must stand out in the rain, the snow, etc. The Rayon Executive Committee of Tauragė organizes the taking down even of a small tarpaulin shelter over the belfry door. There is not even any talk of reconstructing the church -- Moscow is allowing them to build themselves a tiny structure attached to the belfry, but Vilnius refuses to give permission! When Vilnius finally allows it, the Rayon Executive Committee forbids it. Only after a House of Culture and a kindergarten are erected in Batakiai (and the faithful are asking neither funds nor labor of the government), at long last, Lioginas Šepetys, Secretary of the Communist Party of Lithuania came to Batakiai and allowed construction of an attachment to the belfry -- a wooden barracks no larger than the belfry. And this, not

now... in the future...

So loudly throughout the entire world is our freedom to practice religious cults publicized! Probably no one in the world has managed to ridicule its own Constitution so blatantly!

And those going to various "peace" conferences under duress or freely, in either case support such a "peace" policy!

The country calling itself the most democratic in the world often boasts on various occasions how much literature is published for Lithuanian Catholics. More than one hierarch of the Church in Lithuania -- "defender of peace" -- has sung the praises of that "freedom" of the press in all sorts of interviews. That wonderful freedom of the press has determined to publish on the occasion of the 600-year Jubilee of the Baptism of Lithuania 50,000 small religious commemorative cards (as they did for the Jubilee of Saint Casimir). Such a quantity would probably not be enough for the faithful of the City of Panevėžys! So much for freedom!

The whole world admires the Holy Father's practical efforts on behalf of peace (the Argentinian-English conflict, etc.). There is no initiative for good in the world to which the Holy Father has not responded. He is always and everywhere inviting everyone to peace and tranquility. On the eve of the summit meeting between USSR General Secretary Gorbachev and USA President Ronald Reagan, the Holy Father addressed them also with his longings for peace. This is why the UN listens to the Holy Father's speeches so respectfully. The world approves of his efforts on behalf of peace. However, the Holy Father's peace policy is condemned by the Communists! The headlines of Communist *Tiesa (Truth)* proclaim "the Pope is for rockets" (September 25, 1985).

When the government of Poland proceeded to denigrate the Holy Father, the clergy of Poland protested. The same happened in Czechoslovakia.

However, some Lithuanian Catholic priests line up with the Communists.

The betrayal -- there is no other name for it -- does not stop. This year too, when the archbishop visited the Vatican, eight priests from Lithuania left for Moscow at the same time to participate in the so-called Peace Conference in Berlin. Is it not time to come to our senses and to draw the necessary conclusions?

#### **PETRAS ANILIONIS "INSTRUCTS" PRIESTS-TO-BE**

At the end of October, 1985, the repeatedly postponed traditional seminarians' meeting at the beginning of the academic year with the Commissioner for Religious Affairs Petras Anilionis took place. In his talk, Anilionis set forth the important manifestations of "religious extremism" in the activities of the Catholic Church in Lithuania.

In the beginning, he touched purely on the internal affairs of the Church: last year's elections of the priests' councils. Anilionis, contrary to Canon Law, affirmed that the Bishops' Conference has the right to impose a standard set of rules on the priests' councils of all dioceses. Msgr. Kazimieras Dulksnys, Administrator of the Diocese of

Panevėžys, and Father Donatas Valiukonis, Consultor of the Archdiocese of Vilnius, were publicly assailed for their objection to the uncanonical interference of the civil government in the makeup of priests' councils and colleges of consultors.

Msgr. Dulksnys was criticized for not restraining priests when they show some energy in the war against atheism, while immediately reacting when suspicion falls on priests in the moral sphere. This allegedly is the influence of the extremists, and such behavior on the part of the administrator, according to Anilionis, is an embarrassment for the Catholic Church.

Father Rokas Puzonas was assailed, because during the Feast of Pentecost, in Vepriai, while making the Way of the Cross, according to the Commissioner, he gave eight sermons. Here Anilionis cited the *Liturgical Prayer book* where it says that during the Pentecost procession, one is supposed to join in spirit with Mary, the Mother of Jesus and the Apostles, praying in the Upper Room of the Last Supper. "But with whom did Father Puzonas invite people to unite in his Way of the Cross sermons? With the 'bandits suffering for anti-Soviet activity'," according to the lecturer, "and with the priest who introduced himself as having been born in Siberia!" Anilionis raved.

In a similar tone, the Commissioner spoke about the collecting of signatures at Christmas, 1984, in front of the church at Sakiai, on behalf of the release of Father Jonas-Kastytis Matulionis. According to him, for women living as religious -- the gatherers of these signatures -- Christmas, the Feast of the Nativity of Christ is of no concern. They are more concerned about the convict Jonas-Kastytis Matulionis. The collecting of signatures on behalf of a priest-convict, in the opinion of the Commissioner, has nothing in common with Christ or with religion. Such allegations by Anilionis constitute a call to change the Gospel of Christ into a gospel censored by the atheists which the future priests of Soviet Lithuania would zealously proclaim.

No less displeasure did Father Antanas Jokubauskas, pastor of Pociūnėliai, attract to himself for his sermons preached during the solemnities of Saint Casimir in SS. Peter and Paul Church and of the Feast of Our Lady of the Gates of Dawn in Vilnius. Allegedly, he urged the faithful not to honor Saint Casimir when there are new priest-convicts, Alfonsas Svarinskas and Sigitas Tamkevičius.

The lecturer falsely claimed that Canon Bronius Antanaitis brought Father Jokubauskas to the Festival of the Gates of Dawn. It was naive of the Commissioner to suggest that during Father Jokubauskas' sermon at the Lithuanian services, the greater number of listeners were Poles who were scandalized by the singing of Maironis' *Lietuva brangi* at the end.

Was Anilionis not presumptuous in claiming that the faithful of Vilnius had been scandalized by Jokubauskas' sermons? What right does an atheist have to speak in the name of believers?

In an effort to convince everyone that the atheistic government had not tried to interfere with renovation work on the Church of SS. Peter and Paul for the celebration of the Jubilee of Saint Casimir, the Commissioner stated that this could be proven by the correspondence of priests at the



**Father Juozas Prancka instructs seminarians at the Theological Seminary in Kaunas**

church with government agencies, and by the recorded telephone conversations of the priests (So what is the good of guaranteeing confidentiality of telephone conversations!).

The worse thing is that extremism has shown up even at the Kaunas seminary, Commissioner Anilionis explained. Such an extremist assault was the attempt to bring literature into the seminary which the Supreme Court of the Lithuanian SSR has acknowledged as anti-Soviet (i.e., J. Girnius' *Žmogus be Dievo -- Man Without God*). The method of operation of the extremist priests is the same as that of extremist priests in Poland, for example; in Lithuania as well as in Poland, lay people are allowed to speak in churches under the administration of extremist pastors: In Viduklė, Nijolė Sadūnaitė; in Josvainiai, Petras Paulaitis. This is allegedly a proof that all the activities of the extremists proceed according to secret instructions from centers of disruption in the US and Western countries. However, this "instruction" about which Anilionis was so annoyed, is not secret at all. Such a possibility is provided for in the Code of Canon Law (759-766).

In closing, Anilionis tried to show that the refusal of the Church to accommodate to the civil government has not and will not do religion any good.

It is sad that some seminary instructors see nothing in Anilionis' speech contrary to doctrine, as though Anilionis were not trying to make the seminarians atheists. But has anyone from the seminary administration explained that these "instructions" of the Commissioner are incompatible

with the Gospel of Christ or Christian morals or Canon Law? By these talks, are not the souls of young candidates to the priesthood, still lacking foundations of firm faith, being crippled?

**A READER'S LETTER TO THE C H R O N I C L E**  
(Painful Anniversaries)

One greets each New Year with certain hopes, expectations and wishes. One wishes and trusts that the coming year will be better and more meaningful. Even among the customs of barely developed nations, various New Year's ceremonies prevail, with the help of which an attempt is made to ward off misfortune and evil spirits. No shadows are supposed to darken New Year's happiness.

Alas, 1986 brings the faithful of Lithuania not only happiness and a joyful, uplifting spirit, but also reminds them of one more painful anniversary on January 26, which we shall mark among many: It will be the third anniversary of Father Alfonsas Svarinskas' incarceration.

Three years are a very brief period in a person's life. However, it looks much different when these three years constitute the continuation of nineteen years of confinement. Of thirty-one years of Father Alfonsas Svarinskas' priesthood, eleven have been spent behind bars and barbed wire without the right to call himself not only a priest, but even a human being! He is a clerical extremist and calumniator, a dangerous criminal and the paid lackey of bourgeois ideology, a troublemaker and who knows what else; only not a priest, not a human being defending the truth, struggling for the affairs of God, and for the ideals of spiritual improvement.

Condemned by strangers, ridiculed and degraded even by some of his own brother clergy, nevertheless for thousands of the faithful and people of good will in Lithuania, he is a powerful, untiring icebreaker; guided and protected by God, supported by the prayers of loyalists, he has unswervingly broken and continues to break the ice of spiritual apathy, untruth, hatred and enforced atheism. His personal greatness is acknowledged even by the government atheists. All those earlier injunctions against seminarians visiting him, at the present time arranging commemorations of him, publicly praying for him, evaluating positively in sermons his activities and efforts, show that the guardians of the apparatus of force understand the power of Father Alfonsas Svarinskas' example and his effective influence upon seriously thinking people.

This is why they are trying at any cost to denigrate him, to hammer into people by force and by threats that Father Svarinskas is an enemy of the Soviet system, and that any defense of him can be treated as a political crime. The various expressions of falsehood trying to vilify the priest-prisoners and other prisoners and dissidents still appearing in the Soviet press look very sad. For instance, in the *Kauno tiesa* (Truth, Kaunas ed.) daily, not long ago, one such mouthpiece for untruth,

Instructor in Marxism Jeselski, tried to show that the faithful themselves condemned the activities of Fathers Alfonsas Svarinskas and Sigitas Tamkevičius, that during the trial, the public turned its back on them and the like. It would be interesting to know what faithful and what public Jeselski is talking about.

Did those faithful turn their backs on Alfonsas Svarinskas who, risking their own well-being or even freedom, hounded in every way, and even terrorized, have written expressions of protest to various Soviet agencies and collected thousands of signatures under them? Have those thousands who have signed, demanding restoration of freedom to Father Alfonsas Svarinskas, left him completely alone in the tangle of falsehood? Has Father Svarinskas been rejected by that segment of the public which spent several days standing outside the courtroom suffering the arbitrariness, ridicule and even repressions of the KGB and the militia: the roundups, the forcible deportation scores of thousands of kilometers beyond Vilnius, ten-day jail sentences, etc.?

Finally, do these priests and faithful who in many churches today pray for Father Alfonsas Svarinskas and other prisoners wish to hear or know nothing about him?

So what rejection of Father Alfonsas Svarinskas has this defender of "Soviet truth and reality" written about? Jeselski most probably had in mind those basic actors in the courtroom farce and that portion of the public (KGB and Party cadres) driven into the courtroom by force, which tried with its approving applause to drown out the voice of conscience regarding the unjust condemnation of a man. However, their efforts were in vain!

The government atheists are thrown off-balance mostly by the firm unbreakable spirit, the complete trust in the protection of the Lord, and the unconditional surrender to the will of the Most High on the part of Father Alfonsas Svarinskas and the other prisoners, whether priests or laity. Oh how they would like to see them out of commission, bathing in tears of "repentance". Prisoners' letters indicate just the opposite, almost everyone of them reflecting gratitude to God for granting the opportunity to sacrifice, to perfect oneself and to be an example to others. The opportunity of witnessing to God is granted to everyone, rich and poor, scientist and plowman, the head of state and prisoner.

The place for fulfilling one's duties to God is also not exceptional, the altar and the house of prayer, family and work, prison and exile are all incomprehensible and immeasurable fields of human endeavor for the incarnation of divine thought. Christ, sending His apostles into the world said:

"... I am sending you as sheep among wolves..."

"...You will be hated by all on account of my name, but whoever perseveres to the end shall be saved..."

"...Therefore, do not be afraid of them, for there is nothing hidden which will not be revealed, there is nothing hidden which will not make itself known..."

"...Do not fear those who kill the body but cannot kill the soul..."

Hence, no cry of despair or sorrow for lost life or freedom is heard



**Father Alfonsas Svarinskas**

from the lips of a single prisoner. Perhaps not everyone is equally prepared to suffer physically the deprivations of incarceration, but their souls are peaceful and strong for they are strengthened and protected by Christ Himself, our Lord and our God!

Commemorating the anniversary of our parting with our honorable father, Alfonsas Svarinskas, let us lift our hearts to the Lord that we may be able to overcome fear and uncertainty, that we might draw determination and courage from the martyrs, and that we would always pray to the Holy Spirit.

"...Powerfully enlighten our minds  
and touch our hearts with your love  
so that our will might not break  
strengthen it with eternal power..."

Let us remember that Father Alfonsas Svarinskas and others bear the chains of the prisoner for God, the Church and the nation. May the

Almighty bless him!

#### WHEN WILL THE DESECRATION OF CHURCHES CEASE?

Lately, burglaries of churches have grown more frequent. In Kaunas alone this fall, the churches of Saint Anthony and Panemunė were burglarized; burglaries occurred in the churches of Dūkštas, Švenčionėliai and Braziūkai. An attempt was made to burglarize the church of Šančiai, but the culprits were caught at the scene of the crime.

It is difficult to know what barometer these waves of sacrilege follow. But one thing is clear: These are not exceptions or anomalies, but part of a criminal chain. What is it: Satanism, the recreation of bored *macho* young men or consciously malicious activity? If the first two causes predominate, then it would not be very difficult to abolish them. It would be enough for the forces of law and order to crack down, and order would be restored. But the organs of the militia do not look for this type of criminal very seriously, and the courts let them off easily, so it is with some reason that one comes to the entirely logical conclusion that in this case, it is the third cause which holds, namely, consciously malicious activity.

#### **T ū b a u s i a i** (Kretinga Rayon)

On the night of October 10-11, 1985, vandals broke into the church of Tūbausiai and desecrated the Blessed Sacrament. They tore open the tabernacle door and found the safe which they could not open, where the Blessed Sacrament was kept. The vandals tore out the tabernacle with the safe and took it with them. The culprits have not been found.

#### **K a u n a t a v a** (Telšiai Rayon)

On the night of October 13-14, 1985, vandals broke into the church of Kaunatava. After rooting around the sacristy and tossing liturgical vestments about, they found the tabernacle key and desecrated the Blessed Sacrament, taking out the consecrated hosts, crumbling them and scattering the fragments about the church. On November 24, the Feast of Christ the King, services of reparation took place in the church of Kaunatava, presided over by the pastor, Father Vytautas Kadys. Participating in the services were the priests of the Cathedral of Telšiai, Fathers Vincentas Vėlavičius and Jonas Bučelis. As a symbol of contrition, all three priests and a large crowd of the faithful went from the main door to the altar on their knees. A sermon was preached by Father Bučelis.

#### **L e n k i m a i** (Skuodas Rayon)

At the end of October, 1985, small statues of saints were stolen from the Lenkimai churchyard. There has been no word that the authorities have been seriously looking for the culprits.

**L i e p l a u k é** (Telšiai *Rayon*)

During the night of October 31 - November 1, two small statues of the saints were stolen from shrines in the Lieplauké churchyard, and the shrine of Saint George from the city square, which is listed as a monument protected by the state, was vandalized. There is no word that the authorities have been seriously looking for the culprits.

**NEWS FROM THE DIOCESES**

Lithuania's Praying

**Ž e m a i č i ū K a l v a r i j a** (Varduva, Plunge *Rayon*)

The great religious festival of Žemaičių Kalvarija (beginning July 2), was celebrated with great enthusiasm and devotion, in spite of constant government interference: checking of public transportation, registration of private automobiles, strict monitoring of people at work, etc.

**P i v a š i ū n a i** (Alytus *Rayon*)

On August 11, 1985, the militia kept stopping people traveling to the religious festival of the Assumption celebrated in Pivašiūnai. That day, they allowed no one to drive into town, rerouting automobiles out into the fields. On the streets and in the churchyard, KGB agents icily scrutinized everyone going to church. The church and churchyard were full of worshippers. His Excellency, Bishop Vincentas Sladkevičius also came to the devotions. The bishop concelebrated Holy Mass together with visiting priests, and preached the sermon, during which he emphasized the significance of Mary in our lives and her maternal protection, urging unreserved trust in her under all circumstances. "It is good for us to be here with our mother," said the bishop. In his sermon, he touched upon the fame of the Miraculous image of Mary in Pivašiūnai, known throughout the world. Even the Holy Father, speaking of Lithuania, mentioned it. (Trans, note - an allegedly miraculous painting of the Virgin Mary has twice survived the destruction of the Church of the Assumption, dating from 1648. The provenance of the painting is uncertain.)

Although the KGB did not interfere directly with worshippers, nevertheless, there was an air of tension in the churchyard. It was impossible to purchase any religious articles.

**G i e d r a i č i a i** (Molėtai *Rayon*)

On August 25, 1985, the 500-year jubilee of the Blessed Mykolas Giedraitis was commemorated. On that occasion, His Excellency Bishop Vincentas Sladkevičius administered the Sacrament of Confirmation in

Giedraičiai. To the festival came priests of neighboring parishes, and worshippers from various corners of Lithuania: Vilnius, Kaunas, Šiauliai; many children and youths came to receive the Sacrament of Confirmation. Before services, the bishop blessed an artistic statue of the Blessed Mykolas Giedraitis, carved from oak by folk sculptors for the jubilee. The principal Mass was celebrated by Bishop Sladkevičius, together with the visiting priests. On that occasion, the bishop preached. After services, children and youth greeted him. As might be expected, the jubilee made the authorities uneasy.

In the square before the church, and in the bus station, the militia were on duty, and everywhere the KGB poked about.

#### **Šil u v a** (Raseiniai Rayon)

This year, it was even more difficult to get to the religious festival of Šiluva. Some of the bus routes from rayons and cities had been discontinued, and most of the buses coming from the larger cities would take only as many passengers as there were seats. At the Kaunas bus station, this was a regular occurrence. Tickets to Šiluva for the entire octave had been sold out in advance.

Regardless of the difficulties and obstructions, a crowd of worshippers gathered in Šiluva. On September 13, His Excellency Bishop Julijonas Steponavičius who was celebrating his thirtieth anniversary as a bishop, came to the festival at Šiluva.

Before the principal Mass, the clergy greeted the bishop. A large number of priests concelebrated the principal Mass with the bishop, during the sermon, Bishop Steponavičius urged everyone to be loyal to the faith, practice the virtues and to frequent the sacraments. After the services, the bishop was greeted by the children and the youth.

On September 15, the final day of the festival, almost all the bishops of Lithuania and a large crowd of the faithful participated in the services.

#### **V i l n i u s**

Throughout the entire octave, there were crowds of worshippers at the religious festival of Our Lady, Mother of Mercy of the Gates of Dawn (Aušros Vartų). Before the evening devotions, in the Gate of Dawn Chapel, young people prayed the rosary and sang hymns. There were so many people that the more feeble would not even attempt to climb up the stairs to the chapel, but remained praying on the stairs or in the corridor, which they used to fill right up to the doors.

In church, visiting choirs would sing every day in rotation. The persistence of the worshippers was surprising: hot and tired, not only without a place to sit down on account of the crowds of people, but without even a place to lean, they would remain praying for several hours at a time.

#### **T e l š i a i**

On All Souls' Day, 1985, in the Telšiai Municipal Cemetery, there was a solemn Catholic memorial service. The procession to the cemetery, with the clergy and a large throng of faithful participating, was led by His Excellency, Bishop Antanas Vaičius. The Catholics are grateful for this beautiful commemoration of the dead.

#### **B u t r i m o n y s** (Šalčininkai Rayon)

The District Chairman of Butrimonys warned Father Vytautas Pūkas through the chairman of the church committee not to organize any procession to the cemetery on All Souls' Day. Father Pūkas did not heed the warning. The atheists closely observed the procession, but did not interfere in the services directly.

#### **Š a l č i n i n k a i**

At the end of December, 1985, the priests of the Rayon of Šalčininkai were summoned for a talk with local authorities. The traditional report about rayon economic achievements was followed by the Rayon Prosecutor's talk regarding "infractions of the law" and the possible penalties attached thereto. The Prosecutor threatened Father Jonas Vaitonis with penalties for trips to Byelorussia without government permission to minister to the faithful, and the pastor of Butrimonys, Father Vytautas Pūkas, for an All Souls' procession in the cemetery. The Prosecutor emphasized that in the future for teaching catechism to children, allowing children to participate in processions, to sing in choir and other "crimes", suitable penalties would be meted out to priests.

#### **P o c i ū n ė I i a i** (Radviliškis Rayon)

From: The Commissioner of the Council for Religious Affairs  
Attached to the Council of Ministers of the USSR,  
Lithuania, SSR

#### **Final Warning**

To: Pranciškus Kvietkevičius, son of Vincas, and Birutė Gaštentienė, daughter of Klemensas.

It has been determined that the Executive Organ of the Catholic Religious Community of Pociūnėliai, regardless of many repeated urgings from local authorities, has not organized parish founders ("committee of twenty") to sign a new agreement with the Rayon Executive Committee concerning the use of the house of worship and its religious inventory, art and cultural treasures without charge.

I demand that the Executive Organ of the Pociūnėliai community (parish) enter into a contract no later than November 1 of this year

(1985) with the Radviliškis Rayon Executive Committee, concerning the use of the house of worship.

I warn members of the Executive Organ that failing to enter into a contract, the religious association's registration can be nullified, and the church, since it is being used without a contract, can be closed,

(signed) Commissioner Petras Anilionis

September 18, 1985

October 14, 1985, the District chairman presented the warning to Father Antanas Jokubauskas, pastor of Pociūnėliai.

#### V i d u k l è (Raseiniai Rayon)

In the church of Viduklė, on the 26th day of each month -- the arrest date of parish pastor Father Alfonsas Svarinskas -- believers and priests gather in prayer for their imprisoned pastor and all prisoners. The atheists intimidate the youth as much as possible, especially in the school. Services are usually held in the evening, during which there are always detectives in church, counting to see how many school - children are in church, who they are and what they do: sing, lead the prayers, which of them begin the prayers and which of them end, etc. Later, the pupils who have participated in the services are intimidated in one way or another and discussed, whether they will be allowed to take examinations or whether upon completion of middle school, they will not be able to go further for higher studies; they warn people that for their participation in services for convicts (especially the youth), they could be arrested. The detectives assigned observe the priests who arrive, and copy down the sermons they preach and the license numbers of automobiles parked there.

To: The Editor of the Klaipėda Rayon Newspaper *Banga (Wave)*,  
A. Platužas

Copies to: LSSR Council of Ministers  
Commissioner for the LSSR Council for Religious Affairs,  
Petras Anilionis  
His Excellency, the Bishop of Telšiai, Antanas Vaičius

From: Gargždai Parish, Klaipėda Rayon  
Associate Pastor Father Antanas Šeškevičius and  
Organist A. Bumbulis

#### A Petition

Editor: In the July 27 issue of *Banga*, you published an untruthful article by Religious Affairs Commissioner Petras Anilionis entitled "To

Whom Does the Cemetery Belong?" An explanation of the truth will reveal the falsehood.

1. In the Commissioner's article, J. Kavaliauskas is mentioned and the Commissioner himself speaks about a petition in which "it was written that in the Catholic cemetery of Gargždai, erecting monuments with crosses is prohibited." But they both missed the point, as though neither had seen the petition. We therefore enclose a complete text in the Russian language; this is how it was written to the Committee for Religious Affairs, attached to the USSR Council of Ministers, January 8, 1985, with the signatures of the faithful (150 believers signed -- Editor's Comment).

The petition begins: "You allowed us to erect crosses on the graves of the faithful. Commissioner Anilionis, in a conference in Gargždai, told us that the Factory for Essential Services has to manufacture the crosses at high cost, and factory workers make them secretly. Is that normal? Neither the Ministry of Essential Services nor the Rayon Executive Committee nor other authorities are concerned about this. In reality, there is no permission except your words."

The petition ends: "We sincerely ask you to use your good offices with the appropriate authorities so that the Factory for Essential Services would make us the crosses on order."

So the gist of the petition is as follows: Moscow gave permission to erect the crosses but the factory is not making them, so we asked it to make them.

It is now clear that Kavaliauskas and the Commissioner completely distorted the essence of the petition.

2. When the government opened a new cemetery for the residents of Gargždai, in Laugaliai, they no longer allowed the erection of crosses. Therefore, the church committee of the parish of Gargždai wrote to Commissioner Anilionis on August 2, 1984, the following petition:

"More than once, our parishioners have requested Chief Architect Kelbauskienė of the Klaipėda Rayon for crosses to be erected on graves in the cemetery. She would allow them only to put up a monument from an album of approved examples. In it however, there is no cross but only box-shaped stones, without any religious symbol. Can believers put up such an atheistic monument on the grave of a believer? This would mean that after death, believers are turned into atheists.

"Our parish, like all other parishes of the Diocese of Telšiai, has received from the chancery communication no. 577 (October 1-3, 1954) which says: 'Crosses are permitted to be put up not only in churchyards and cemeteries, but also in the yards of believers; elsewhere, crosses are not erected and not blessed.' That document, of course, was confirmed with the authorities and until now, has not been rescinded. Why then are the faithful now being forbidden to put up crosses and those already erected are being destroyed, causing a world-wide scandal? Therefore, we are forced to ask you that the matter be clearly settled according to the Soviet Constitution.

"1. The erection of a religious monument on the grave of a believer is a part of cult, as emphasized in the *Apeigynas (Ritual)*, Vol. II, pps. 286-288.

"2. To force a believer to choose a non-religious monument is to abrogate freedom of conscience and religion.

"3. The faithful wish not just to attach a small crucifix to the stone, but to erect a real cross.

"4. To force us to put up atheistic monuments in place of crosses is to impoverish Lithuanian art which, down the centuries, has been proud of its artistic crosses of which there are whole albums put together by world-renowned artists.

"5. According to the present plans the monuments would be stereotypic and there would be no room for spontaneous folk art.

"We request the honorable Commissioner of the Council for Religious Affairs to grant the faithful the possibility of erecting religious monuments --crosses-- on the graves of the deceased. We await your favorable reply."

Commissioner Anilionis gave a negative reply, telling us to choose a monument from the approved catalogue.

Then the church committee and faithful sent a petition to the Council for Religious Affairs in Moscow, and received a reply through Klaipėda Rayon Executive Committee Vice Chairman Leita, who read it to Chief Architect Kelbauskienė, and to me (Father Šeškevičius): "Whoever did not allow the cross to be erected has committed a grave injustice."

We rejoice that Moscow has allowed it, but alas, the crosses did not show up on the graves of the faithful because the factory did not manufacture them, but in five years, only carved one rather large cross on a rock. They give with one hand and take away with the other, and things remain the same.

Since a monument without a religious symbol cannot be blessed, the faithful attach some sort of crucifix to the rock or request that one be carved. About such "crosses" in the new cemetery, Kavaliauskas informs the Commissioner, while in the old ones are large crucifixes, but only from past times.

Monuments with a little cross carved on it were not allowed in the new cemetery. The faithful used to smear it with black and the security guards would not notice it, so there are monuments with little crosses, but not a single cross.

Editor, invite the author of the untruthful story, Commissioner Petras Anilionis, and go down to the new cemetery in Laugaliai and look for the cross everywhere, and you will not find a single one independently erected as much as 1.2 meters high. But you should have done this before the appearance of the article. J. Kavaliauskas, however, affirms that he found very many crosses. I enclose a view of the new cemetery, so that you may find "many crosses". You won't find them even with" binoculars.

So it is obvious how much such expressions are worth, and what they are good for: "Where do the calumnies come from which prepare such petitions? Why are they not taken to court for lying?" (J. Kavaliauskas) "The authors of the petition are lying and blackening reality" (P. Anilionis).

3. The Commissioner accuses us: "...Of collecting signatures of residents, most of which were forged..."

We respond: We absolutely deny that. No objective analysis can prove it, but only confirm that the signatures are authentic. We don't even have to multiply signatures, since we have them; thousands of parishioners would sign, but who needs so many? If they don't pay attention to a hundred, they won't pay any attention to a thousand! Here is a clear example: The Commissioner gladly accepted the untruthful report of one atheist, J. Kavaliauskas, as the real thing, and he did not pay any attention to more than a hundred of the faithful, and even accused them. What kind of logic, what kind of diplomacy is this, coming from such a high official who has been appointed to assist the public? After all, he clearly told the faithful in Gargždai that the factory must turn out the crosses, but he writes just the opposite. Even in Moscow, E.S. Galustian asked our representative whether the factory in Gargždai is making the crosses. Told that it was not, he declared, "They should make them." Talk remains talk when no one puts it in motion.

Even in *Akiratis (Perspective)*, the Commissioner accused us of falsifying signatures, because parishioners called repudiated their signatures. "A stick has two ends": There is another reason for repudiating, that is fear which continues from the days of Stalin. Vice Chairman A. Leita uses that means: He summons in writing some believer who has signed more legibly and asks whether he signed. The summons itself is frightening, and the questioning only increases the fear, so there are some who repudiate their signatures. One of those who repudiated his own signature expressed the thinking of all of them: "I signed, but why should I tell them."

4. The Commissioner writes, "In bourgeois Lithuania, church officials were in charge of cemeteries. They used to decide who was to be buried where... They had set aside in the cemeteries so-called potter's fields where they used to order the burial of suicides, unbaptized children and, of course, non-believers -- atheists."

We would like to explain: In Lithuania, every religious group had its own religious cemetery and put up its own religious monuments -- the Orthodox, the Lutherans, the Jews... where there was a demand, there was also a cemetery for free-thinkers and atheists, for example, near Šiauliai, where several free-thinkers were buried. So everyone was able to put up the kind of monument he wanted and to choose the place. Since a religious community looks upon cemeteries with special respect, so the Catholic Church ordered them to be blessed (*Code of Canon Law*, Canon 1205), and to leave an unconsecrated section for those who could not be buried with the Church: "If possible, let a place be set aside and kept for those to whom a Church funeral has been refused." (Canon 1212)

Here they used to inter unbaptized children, for they were not yet members of the Church, and those who fell away: atheists, suicides and public sinners. Since they did not wish to be with us in life, they were left free in death.

Because the atheistic government has taken all cemeteries under its own administration, there are no denominational cemeteries; even though Kavaliauskas still speaks of a Catholic cemetery in Gargždai, even though freedom of conscience and religion is now proclaimed (Constitution, Art.

50), nevertheless, every religious group (Catholics, Orthodox, Lutherans, Jews ...) have to inter their members only in common state cemeteries, and erect the kind of monuments which the state determines.

According to the Commissioner, there is greater freedom of conscience now. However every religious group would be very grateful to the government if the latter assigned to the faithful at least the kind of corner the Church used to assign to atheists in its cemeteries. She never required that a few atheists be interred with the faithful, but used to segregate them according to religious principal, and now, all the faithful have to be interred in atheistic cemeteries where no religious monument or cross was provided for, as though only atheists were buried there. This is very painful for the faithful. They therefore request that they be allowed to erect a cross at least at the grave of a believer.

5. The Commissioner accuses us: "The petition was addressed to foreign anti-Soviet propaganda centers."

Response: This is made up of whole cloth, dishonorable and illogical. If the purpose were such, one signature would suffice, while we have been struggling for crosses in our cemetery for five years now, and we have not heard any report from abroad, even though the Commissioner heard: "This petition was soon read over Vatican Radio with juicy commentaries."

With regard to the razing of the church-barracks of Gargždai, the faithful have been writing petitions for perhaps eight months, and Moscow has been relaying them to the Commissioner, and he, to the Klaipėda Rayon Executive Committee, and always with the same annotation: No! "According to jurisdiction", as though the Commissioner's office were an empty place to send petitions. This shows that the Commissioner is not inclined to help the faithful, even though they are suffering in a barracks. This is confirmed by his final, distinctive reply: "There is no need!", even though thousands are requesting the raising of the roof, while he, Anilionis, is appointed to assist the public: "The Communist Party of the Soviet Union exists for the people and serves the people." (Constitution, Art.6)

Even though the authorities are acting so inhumanly at this point, nevertheless the people of Gargždai heard nothing about it from the Vatican. We've gathered all the Commissioner's accusations, publicly bare his morals which ignore Art. 55 of the LSSR Constitution and, by the same token, transgress Art. 52, stirring up discontent between Church and state, hurting himself and the state.

Intellectuals and diplomats do not act so. The Commissioner calls clergy the "church gang". Such nomenclature means that they are insulted, and shows the author's cultural level. How must a bishop or priest feel, addressing such an intermediary between Church and state? They label as extremists those priests who try the least bit to defend the Church's affairs, in an effort to demean and silence them.

6. We appeal to the LSSR Council of Ministers to see how the Commissioner represents the state.

To our bishop, to be aware how the Commissioner treats priests. We appeal also to the Commissioner himself because silence would be a transgression against the truth.

We appeal to the editor of *Banga* so that he might be aware of how he is publishing false articles on questions of worldview. He goes by the rule: Whatever is against religion and priests is all true, because they have no voice in the press, and so they will have to keep quiet, and the one who vilifies them will be right. For example, the hack writer M. Dausynas wrote all sorts of nonsense in his anti-religious articles, and the editors published everything March 30. In *Banga*, he wrote, "According to the church people, it (confession) was instituted by Christ when, at the Last Supper, addressing His apostles... "

He thus showed that in the field of religion, he is an illiterate; such is the level of the editors also who print it. Since the faithful do not have any religious newspaper, they cannot write the truth, their plight is worse than that of the Negroes in Africa, or of the Asiatics. Although Art. 48 of the LSSR Constitution guarantees citizens freedom of speech and of the press, it would nevertheless be very naive to request the editor that the untruthful article of the Commissioner be unmasked and recalled in accordance with the specific facts in this petition.

The faithful have neither a religious newspaper, nor journal nor religious books to read, so they are forced to live in great religious obscurity such as our nation has never experienced. Under the Czar, book smugglers used to bring books over from Tilžė (Tilsit), but now it is impossible to obtain any religious books from abroad. In the meantime, Poland, Democratic Germany and Hungary have religious magazines and books. True, during forty years of "freedom" of the press, they have allowed the clergy to publish a few books, an almanac, a catechism and a quantity of prayerbooks such that a hundred thousand people received only a few.

If, in former times, a beggar would have received so little alms, he would soon have died of starvation. Part of religious starvation is the fact that the priest has no right to teach a few children catechism in church. Where are they to learn if there is no catechism intended for children? How are the parents to teach them without a book? All that remains is to die of religious starvation and become atheists. Meanwhile, in other democratic lands, they teach secondary school students religion in church.

See what kind of freedom of religious speech and religious press we have! We do not expect any retraction, but only greater defamation.

Enclosures:

1. Photographs of the old and new cemeteries of Gargždai.
2. Copy of the petition in Russian.
3. An article by Commissioner P. Anilionis

Gargždai, August 27, 1985

On September 17, 1985, Commissioner Petras Anilionis replied to Father Antanas Šeškevičius and organist A. Bumbulis, saying that the examples cited in the newspaper reflect reality, and so discussion regarding this question is unnecessary.

To: The LSSR Commissioner for Religious Affairs, Petras Anilionis

Copies to: The Honorable Bishops and Administrators of Lithuania

From: Father Gustavas Gudavičius,  
Administrator  
Žagarė-Juodeikiai Churches

#### A Petition

Esteemed Commissioner, in connection with my petition of August 25, 1985, to General Secretary Mikhail Gorbachev, of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of the USSR, in which I expressed thanks for his determined war "on all sorts of evils which have become prevalent in our lifetime, and especially on the intemperate consumption of alcoholic beverages drunkenness", and I asked in the name of the faithful of Lithuania that one more evil "be abolished from our life, namely the carrying out on a wide scale among us of discrimination against the faithful". Coming to Joniškis, you "brainwashed me" for two hours in an effort to prove that black is white and white is black. You called my petition libellous, and you threatened me with certain articles of the Criminal Code if I did not stop writing.

Seeing evil manifest in the world or falsehood triumphant, losing patience, I occasionally write to someone. I write openly, making use of the freedom of speech and of press guaranteed in the Constitution, and if some correspondents use that material for their own ends, I will not be responsible.

Since after your long talk I was in a hurry and could not respond to you, therefore, I resolved to respond in writing to false accusations which you have brought against me. I would like to clear up certain details touched upon in my petition and in our conversation.

1. Honorable Commissioner, you affirm that there is no discrimination against the faithful among us, that all believers regardless of the position they occupy, may freely attend church: the parents have the right of teaching their children the truths of the faith, that enough prayerbooks, catechisms and other literature are published.

But what does the Constitution say on this question? "All citizens of the USSR are equal before the law, regardless of their origin, social status... education, language or relationship with religion." (Art. 34)

"Citizens of the USSR are guaranteed freedom of speech, the press, meetings and assembly, parades and demonstrations." (Art. 50)

"Citizens of the USSR are guaranteed freedom of conscience; that is, the right to profess any religion or the right not to profess any. To engage in religious worship, or to conduct atheistic propaganda." (Art. 52)

"The Church is separated from the state, and the school from the Church."

Such is the law, and that is what you affirm, but how is it in practice? What do the facts say? All those articles of the Constitution just mentioned concerned with the faithful and government officials are violated. For processions to SHuva or to the cemetery on All Souls' to pray for the dead, for a publicly uttered word, defending believers' rights, for the group instruction of children in preparation for reception of the sacraments, priests and laity are punished by fines or imprisonment.

The faithful are absolutely terrorized, as a climate of intolerance in their regard is created. The children of believing parents are afraid to go to church, lest they suffer in school. Many employees, even at the lowest grade, are afraid to go to their own church lest they suffer at work. What are we to say about teachers? They are discharged from work. On this matter I wrote to General Secretary Mikhail Gorbachev.

Among us, for atheistic propaganda and the war against religion, the atheists have at their disposal the press, radio, television, auditoriums and squares, while believers have no right to avail themselves of all this. Believers have the right to carry out worship ceremonies only in church. The priest has no right to teach children the truths of religion, even in church at the request of the parents. There is your equality guaranteed before the law to all citizens!

According to the *Regulations for Religious Associations*, priests may teach children the truths of religion only from the age of eighteen. And how about the teaching of atheism? Government officials strictly require of teachers that the children in all schools, beginning with kindergarten, be educated in the atheistic way. What a gross infraction of the rights of believing parents. Have believing parents, as citizens of the State with equal rights, conferred upon teachers such a right, the right to hurt their children?

2. Art. 52 of the Constitution states that in the USSR, the Church is separated from the State. If it is, then why do officials of the state interfere so grossly in the internal life of the Church?

Let us take the seminary. The last word concerning the suitability of a candidate to the seminary belongs not to the seminary administration or bishop, but to the Commissioner for Religious Affairs, presently you. To that abnormality, I directed the attention of the Honorable General Secretary Gorbachev in my petition. You did not deny that fact, but only offered the excuse that the candidates you cross off are politicians crippled by reactionary priests, and the Church does not need priest-politicians. In this way, you decide whether this candidate will make a good priest or a poor one.

Who gave you that right and omniscience? One would have to think that the seminary administration, in the course, of five years of studies and training, would better be able to test whether such a candidate would result in a good priest or a politician. You evaluate people according to the standard of atheistic materialism, and so you designate the best priests as reactionary, as politicians, etc. You mentioned a few names to me, but these are our best priests, who, perhaps had even made some mistake in their youth, but they have atoned for it in good measure.

But are not those priests and seminarians recruited by state security agents greater politicians, who in their desire to enroll in the seminary, succumb to pressure and agree to cooperate, spying on their own leadership and friends? Perhaps you will say that this is calumny. This fact has long been known to everyone, but only recently Father Rokas Puzonas brought to light the fact that it is not calumny but the truth. And I have experienced it myself. About this, more later.

If the Church is separated from the state, then why do you assign priests to parishes? Having finished our conversation, I asked you why you keep the bishop from transferring me from Žagarė? You replied that it is the bishop's business. The bishop says that Commissioner Anilionis does not agree to it. I have been asking His Excellency the Bishop since 1978 to transfer me from Žagarė for pastoral reasons. But when, in the fall of 1983, the parish building where I live was set afire by some unknown vandals, and I survived only by a miracle, I again asked the bishop to transfer me to another parish. The answer was the same, "The Commissioner does not agree to it."

So who assigns priests to parishes? Why do you interfere in the internal affairs of the Church? After all, the Church is separated from the state. That discrimination against the faithful, government officials have been practicing for a long time. I experienced this personally in 1961.

While administering the parish of Kulautuva, and at the same time recuperating from tuberculosis, I managed with some difficulty to construct a rectory for the parish. I helped out with the construction myself. I used to invest all of my personal savings. I had just about gotten into my new apartment still not entirely finished and was rejoicing at being able to get at least a little rest, to finish my treatment for tuberculosis in the pine stand of Kulautuva. But it was not to be... Immediately, a KGB agent showed up, and suggested that I "help educate priests". Since I did not feel prepared to be such a "pedagogue", and firmly refused, I was transferred from Kulautuva in a couple of months.

The late Canon J. Stankevičius, at that time the administrator of the archdiocese, summoned me and said, "Rugienis (at that time Commissioner for Religious Affairs) is demanding that you be transferred from Kulautuva and from the Kaunas Rayon, and we are suggesting that you go to Paliepieiai, Raseiniai Rayon)."

It was then that my way of the cross began. Is this not gross interference in the affairs of the Church and discrimination against believers?

Is it not because of the same kind of gross interference of government officials in the affairs of the Church that Bishop Julijonas Steponavičius of Vilnius has been exiled to Žagarė without any trial and for twenty-five years now has been living in isolation from his flock?

3. In my petition to General Secretary Gorbachev, I wrote that the *Regulations for Religious Associations* are contrary to the Constitution of the USSR and to international agreements, to the United Nations *Declaration of Human Rights* and to the Helsinki Accords which the Soviet

Union also signed, and obligated itself to keep. I asked you to abolish those religious regulations. You replied that those international agreements are not legally binding with us. Strange! Why then sign if there is no intention of abiding by them. Is it really so?

4. I wrote to Mikhail Gorbachev that after years of interfering with the teaching of the truths of faith and Christian morals to children, and discrimination against the faithful going on, the morality of the youth is declining, alcoholism is rampant and criminal activity is on the increase.

You tried to explain that faith has nothing in common with morality, that religion does not have any influence on morality, and that believers, too, break the law. To prove this, you brought some pre-war publications in which were described terrible crimes: robberies and murders. It is not true. Religion is the basis of morality. True, the faithful also break the law, but this only shows the weakness of their faith. And conversely: with the diminishing of the influence of religion, morality is on the decline. "If there is no God, then everything is allowed," says Doestoyevski's Ivan (*Brothers Karamazov*). History shows it.

Before the Second World War, I was a teacher, a class counselor. In those days, religion used to be taught in schools, and the high school *Ateitininkai* organization was operative with its motto, "To renew all things in Christ". The Scouts' organization was active with its motto, "For God, Country and neighbor." Pupils used to go to Communion and pray. How fine our youth was then. Crime among schoolchildren was a rare thing.

But what is going on today, when religion classes have been done away with, when even the children of believing parents are made into atheists in all sorts of ways? In 1984, in the Middle School of Žagarė, two instances of rape took place, and how much other hooliganism is there? When religious practice was done away with, so was sin, and a new road to crime opened up. And what has become of our families? Before the war, there were no divorces; families were large and morally sound. But what has happened in the last forty years? More than a third of marriages end in divorce. The average size of a family is 3.2, rampant alcoholism leads to fetal alcohol syndrome. In other words, the nation is dying. This is where atheism is taking the nation!

You express satisfaction that people today are much better off materially, with cars and good apartments, but what good is that when the nation is diminishing? Finally, can religion be an obstacle to a rise in the standard of living? I think that with the help of religion during the past forty years, we would have had better results materially, and especially spiritually.

Honorable Commissioner, you even make use of Canon Law to support your theses. The fact that you read is commendable. I have an earnest request: do not keep the Catholic Church from acting in accord with Canon Law and there will be no conflicts. The Church does not meddle in the rights of the civil government. It brings nations the Good News of Christ, it forms souls, elevates the morality of nations, and by the same token helps states and nations. I am reminded of a lecture by our renowned educator, the late Stasys Šalkauskis, on the partners in education: They are the state, the Church and the school. Only the close cooperation of

the three brings good results. The truth of that statement was witnessed by the gaps in the education of our younger generation today. Once atheism has been proclaimed as a state religion and the Church is prevented in all sorts of ways from carrying out its mission, more and more apemen turn up, living only the life of the senses, as slaves to their baser instincts. This is why there are so many criminals, alcoholics and wrecked families.

Even the war against alcoholism would be more effective if the Church were not prevented from carrying out its mission. Bishop Motiejus Valančius, in the 19th Century, slew this dragon in two years with the help of temperance brotherhoods. The bishop's authority and the living faith of the people saved the nation. It is doubtful whether the pedagogy of monetary fines and camps will be so successful. As liaison between Church and state, please convey these thoughts to the honorable Secretary, Mikhail Gorbachev.

Žagarė, December 17, 1985

**G a r g ž d a i** (Klaipėda Rayon)

On June 29, 1985, Petronė Kapičkienė, an eighty-one year-old lady living in Gargždai, at Komjaunimo 61, was visited by two government representatives, Teacher Pukinskaitė and a man in civilian garb. In the apartment with Mrs. Kapičkienė they found twenty-three children preparing for First Confession and Communion. The frightened children wanted to flee, but only one girl was successful. The old lady was told, "You have no right to teach. Let the parents teach them, or let them study themselves. You are going to be punished. That's the law!"

"I'm not doing anything wrong, I don't take money for teaching them. The people compensate me with food. I receive only 28 rubles in pension, and I have a daughter who has been an invalid for 55 years..." Mrs. Kapičkienė defended herself.

"You'll sell the food and pay your fine," warned the government officials and wrote a report on her. From that day on, the children stopped coming to study with Mrs. Kapičkienė. Twenty of them, the little old lady prepared by teaching them in the churchyard. Sometime later, she received a notice that at 5:00 PM, July 31, 1985, a meeting of the Executive Committee of the Peoples' Deputies of the City of Gargždai of the Administrative Committee, Klaipėda Rayon, would take place which she was obliged to attend. Her case would be discussed for teaching children catechism.

The little old lady became ill, and was admitted to the hospital, so she did not go to the meeting of the administrative committee. Returning from the hospital, Mrs. Kapičkienė received a second summons to come to the meeting of the administrative committee August 28. She did not go because she was not feeling well again. To her daughter who attended, it was explained that her mother was doing great damage to the state. "She was teaching children their prayers..."

Finally, Mrs. Kapičkienė received in the mail a document in which it is indicated, "We are sending you the June 28, 1985 decision of the City

of Gargždai Soviet Executive Committee, by which you are warned for transgression of Par 214 of the Lithuanian SSR Code of Administrative Law. M. Jurevičiūtė, Chair of the Administrative Committee."

"Administrative Case No. 23-85 Decision, Gargždai, August 28, 1985: "The Administrative Committee of the Executive Committee of Gargždai, Klaipėda Rayon:

Chair Miss M. Jurevičiūtė  
Secretary Mrs. J. Surplienė  
Members: Z. Lukas, Mrs. M. Vaišnorienė

"Having considered in open session Administrative Case No. 23-85, it has been determined that Petronė Kapičkienė, daughter of Pranas, residing at Gargždai, Komjaunimo 61, on June 29, 1985, taught twenty-three children catechism and so transgressed against Par. 214 of the Code of Offenses Against USSR Administrative Law.

"Complying with the *Régulât ions for Administering and Recovering of Administrative Fines*, this committee has decided to issue Mrs. p. Kapičkienė an administrative fine in the form of a warning."

#### **V i d u k l ė** (Raseiniai Rayon)

For a long time, the KGB demanded that Mrs. Stonienė, a resident of Viduklė, Šaltinio-5, remove from the register Monika Gavėnaitė, former housekeeper of Father Alfonsas Svarinskas, registered as living with her. Since Mrs. Stonienė has refused to comply with the demands of the KGB, Miss Gavėnaitė's registration was cancelled by her sister, Ona Gudaitytė.

Miss Gavėnaitė attempted to register with other residents of the town. However, when they filled out registration blanks, KGB agents would visit them with various warnings and calumnies to the effect that Miss Gavėnaitė was a state criminal and could cause them problems.

Having been unable to register in Viduklė-, she tried to register in Šiauliai, but there also, KGB agents came and explained to the landlady that Miss Gavėnaitė was a deserter, a state criminal and finally, with regard to registering, they threatened to take away from her her cooperative apartment. After such "explanations" and others like them, and warnings, the woman actually fell ill. Miss Gavėnaitė was successful in registering only in a village: Adakavas, Tauragė Rayon.

On December 16, she was summoned to the rayon and warned by the KGB chief to live quietly in his rayon, since according to available information, she had not lived in other rayons peacefully.

#### **K i a u k l i a i** (Širvintai Rayon)

At the beginning of June, 1985, the faithful erected an artistic cross on the gravesite of a soldier who had been killed at some time or other at Kiaukliai, along the highway to Širvintai. On the morning of June 12, the people of Kiaukliai saw that their cross had been dug up and the

planted flowers uprooted. Residents Malvina Butkuvienė, Genė Gudonienė, Robertas Grigas, Ona Polkienė and Karolis Dėdelis spoke with District Chairman Karoliūnas, demanding that he find the night marauders and compensate for the moral and material damage done to the faithful. The chairman explained that the cross had been demolished on orders from above, that it had been erected without government permission and moreover, on collective farm land.

Karaliūnas reminded them of the *Regulations for Religious Associations*, and when it was pointed out that they contravene Canon Law, that more than 500 priests refuse to abide by them, he retorted, "Perhaps ten million Party members voted for those Regulations. To whom should we listen?"

Since the Chairman said that he could neither allow the reconstruction of the cross nor find the culprits, the people went to see Vice Chairman Tvirbutas at the rayon but they could not find him. The rayon architect explained that this was the first case in his professional experience, and he could do nothing without consultation with Vilnius.

The people went to the rayon militia and wrote a complaint addressed to the Chief, demanding that he find the culprits and rectify the wrong done to the faithful. On June 17, Ona Polkienė, Mykolas Butkus, Genė Gudonienė and Robertas Grigas went to Širvintai and presented a similar petition, signed by eleven residents of Kiaukliai to Vice Chairman Tvirbutas. The latter ominously asked whether the church committee was concerned in this, or "was another organization starting up".

To the explanation that the demolition of the cross wronged not only the members of the committee but to every believer, he did not respond. He demanded that they tell who, specifically, made and erected the cross. Then the government would negotiate with him personally about compensation for damages. When the faithful replied that everyone worked on it and erected it together, the Vice Chairman refused to talk with them any further. He was very angry that they had come as a delegation and not as individuals. He accused the sacristan, Robertas Grigas, of inciting people and threatened to square accounts with him and Father Rokas Puzonas in the near future.

"The days of the crosses are gone and they will never return," the Vice Chairman spoke angrily, "the Soviet government will go on forever!"

During the conversation, the Vice Chairman assailed Father Rokas Puzonas, explaining that a priest is forbidden to associate with youth, his sphere of activity is strictly regulated, confined to the house of prayer and not beyond. When the people bridled at such Soviet "equality", the Vice Chairman affirmed that believers would not attain any other equality, that all the offenses being committed by the pastor of Kiaukliai were being recorded and when the time came, "The accounts would be rendered."

He said that the government knows everything, but is being lenient, patiently waiting for things to improve, and this was why it had not meted out any penalty last year for teaching children or for the school childrens' "trips" this year.

When Ona Polkienė explained that the children associate with the

priest in keeping with the parents' wishes, and expressed annoyance at the fact that they are being enrolled in atheistic organizations under duress, and being coerced without the parents' knowledge to write statements and testify against the pastor and being threatened and interrogated, Tvirbutas replied that it was legal: one is allegedly allowed to question children in the presence of the teacher.

On the night of October 8-9, 1985, in place of the demolished cross, there appeared another one, of iron, in the form of a shoot sprouting out of a cut-off stump. The cross stood on the old site, between four evergreens planted in the square where, according to the testimony of people, the grave had been.

On October 9, District Chairman Karaliūnas, Collective Farm Chairman Kinshev, Party Organizer J. Stakelskis and Agronomist V. Kanaprokas came. The officials threw a cable around the cross, uprooted it and hauled it off to the cemetery.

Sometime later, in one of the evergreens, just about at the top, the people fastened an artistically designed little shrine. Within a few days, the evergreens had been cut down.

#### **G a r g ž d a i** (Klaipėda Rayon)

In the spring of 1985, not without the knowledge of Gargždai Soviet Farm Director Melderis, under the pretense of reclamation work, an old wayside cross of wood which had stood in the Village of Kvietiniai was knocked down. At the end of May, the faithful erected another cross in place of the one which had been toppled. Before it had been there a month, the second cross too was pushed over.

#### **M a r c i n k o n y s** (Varėna Rayon)

During the month of December, 1985, by order of the Marcinkonys Farm Director, a fallen cross which the faithful (tardily, to be sure) had been preparing to repair was cut up for firewood.

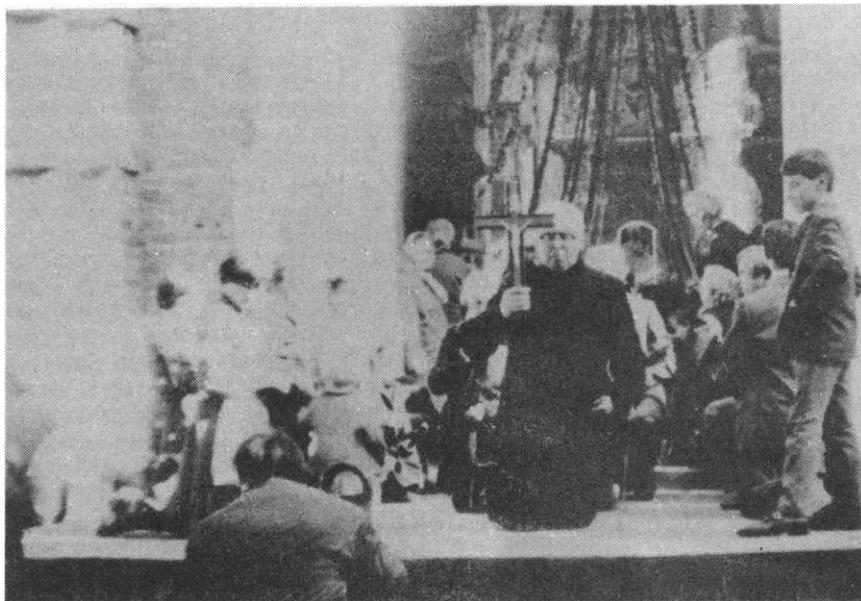
#### **K l a i p ė d a**

On August 17, 1985, in the recovery room of the Klaipėda City Hospital, Pranas Paulauskas, a religious believer, died without receiving the sacraments. Mrs. Vanda Paulauskienė, the patient's wife, had repeatedly requested the doctor on duty to allow a priest to come in, but the doctor would not

### **OUR PRISONERS**

From the August and September letters of Father Alfonsas Svarinskas:

"...Last week was sunny and warm and today is warm and pleasant. I'm grateful to God for these wonderful days and hours. I have learned to enjoy small things.



**Father Alfonsas Svarinskas leading pilgrims in kneeling procession at the shrine of Our Lady in Šiluva, August 12, 1982.**

"The mind of God creates human history even though we little people do not always understand the meaning of history and of our experiences. However, don't worry about me, because I have become accustomed to trying to bear everything in a Christian spirit, like the blessed Job...

"Today is a special day in Šiluva, dear to the hearts of believers since 1612. Everyone today is going to that shrine. This is the third year that I have been kept from these holy places. Today, I too, will place my sacrifice at the statue of the Mother of God in Šiluva.

"...The quotation from de Saint Exupery is good. He is a great French writer, worth reading. I am glad this citation touched your hearts. Really, people do seek all their life and aren't able to find; they are often at fault themselves, flying up in the clouds without seeing what is under their noses. It is time for people and nations to return to the bible... I have learned to rejoice even in a little ray of the sun, beautiful sunsets, a poor little flower or the yellowing leaf of a birch... I am calm in spirit. His Holy Will be done. I would I like only one thing, that those who have the possibility of working would work with all their might, sparing nothing, even themselves, for there is much to do..."

Father Sigitas Tamkevičius writes:

"In prison, one wishes that the time would pass as quickly as possible, but I often think that I should desire not the quick or empty passage of time, but that the time should be useful to me and to those to

whom I have devoted my life. Therefore, every day I offer God my imprisonment and the longing of my dear ones and fatigue and physical problems when they occur, and everything else which can be offered so that the Lord would be loved more, and that people would draw near to the eternal truth and goodness...

"Today, we're having a wonderfully beautiful Sunday. It seems that nature itself is celebrating the Feast of Christ the King. The sky is clear, the branches of the young birches are covered with a heavy snow, so beautifully ornamented that you could place them on the altar. There is not the slightest breeze; it is quiet, peaceful, majestic. At the feet of the Eucharistic King, I have placed many requests --first of all, the needs of those with whom I have shared food for soul and body.

"The Feast of Christ the King this year reminded me of my investiture. Thirty years ago, on this feastday, my class --twenty-four new seminarians-- was presented with the cassock. It was supposed to remind us constantly that we had renounced everything which the world clings to, that the rest of our life was unconditionally dedicated to the service of Christ and love of neighbor, that from now on, our greatest concern would be striving for the goal which Don Bosco expressed in his motto, 'Give me souls, Lord, and take the rest!'

"At our investiture, upper classmen gave us little pictures with beautiful thoughts, while the Spiritual Father presented each one with a large reproduction of Christ the King: the Lord standing before Pilate, hands bound, with a crown of thorns on His head, and on His countenance, it seemed, the suffering of the whole world. Could anyone at that time in the glow of our investiture sense deeply that this King would require of His officers-to-be also no small sacrifice? But everything comes in its own time.

"How grateful I am to God that thirty years ago I had alongside me fine friends --idealists. We were all on fire with the idea to train and grow in perfection now and later, to work with all our might. My class chose as a motto, the words of the writer Marija Pečkauskaitė --Šatrijos Ragana (The Witch of Šatrija - Catholic educator and writer, 1878-1930, who played an important role in Lithuanian literary revival -- Trans. Note), 'To rise and to raise', and for our patron, Saint Francis Xavier. Who could have thought then that this patron would share with more than one of us his ideals and invite more than one of our class to the missions?

"At Christmas, I would like to visit many people. During the years of my priesthood, the Lord has given me so many friends, benefactors helpers and like-minded people. I would like to press the hand of every one of them on the Feast of Christmas, to greet them, to tell them 'thanks' for the light of their example, for their understanding and response to the word I proclaimed. May the Child of Bethlehem bless, reward everyone a hundred-fold and grant them a good year for 1986.

November, 1985



Friends gather outside the courtroom on the last day of Viktoras Petkus' trial in Vilnius, 1978. Antanas Terleckas is first from left.

**P e r m**

On April 19, 1985, Viktoras Petkus was granted an hour and half visit with relatives (through plate glass and by telephone). Five times in a row, i.e., at two years and five years of his sentence, the prisoner's relatives were not allowed to come for visits. The reason was given in a form reply: "Transgressed camp rules." Letters from Viktoras Petkus were also not received for a whole year.

In one of his last letters in 1983, Petkus wrote that the pains had recurred in his face, which had been operated on in camp, and were regularly inflaming his whole head. It required great effort to perform his compulsory labor. When his visits were disallowed and correspondence broke off, it was thought that Petkus' health had seriously declined. On April 19, his relatives were surprised to see in the visiting room Petkus, not looking bad. Asked. "When and where did you obtain treatment, and how do you feel now?", Petkus asked his relatives upon their return to Vilnius to thank Our Lady of the Gates of Dawn for the return of his health.

"There was no hope left... A month after I began to ask, I felt well... Now I am completely recovered..." said the prisoner.

Petkus expressed the hope that with the help of the Heavenly Mother he would yet see Lithuania. (Five camp staff members listened in on the conversation.)

On October 14, 1985, Petkus had one more visit coming. Before their departure, Petkus and his relatives received word from the camp

administration that the visit would not take place, no reasons indicated.

#### FROM THE C H R O N I C L E ARCHIVES

A list of priests of the Diocese of Telšiai who were killed or suffered in Soviet prisons, and not included in the book published by Bronius Kviklys, *Lietuvos bažnyčios*, Vol. 1, *Diocese of Telšiai*, Chicago, 1980.

#### Tragically Perished in June, 1941:

1. Vaclovas Dambrauskas, Canon - Pastor of Kuršėnai.
2. Jonas Novickis, Canon - Dean of Vieکشniai.
3. Benediktas Vanagas - Pastor of Ubiškė.

#### Suffered in Camp:

1. Vladas Abromavičius - From March 25, 1949 to August 22, 1958.
2. Benediktas Andriuška.
3. Stanislovas Butvytis - From December 17, 1948 to March 24, 1956.
4. Brunonas Bagužas - From July 30, 1949 to July 27, 1956.
5. Bronislovas Burneikis - From 1961 to 1965.
6. Juozapas Butkus - From February 24, 1949 to July 27, 1956.
7. Jonas Gaidelionis.
8. Bronislovas Gudmonas - From September 30, 1949 to November 30, 1956.
9. Aloyzas Januškaitis.
10. Jonas Jurgutis - From January 21, 1950 to August 27, 1956.
11. Antanas Kaubré - From April 2, 1949 to May 19, 1956.
12. Antanas Krenčius.
13. Jonas Latvis - From January 26, 1947 to May 11, 1947 and from August 12, 1948 to April 7, 1955.
14. Juozapas Mantvydas - From January 31, 1951 to October 6, 1956.
15. Juozapas Martusevičius - From April 19, 1951 to November 16, 1954.
16. Aleksandras Narkevičius.
17. Juozapas Olšauskas - From February 28, 1948 to May 15, 1956.
18. Petras Paišys - From 1950 to April, 1956.
19. Antanas Puodžiūnas - From 1947 to July 9, 1956.
20. Stanislovas Pupleigis - From 1949 to November 19, 1954.
21. Stanislovas Rimkus - Arrested in 1940 and died of starvation in camp.
22. Juozapas Stasiulis - From July 18, 1945 to July 1, 1953.
23. Leonas Šapoka - From April 4, 1947 to July 27, 1956.
24. Liudvikas Sarkauskas - From December 25, 1946 to July 12, 1955.
25. Konstantinas Šleinius - From March 23, 1948 to April 18, 1956.
26. Vladas Taškūnas.
27. Justinas Urbanavičius.
28. Stanislovas Vaitelis - From October 9, 1949 from September 3, 1955.
29. Vincentas Vėlavicius - From May 2, 1948 to July 30, 1956.
30. Antanas Viskanta - From May 30, 1948 to November 18, 1956.

**Priests deprived of their right to function:**

1. Valentinas Šikšnys - 1 year.
2. Adomas Mileris - 1 year.

**IN THE SOVIET SCHOOL**

**S k a u d v i l é** (Taurage Rayon)

On March 4, 1985, Principal Bružas of the Skaudvilė Middle School, Vice Principal Beiškienė and teachers Jancevičius, Mrs. Jancevičienė and Mrs. Eituvienė interrogated pupils, actually driving the smaller ones to tears, for participating in the transfer of the living rosary, February 24, in Taurage. Some of the pupils had their deportment mark lowered.

**S a l d u t i š k i s** (Utena Rayon)

In October, 1985, in Saldutiškis, the local pastor, Father Juozapas Masalskis, was being buried. Right across from the churchyard is the middle school. Just so that pupils would not drop into church during recess, hear the preaching or see the bishop, the teachers locked the school doors. The locked-in children jumped out the window.

**B a g a l a v i s k i s** (Širvintai Rayon)

On November 1, 1985, Bagaslaviškis Middle School Principal, Mrs. Elena Pakalnienė, was terminated because her son, while vacationing at his grandmother's, received the Sacrament of Confirmation in the church of Gelvuonai.

**NEW UNDERGROUND PUBLICATIONS**

Aušra ( Dawn), No. 48 (88). In April, 1985, the underground publication Aušra No. 48 (88) appeared. In the publication's introductory article, attention is called to the fact that in Soviet society, a certain number of people seeking spiritual sustenance turned to Eastern philosophy. A special place is occupied by the article called "A Threat to Simutis". In it, public attention is called to the KGB persecution of political prisoner L. Simutis, who suffered twenty-two years in the Gulag, and who, for his "Open Letter to the Priests and Seminarians of Lithuania," is in danger of new attacks by the chekists. A full text of the document is given in the publication.

Also appearing is Father Rokas Puzonas' statement to the Chief of the LSSR KGB, in which he sets forth how difficult his path was to the Theological Seminary in Kaunas. Also published is Vladas Lapienis' *Memoirs*

*of a Soviet Prisoner.*

In June, 1985, Aušra 49 (89) appeared. Presented here is information about the religious beliefs of author Antanas Vienuolis-Žukauskas. A continuation of Vladas Lapienis' *Memoirs of a Soviet Prisoner* is printed.

Lithuanian, Do Not Forget:

Father Alfonsas Svarinskas  
Father Sigitas Tamkevičius  
Father Jonas-Kaštytis Matulionis  
Vladas Lapienis  
Romas Žemaitis  
Docent Vytautas Skuodis  
Jadvyga Bieliauskienė  
Viktoras Petkus  
Povilas Pečeliūnas  
Gintautas Iešmantas  
Julius Sasnauskas  
Liūdas Dambrauskas  
Antanas Terleckas

and others bear the chains of slavery so that you might  
live and believe in freedom.

Lithuania, 1986

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SEND YOUR TAX-EXEMPT DONATION, OR WRITE TO:**

**Lithuanian Catholic Religious Aid, Inc.  
351 Highland Boulevard  
Brooklyn, NY 11207**