



CHRONICLE OF THE  
CATHOLIC CHURCH  
IN LITHUANIA  
No. 28

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A Translation of the Complete Lithuanian Original,  
LIETUVOS KATALIKŲ BAŽNYČIOS KRONIKA No. 28  
Documenting the Struggle for Human Rights  
In Soviet-Occupied Lithuania Today

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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, 2.4% Orthodox and 0.2% of other persuasions.

In the two archdioceses and four dioceses were: 708 churches, 314 chapels, 73 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 27, 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.

ecclesiastical forms of administration. In reality, all decisions are made by the state-appointed Deputy for Religious Affairs—an atheist.

It is the story of the struggle between clergy who have decided for one reason or another to cooperate with the regime, and stubborn dissident priests and faithful insisting on rights under the Soviet Constitution, the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, and Natural Law.

It is the record of heroic parents of children, who insist on rearing their offspring in the Catholic Faith, against all efforts by teachers and government youth leaders to dragoon youngsters into various Communist youth organizations.

The *Chronicle* is the record of mere school children risking the wrath of atheistic teachers and even of Security police, to go to church or sing in a choir.

Constantly harassed in one way or another, the religious believers of Lithuania find themselves in the position of second-class citizens.

Denied access to mass media to tell their story, or to religious literature to nourish their faith, the Catholics of Lithuania find it necessary to photo-copy such religious literature as they can lay their hands on.

Ironically, the Soviet constitution, under which the people of Lithuania are forced to live, contains glowing guarantees of freedom of conscience, of assembly, of press, and of speech.

In practice, such constitutional guarantees are over-ridden by unwritten administrative decrees, verbal interpretations, and galling bureaucratic high-handedness, giving atheism the position of the established religion of the Soviet Union and its subject territories.

The message of the *Chronicle*, loud and clear, is that the atheistic government is slowly strangling the Church in Lithuania, while doing its best to make it look like the Church is dying a natural death. The people of Lithuania are risking imprisonment, labor camp, and torture to make sure that we are not deceived

*Rev. Casimir Pugevičius*  
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Lithuania

June 29, 1977

PROBLEMS OF RELIGIOUS LIFE IN LITHUANIA  
AND THE SOVIET UNION

Lithuania has been occupied by Russia almost two hundred years—1795-1977—with the exception of a brief 22-year period of independence—1918-1940. During that time, Lithuania has suffered much from its oppressors. She was not only pillaged, but she also had to fight hard and suffer much in her efforts to preserve her two greatest treasures: her Catholic faith and her nationhood. For a long period, Lithuanians were exploited in various ways, persecuted, deported en masse and even killed.

In an effort to save their lives and gain their freedom, many Lithuanians emigrated, most of them to the United States, fleeing military service in the army of the occupants, or death in the snow drifts of Siberia. Separated from parents, brothers and sisters, they never stopped loving the land of their birth and their dear ones suffering there. Even now they feel that they are the children of the same mother, Lithuania.

Our educated and disciplined fellow-countrymen who emigrated were able to get themselves well organized. They established Lithuanian parishes, and organized their own educational and cultural societies and institutes. They publish their own newspapers, harmoniously and perseveringly defend the rights of their oppressed homeland, and are able to find ways to inform even high Church officials and to influence political and social leaders to intercede for their suffering homeland.

When our fellow countrymen here, whether clergy or laity, meet fellow Lithuanians visiting here as tourists, or when they themselves go abroad, they note how many have great difficulty grasping the complex questions of religious life in Lithuania. Even high-ranking clergy, with a few exceptions, are unable to understand or to solve many of our problems, to say nothing of rank-and-file laity.

Some of them think that local Ordinaries can decide all religious questions, even those dealing with the secret activities of believers. They forget that the activities of many Ordinaries are restricted, and that the faithful do not dare approach some of them.

Others cannot understand how, in Lithuania, about 70% of the children in Lithuania can be catechized, when many priests and laity have been punished for teaching religion in Lithuania.

They have no idea how extensively in Lithuania religious education is carried out in catacomb fashion, under the direction of priests and laity who fear neither fines nor imprisonment.

There have even been tourists who have wondered why Lithuanians being dragged off to Siberia did not telephone the police to prevent their exile.

It is often difficult for them to tell which individuals they can trust, and which they cannot. They have no idea how people in Lithuania are engaged by the K.G.B., to confuse trusting individuals and public opinion.

We can justify this phenomenon in part, because it is very difficult to understand our complex situation if one has not lived here longer and has not seen Siberia. Our neighbors, the bishops and faithful of the socialist states of Germany and Poland, admit that they find it difficult to understand us. All the more is it for people of the western world, born in freedom and reared in freedom, to understand our situation. The problem is compounded by the cunning deceit of our nation's enemies. They are able freely to send

misleading documents and publish articles abroad.

The worst thing is that spiritual leaders of various ranks contribute to this deception, albeit under pressure. Some of them, conscientiously carrying out the instructions of the atheists, even misinform the Vatican when they visit there. Thank God that at least recently that kind of deception has been seen through. Even those clergy and laity abroad who understand us better and sympathize with us complain that they are unable to obtain privileges or assistance for us. Our requests by word and in writing have till now most often remained without results. We trust that the hierarchy of the Catholic Church and our own fellow-countrymen, will become better acquainted with our situation, and will help us more effectively.

First of all, we feel the obligation to thank the Apostolic See for establishing us as a separate ecclesiastical province. We thank our present Holy Father, Pope Paul VI, for the attention he has paid us in recent times: the meaningful broadcasts of Vatican radio, the refusal to recognize officially the occupation of Lithuania, the establishment of the College of St. Casimir in Rome, the conferral of the title of basilica on the Shrine of Our Lady of Šiluva, for the kind reception given representatives of our nation who visit the Holy Father, for the sensitive reaction to the Petition of the Seventeen Thousand, for diplomatic efforts to help us, for all the sympathy and love, and for the kind prayers.

We are grateful for the wish to help us by all means possible. We know that the strength of the Catholics of Lithuania lies in unity with the Holy Father and with the Catholic Church. Our oppressors have tried in various ways to tear our bishops and individual priests away from the Apostolic See. For their loyalty they had to suffer much. In the most difficult times, the Catholics of Lithuania have demonstrated their sense of discipline and their obedience to the Holy Father.

We invite Lithuanians throughout the world and the Catholics of the entire world to show the greatest love and respect for, and confidence in, the Holy Father, to refrain from unhealthy criticism of Church leaders which is not rooted in love. We condemn any action disruptive of Church unity. We trust that the Holy Father, appreciating our loyalty and dedication, will in the future show us even more confidence and, within the realm of possibility, will satisfy our wishes.

We are grateful to the Catholics of Ireland for showing us such

sincere fraternal sympathy and for giving our suffering nation the statue of the Blessed Virgin Mary.

We especially thank the Bishops of the United States, senators, and congressional representatives for their defense of Lithuanians imprisoned for the faith and freedom of Lithuania.

We are grateful to a host of bishops, clergy, and faithful in Italy, Germany, France and Switzerland, who by written and spoken word defend the religious freedom of Lithuania. Moreover, we are grateful to the defenders of human rights in the Soviet Union, especially Academician Andre Sacharov, and Doctor Sergei Kovalev, who is imprisoned for defending that freedom.

We would like to take this opportunity to thank Jewish journalists and their newspapers for proclaiming widely to masses of readers the wrongs perpetrated on us by the atheists of the Soviet Union.

In the terrible days of the Hitler terror, a whole host of Lithuanian clergy, at the risk of their own lives, saved a good number of Jewish lives. Such facts are described in the book *Ir Be Ginklo Kariai (Soldiers Without Weapons)*. His Excellency, Bishop Vincent Brizgys, caluminated in every way by the atheists, in a sermon in the Garrison Church in Kaunas during the Nazi occupation, publicly denounced the mass murder of Jews, as incompatible with Christian morals.

Seeing the wish of our fellow-countrymen abroad and friends of the Catholic Church in Lithuania to help us, and knowing how the atheists of the Soviet Union are trying to mislead world public opinion, we are determined at least in brief outline to inform our fellow countrymen, the faithful of the entire world and people of good will, what are the current matters concerning Lithuania and the Catholic Church here which require speedy and forceful decisions, and what the thinking of our clergy and laity is.

Regardless of the greatest risks, we are trying to do everything to see that the Faith survives in our land.

In order that it might be easier to understand the chicanery of the atheists of the Soviet Union, we shall briefly acquaint you with the methods they are using to destroy the Orthodox Church in the Soviet Union. After that we shall acquaint our readers with the problems of the Roman Catholic Church throughout the Soviet Union, and especially in Lithuania.

According to Marxist theory, religion is a capitalistic, parasitic social phenomenon. In those countries where the capitalistic system

is destroyed, religion is destined gradually to disappear. Religion is the opiate of the people.

Since life does not bear out this theory and religion survives in lands ruled by the Communists, they use all weapons, propagandistic, administrative, and even physical, to see that the theory is proven. It is therefore not surprising to find in the Soviet Union the following policy: Religion is tolerated for the time being, only as a disappearing phenomenon, and it is attacked with all possible force wherever it begins to show signs of revival.

The Roman Catholic Church, as a dying institution, is allowed by Soviet laws of cult to function in a limited way for the time being: Priests are allowed to perform liturgical ceremonies and to confer the sacraments. However, even here, complete freedom does not exist. In general, the activities of religious believers are limited by all sorts of unofficial, secret or semi-secret, directives and instructions.

Most often, the methods of the Russian Czars are slavishly copied: They choose candidates for the episcopacy, interfere in the work of diocesan chanceries and in parish activities, placing them in the care of so-called parish committees, of which even atheists can be members. In this way the administration and activities of the Church are paralyzed from within.

### The Plight of the Orthodox Church in the Soviet Union

No sooner had the Bolsheviks taken over the government of Russia after the October Revolution, then the repression of religious believers, especially of the Orthodox Church and of the Catholics began, later becoming a bloody persecution. By newly promulgated decrees, the Church was separated from the state and the schools were separated from the Church. As a matter of fact, the Orthodox Church was subjugated to the state, and in the schools atheistic education was introduced, forbidding youngsters from going to Church.

Over a period of years, the Soviet government became convinced that the best way of fighting religion was not by bloody persecution, but by attacking the Church from within. It was unfortunate that the head of the Orthodox Church lived in Russia. Moreover, the Orthodox was accustomed to obeying civil authorities. After the most terrible persecutions, the Orthodox Church, wishing at least to survive, was forced to make various concessions to the atheistic government. It was forced to agree that the

Church should be in charge of individuals who agreed to carry out the orders of the atheists.

This did great damage to the Orthodox Church. Its leadership, by praising the Soviet government in all sorts of decrees and by misleading world opinion concerning the alleged freedom of religion in the Soviet Union, and by agreeing to cooperate with security organs, lost respect in the eyes of the faithful. The Russian Orthodox Church succumbed to corruption. Bishops showed up, who helped the atheists to close down churches.

Great numbers of Russian Orthodox clergy are poorly trained, and given to various vices such as drunkenness and materialism. They have developed practically no pastoral ministry, they do not catechize the children, rarely preach, and are loath to hear confessions or visit the sick. Most of them are satisfied to perform liturgical functions. This is why there are in Russia very few enlightened believers.

A segment of Russian Orthodox clergy and faithful pays no heed to restrictions imposed by their leaders: They boldly proclaim the Gospel of Christ and try to prevent the Faith from dying. Such individuals are respected by the faithful. On them depends the future of the Orthodox Church in the Soviet Union.

The situation is similar with Christians of other persuasions. Protestants, Baptists and other sects operating out in the open usually have as leaders individuals chosen by the atheists and trusted by them, through whom the atheists undermine their work from within.

The most active groups, which have most successfully developed their religious activities are those persecuted by the government: Baptists, Pentecostals, Jehovah's Witnesses and other religious groups operating clandestinely or semi-clandestinely.

### The Plight of the Catholic Church in the Soviet Union

It is by the same methods that the atheists wish to destroy the Catholic Church in the Soviet Union. At first they tried to destroy it by physical means, arresting and exiling Church leaders: bishops, priests and the more active laity. Currently, they are trying to destroy the Catholic Church from within, by trying to see that positions in the hierarchy are filled by persons agreeing to carry out their decrees, which paralyze the activity of the Church.

Thank God, their plan has succeeded only partially. In the

European part of the Russian Federation [sic] there are barely a few Catholic churches functioning, intended not so much for ministry, as for public relations. The Church of St. Louis, in Moscow, is in the yard of the headquarters of the Security Committee of the Soviet Union [The K.G.B. — Translator's Note]. Here, even the least kind of religious activity is carefully watched by the K.G.B. Most visitors to the church are elderly Polish women, foreigners and members of the Russian intelligentsia.

The plight of the one remaining church in Leningrad is similar: The chairman of its parish committee is a representative of the K.G.B., living with another man's wife and still receiving Holy Communion. When a priest visiting from Lithuania wished to speak with local believers, the chairman would not allow it.

Local Catholics are afraid to get married in such churches. It is doubtful whether a single child has been prepared for Holy Communion all year long. The Catholic Faith in Russia is doomed, unless underground activity is developed.

The situation is somewhat better in other churches found in the territory of the Soviet Union, among the Germans, and partly among the Poles, where there are active believers, able to function in underground fashion. Where there is no underground church activity, the Catholic Church has either disappeared completely, or it is moribund (as in vast reaches of Siberia).

The plight of the Church is especially precarious in the Republic of Belorussia. In no republic is the Catholic Faith so persecuted as in Belorussia. There, many of the most beautiful churches have been closed, while others have been turned into warehouses, abandoned and in the final states of delapidation (e.g., Druja, Vydziat, and elsewhere). There is a great shortage of priests. One priest sometimes has to minister to the faithful of 28 former parishes.

There is no seminary, nor is any effort being made to prepare any candidates for the priesthood clandestinely. When this or that young man expressed a wish to enter the seminary in Riga (Latvia) or Kaunas (Lithuania), the K.G.B. began to persecute him so much in an effort to recruit him as an informer, that he was forced to flee to some other republics.

Moreover, the seminary in Kaunas will not accept candidates from Belorussia or the Ukraine, fearing that the K.G.B., instead of sending suitable candidates, will send its own agents. Candidates for the seminary here are designated by the Deputy of

Cult. [A government functionary—Transl. Note].

Most priests in Belorussia are about seventy years old. Some must be carried to church (e.g. the pastor of Borunai, who broke his leg and was unable to walk to church). In five to ten years, Belorussia will be without priests. It is forbidden to invite neighboring clergy to help out. The inhuman work load drives those priests still working to an early grave. It is often necessary to travel 130-200 kilometers on a sick call.

In Minsk, where there are about 40 thousand Catholics, there is not a single functioning Catholic church. The government allowed Catholics to carry out services in an Orthodox church. Did the priest not make a mistake in not taking advantage of such permission?

In Gardinas, where there are three functioning Catholic churches, there was not a single priest at Christmas, 1976, who could celebrate Mass for the faithful. The faithful wept when a letter from the local priest was read to those gathered for the occasion. In it they were informed that the local priest was seriously ill and did not have the strength to celebrate Mass.

The faithful of Para have been keeping their beautiful church from being closed for eighteen years, by performing services without a priest. For a long time, members of the church committee used to stand at the church doors, checking the identity cards of young people. The government had forbidden young persons up to the age of eighteen to go to church. Priests of parishes where young people show up in church are especially persecuted, e.g. in Breslava.

Language poses special pastoral problems. The young people do not understand Polish. Many local priests do not wish to teach youngsters religion in Belorussian or Russian. In this way conditions are created for the spread of atheism. In Belorussia there is a specially debilitating problem of alcoholism. The Catholic Church is persecuted not so much by local people, but by Russian interlopers. The persecution of the Church there goes hand in hand with Russification of the Belorussians.

In the Ukrainian Republic the predicament of western rite Catholics is similar to that of Catholics in Belorussia: priest are dying off, and there is no local seminary. In the Ukraine there are several younger priests who are products of the seminary in Riga. Catholics of the western rite are served by priests of the eastern rite. Pastoral work is greatly hindered by national antipathy between Ukrainians and Poles.

Even more difficult is the plight of eastern rite Catholics. All their churches are closed, and the clergy are especially persecuted. There have even been sacrifices of life.

Liturgical books, vessels, and vestments are confiscated from the priests as the property of the Patriarch of Moscow. Some Orthodox clergy help persecute the Catholics. In the circumstances, the faithful of the Ukrainian Eastern Rite Catholic Church feel quite uneasy at seeing the excessive—in their opinion—friendship of Roman Catholics with the Patriarchate of Moscow, while not sensing much support themselves.

The Eastern Rite Ukrainian Church is fortunate in being able to operate underground. Local security officials believe that in the City of Lvov every neighborhood has its own eastern rite priest. It is said that the security people regret having driven them underground, because they have no way of controlling their activities.

The Ukrainians have been accustomed since days of old to being persecuted, and they have learned to work underground, making it difficult for the atheists to subjugate them. They are grateful to their beloved martyr Cardinal Slypij, who, understanding local conditions, was able to help them.

In Latvia, since 1940, the Soviet Union ostensibly assigned the pastoral care and evangelization of the Catholics of the entire Soviet Union to the Archbishop of Riga. However, throughout those forty years, it has been difficult to observe any signs of that pastoral care. It must be admitted that to some extent the bishops of Latvia perform these duties. Having but a few priests, they send them to the new functioning Catholic churches in the Soviet Union. However, they do not carry on any broader evangelization of the Soviet Union.

Why? Latvian Catholics constitute barely a fifth of the population of Latvia. From of old, they are accustomed to accommodating themselves to the demands of the government. Now, more than ever before, they carry out the demands of the atheistic government, which restricts the activities of the Church. The religious life of Latvian Catholics in many parishes is weak. Priests are afraid of being punished by the government, and they do not trust one another; many limit themselves to liturgical functions, and to ministering the sacraments to the older generation and the dying; the religious education of children has been neglected. Many convents of women religious in Latvia lack apostolic spirit. They have not studied the decrees of the Second Vatican Council, and are not concerned

about putting them into practice. They hardly catechize the children at all, nor do they get involved in pastoral work. They are said to have received instructions from their superiors to watch and pray.

The situation of the Catholic Church is better in the Republic of Tadshikistan, where many zealous Catholics, especially Germans and some Poles live. Their zeal and grasp of their faith could be a source of edification to the faithful of West Germany and other countries of Europe. These are wonderful examples of the working of the Holy Spirit! It is the result of the work of zealous priests, religious and third order members. They have been able to prepare their people for a life in the catacombs. The faithful have been able, without priests or bishops, to keep the Faith. The faith is especially vigorous in those regions which have been visited by former prisoners and banished priests. A special object of their respect has been Father T.A. Šeškevičius, S.J. In the homes of many Germans in Asia, the portrait of Father Šeškevičius hangs alongside the pictures of saints.

The atheists of the Soviet Union are hatching fresh plans to destroy the Catholic Church in the Soviet Union. It is said that while making certain concessions to the Holy See, they want the headquarters of the Catholic Church in the Soviet Union to be established in Moscow. In charge would be a clergyman who has capitulated to the government, with the rank of Cardinal. Under his jurisdiction would be all the Catholic dioceses in the Soviet Union: those of Lithuania, the Ukrain, Belorussia and the rest. Thus the first step towards schism would be set up. Even now some Orthodox clergy are heard to say, "Since the Catholic Church acknowledges the Patriarch of Moscow as a legitimate member of the ecclesiastical hierarchy, the time is approaching for the Catholics of the Soviet Union to renounce the Holy Father of Rome." They say that the Patriarch of Moscow would be able to lead them.

We find it difficult to understand the recent so-called Ostpolitik. In our opinion, it has greatly hurt the Church in Eastern Europe. We hear such arguments:

"The Soviet Union is a powerful country, whose physical power today we cannot overcome. It is necessary to seek diplomatic avenues to dialogue with that power, with the aim of defending the faithful who are there from complete annihilation."

In our opinion, it is not diplomatic efforts which keep them from atrocities, but the necessity of reckoning with the might of

powerful states, world and national public opinion, and fear of a new Nuremberg trial.

Representatives of the Soviet Union eagerly seek diplomatic ties with the Apostolic See, in order that, having obtained concessions from the Catholic Church, they might even more subtly persecute the Church, especially at the hands of Church leaders who have capitulated to them. Bishops accommodating themselves to the atheists often interfere by their directives, or verbally or in writing, often forbidding persecuted ministers the celebration of Holy Mass in private homes, the hearing of confessions outside one's own diocese, in private apartments, and especially the confessions of women religious.

The Catholics of Eastern Europe are impressed by a bold defense of the Faith. If the Catholics of Lithuania can be defended by non-Catholics and even persons of atheistic persuasion, like Academician Andrei Sacharov or Sergei Kovalev, at the risk of their freedom, then all the more do we expect a word of intercession from our brethren the Catholic bishops and faithful of other lands. Thank God, we are lately hearing their voices raised in our defense.

One gets the impression that Catholics, unwilling to spoil relations with the atheists of Moscow, have chosen the tactic of silence. One bishop of Lithuania, upon his return from Rome asserted that the Holy Father, in an audience, advised the faithful of the Soviet Union: "Pray and wait quietly and patiently."

We are accustomed to being deceived, and we do not believe that the Holy Father would so have advised us. We have the Gospel, the decrees of the Second Vatican Council concerning the missions and the apostolate; we hear the words of our Holy Father, Pope Paul VI, over the radio, speaking of the duty to evangelize the world of today, without regard even for one's life. How can we be quiet and wait, when the atheists and other enemies of the Church are not quiet and do not wait? Can we calmly watch and wait when hundreds of thousands of youth, students and intellectuals are longing for the Gospel, disenchanted with atheism, and with the moral rot stemming from it? If we do not, we are all guilty. The Apostle Paul cried, "Woe to me, if I did not proclaim the Gospel!" An example to us in this regard could be the various sects in the Soviet Union. They are supported spiritually and materially by their brethren abroad. Among their members they have developed an apostolic spirit which fears neither suffering nor death. They are provided with the latest literature, they have created a disciplined

organization with leaders at various levels: the small group, the village, city, community, region, republic, etc.

For long years the Catholic Church in the Soviet Union was, as it were, moribund, showing no signs of greater apostolic effort. Now the situation has changed significantly. We need not soporific slogans, but words of encouragement, suitable leeway for action, and the requisite authorization, without which we do not feel we have the right to send anyone forth in the name of the Church, or to urge anyone on to apostolic work demanding heroism. Our strength lies in our unity with the Holy Father, and a bold, well-organized defense of the Church.

We can rejoice that in this regard the Catholic Church has made significant progress. Thanks to those efforts, the facts regarding the persecution of the Faith in the Soviet Union have forced even the Communist Parties abroad to condemn the persecution of believers being waged by the Soviet Union.

Lithuania, because of its geographical situation and historical circumstances, is the outpost of the Catholic Church in eastern Europe. It can serve humanity by creating a synthesis of the cultures of East and West. For that reason the level of religious life in Lithuania can have extraordinary significance for the Catholic Church and the history of Europe.

For that reason the Roman Catholic Church should be very concerned that Catholicism in Lithuania survives, be strengthened by its trials and with the proper support, manifest itself in all its vigor and be able to fulfill the mission assigned to it by Providence and by the Church.

Lithuania is a country on the Baltic Sea, the majority of whose inhabitants are Catholics. Even now the Catholic Church there is working overtly and also covertly, in catacomb style. Its work would be even more active, if it received the moral and material support of the rest of the faithful.

In spite of long, determined and bitter persecution by the atheists, the Catholic Faith in Lithuania is alive. We can boast to the Holy Father that we have had very few priests among us renounce their priesthood, there is no dearth of vocations to the priesthood or religious life, Eucharistic life is flourishing, and the sacrament of penance is appreciated. You have plenty of data showing how courageously the clergy and faithful of Lithuania are defending their Faith. We have had a host of martyrs for the Faith, and of girls who have sacrificed their lives in defense of their chastity

(Students Elena Spirgevičiūtė, Stasė Lukšaitė, Danutė Burbaitė and others).

In our country the soul of the apostolate is alive, thirsting to spread the Catholic Faith throughout a vast land which has been subjected to atheism. The Catholic Church is working effectively in catacomb fashion: An underground press is flourishing, catechization is going on, on a broad scale, in spite of all kinds of sacrifices, and religious communities exist [albeit underground—Trans. Note]. There is no lack of responsible officials or even members of the Communist Party, who albeit secretly, hold the Faith. On their deathbed, they ask to be buried with the Catholic liturgy. We have several bishop-martyrs: Archbishop Teofilus Matulionis, Mečislovas Reinys, Vincentas Borisevičius, and Povilas Ramanauskas. For their loyalty to the Church Bishops Julijus Steponavičius and Vincentas Sladkevičius have been exiled from their dioceses. About six hundred Lithuanian priests have been in prison without ceasing there to spread the teachings of Christ.

However, the atheists in Lithuania do not cease by any means disrupting the life of the Catholic Church.

1. The first means of undermining the Catholic Church in Lithuania consists of the energetic and relentless efforts of the atheists to introduce into the hierarchy of the Catholic Church in Lithuania individuals who would agree to carry out their directives: a) to spread abroad lies about so-called freedom of religion in Lithuania. It is on this condition that the banished bishops have been promise that they would be allowed to return to their duties; b) to help mislead the Vatican and to help place in episcopal sees candidates acceptable to the atheists; c) to thwart pastoral efforts by ignoring the decrees of the Holy Father; d) to promote bad priests, assigning them to responsible positions; and to persecute zealous priests, assigning them to the hinterlands; e) to neglect religious education, etc.

The atheists have partly succeeded in carrying out their plans, but not entirely. The newly appointed bishops presently concern themselves with pastoral efforts as much as possible. Those who on account of age are unable to function, and to resist the demands of the atheists, would be acting honorably if they resigned.

2. The atheists interfere with candidates wishing to enter the seminary, they try to recruit those who enter, and they try to see that the level of education and training in the seminary is at a low level. The bishops are able freely to appoint neither the administra-

tion of the seminary, nor its faculty. They are powerless to remove from their positions individuals obviously unfit for such duties. The seminarians lack theological manuals. The seminary library is very poor, and is not being replenished with books of a purely religious nature published abroad. It is no wonder that the level of education and of spiritual training at the seminary in Kaunas is quite low. Often, young priests revive spiritually once they begin their priestly ministry.

3. One of the greatest means of wrecking Catholicism in Lithuania is the well-organized compulsory atheistic education of the children, without regard either to the Declaration of Human Rights, or to the Final Act of the Helsinki Conference. Even now, priests are fined for teaching children catechism. Teachers in Lithuania are pressured in various ways by the Ministry of Education to educate children in atheism. This task a segment of opportunistic teachers performs zealously. According to the statistics of the atheists in Lithuania, 70% of the children entering school are religious believers; only 30% finish middle school with their faith intact. Their faith is further undermined in institutions of higher learning. All university students are required to complete a course in so-called "scientific" atheism.

Since youth are forbidden to go to church, and there is a great dearth of religious literature, a great part of the young people are not so much atheists, as religious illiterates. The fruit of atheism is a moral degeneracy among the youth which has caused even the atheists concern.

4. One of the things most detrimental to the Faith and morals of the Lithuanian people, and demeaning, is the mass recruiting of people by all means possible to become informers for the K.G.B., bribery, blackmail, the threat of being discharged from work, the most attractive promises of furthering one's career, and of going on to higher education. Those who do not agree to become informers are threatened with all sorts of punishment. Those who agree to become informers are often pardoned for criminal offenses. All are subject to recruitment, beginning with elementary school children, and ending with bishops.

It must be admitted that such pressure, extending over the years, has produced results. Hence Lithuanians today do not trust one another, fear to speak out, and are constantly afraid of being betrayed.

Especially subject to such recruitment are seminarians. Those

who do not agree to become agents of the K.G.B. are threatened that they will not be accepted for the seminary, or that they will not be ordained. Seminarians are placed under particular pressure during vacation. Sometimes they are required to agree to defect publicly from the priesthood after a few years as priests. Thus it was with Father Vytautas Starkus, the pastor of Sidabrava.

5. On July 28, 1976, a new law was promulgated in Lithuania, by which it is planned to restrict the work of the Church even more. One section of the new law allows the priest to perform his ministrations only in the church for which he has been registered. According to that regulation, priests are forbidden from helping neighboring priests to hear confessions, when the latter are overwhelmed with work during feastdays or funerals.

The same law forbids the teaching of religion. The teaching of religion is allowed only in the seminary. All who teach children prayers or catechism must now expect new persecution—based on the law.

The same law forbids clergy from carrying out pastoral visits—"kalėdojimas"—even though Canon Law requires this. The same law directs that the question of establishing new parishes be decided not by the faithful, but by the members of the executive Committee of the *rayon*.

The Catholic Church in Lithuania is operating on two levels: overtly and covertly. Forced to operate entirely in catacomb fashion are all religious communities of men and women; young men secretly preparing for ordination to the priesthood, almost all students and various officials who are afraid to be seen in church or to receive the sacraments, in order not to suffer for it.

A significant number of priests operating with official approval are forced also to operate in catacomb style: preparing children for First Communion or Confirmation, visiting patients in hospitals where the priest is not admitted by the medical staff, and witnessing the marriages of officials.

The Catholic Church is operating in exclusively catacomb fashion or semi-catacomb fashion in broad areas of Russia. It is able to operate because it ignores the restrictions of the atheists. Such activity is quite difficult, since it is bitterly persecuted by the atheists. However, it is difficult to squelch, when properly organized. The Church operating overtly can be destroyed in a moment by the atheists, by closing churches and arresting bishops and priests.

However, it is very difficult to subdue the Church of the

Catacombs, since they are unable to keep track of its activities. The Church operating in catacomb conditions does not interfere with the local Church operating overtly, it does not try to disrupt its discipline or to split it, but tries as much as possible to complement its work. As much as possible, it upholds the authority of the ruler of the diocese, tries to win the conditions necessary in order to operate more freely, defends the rulers of dioceses from government persecution and pressure, and blocks misleading statements emanating from them.

As for the relationship of the Church of the Catacombs with the atheistic government, the government is quite unhappy about the activity of the Church of the Catacombs, because it is unable to control it. While the Church operating in the open has certain privileges, the Church of the Catacombs is persecuted. Therefore priests and religious operating clandestinely are termed agents of the Vatican or foreign spies.

Those making these accusations know themselves that it is not so. Even the Catholic Church operating in catacomb conditions is not about to plan an uprising, nor to fight the Soviet system by force. It does not forbid Catholics to serve in the Soviet army, to participate in social action, or to work in state offices or factories. Many Catholics are exemplary, trustworthy, workers. Even the sisters, who have been driven underground, are appreciated as conscientious medical personnel, who conscientiously nurse Party members and security agents. The Church operating in catacomb conditions does not seek to disrupt good relations between the Apostolic See and the Soviet Union. It wants only to proclaim the doctrine of Christ to all people without hindrance.

A great pastoral error was committed when the bishops, priests and people of Lithuania were not prepared in time juridically or pastorally, for pastoral work in catacomb conditions. The more freedom of religion increases, the less will become the significance of the Church of the Catacombs. The greater the persecution, the more deeply the Church will be forced to burrow into the catacombs and the more will its significance grow.

In view of these facts we trust that our Lithuanian brethren abroad and the bishops and faithful of the whole world will help us to preserve the Catholic Faith, will help us with their offerings and prayers, and with all their might will defend us from those who persecute us for our Faith.

They will make better use, as much as possible, of the media of

information in the hands of Catholics and of other good people. As much as possible they will try to see that Catholic Church leadership assists not only the Church operating openly, but also the Church operating in catacomb conditions.

In recent times, relations between the Apostolic See and the Soviet Union have improved. The representatives of this country regularly visit the Holy Father. Cardinals visit Moscow and Leningrad. No one denies that it is necessary to use all diplomatic channels, seeking contacts even with an atheistic government, working for world peace, justice and racial equality. The atheists eagerly seek better relations with the Apostolic See. However, by that diplomatic activity, they wish to obtain concessions by which they would be able to hurt the Church more.

As a rule, they do not honor their promises or their agreements. The pronouncements of the new bishops of Hungary or Czechoslovakia give us no joy. The atheists threaten that if their demands are not met, if the activities of zealous Catholics are not restricted, a new bloody persecution of the faithful could break out, such as took place from 1917 to 1923 and from 1930 to 1938. We do not feel threatened by bloody persecution so much as by the slow, silent strangulation throttling the Church with its own hands.

With all this in mind, we ask our brother Lithuanians abroad the following:

1. To show more concern, love, spiritual and material help especially for the Catholic Church living in catacomb conditions.

2. In a suitable manner to request the Holy See:

a) as much as possible to hasten the beatification of the Servant of God Jurgis Matulaitis-Matulevičius;

b) to exert efforts, that the cause of beatification of new Lithuanian martyrs for faith and morals be taken up: Archbishop Teofilus Matulionis, Bishop Vincentas Borisevičius, and student Elena Spirgevičiūtė, who showed a heroism similar to that of St. Maria Goretti;

c) To request the Holy Father not to appoint bishops and not to confer titles of honor on individuals who have compromised themselves morally and politically. Not to trust the recommendations of those who have already misled the Apostolic See;

d) To encourage concern for the evangelization of the Soviet Union; to instruct local ordinaries here not to pose obstacles for those who wish to do missionary work in this country;

e) To exert efforts that the faithful of Belorussia and the Ukraine might obtain the right to open their own seminary;

f) to try to see that churches be opened and priests assigned to them, at least in the larger cities of the Soviet Union, such as Kiev, Minsk, Novosibirsk, Krasnojarsk, Omsk, Tomsk, etc.; to promulgate pastoral directives, for radio broadcasts by the Holy See, urging the evangelization of the Soviet Union, effective from the day of announcement; warn that local ordinaries would not have the right to restrict their carrying out. To grant the right of hearing confessions to priests in good standing, without regard to diocesan boundaries, in private homes and apartments, not only of the laity, but also of religious sisters.

Decree No. 7, "Christus Dominus," of the Second Vatican Council, urges the bishops of the entire world to show particular love and concern for those priests who suffer various persecutions for Christ. It urges them to assist them by prayer and support. Moreover, it urges all the faithful, especially those in higher positions, boldly to defend the faithful who are being persecuted (Cf. *Gaudium et Spes*, No. 75). We are waiting for these decrees to be zealously put into practice. The Helsinki Accords created favorable conditions for defending the faithful repressed and persecuted throughout the world, and especially in the Soviet Union.

This appeal has been drafted after appealing to the Holy Spirit for light, and listening to the opinions of many priests, religious and laity, of Lithuania. We trust that our brother Lithuanians overseas, the faithful of the entire world and people of good will, will help us as they can. We will ask the Most High that our cry for help be heard.

## "ENFORCEMENT" OF HELSINKI AGREEMENTS

To: LSSR Minister for Internal Affairs

Requests from: Rev. Pranas Masilionis, son of Jonas,  
Pasvalys *Rayon*, Krikliniai Parish

Honorable Minister:

Please accept this expression of my respect and goodwill.

I would like to share with you, man to man, my concerns and thoughts.

I will speak honestly, with no intent to offend anyone, trusting in human compassion.

You are probably aware that I have vainly tried for the past six or seven years to gain permission to visit my brothers and sisters in America.

In that time, my brother Juozas has sent me three formal invitations, validated by the Russian Embassy.

The last invitation was also signed by American Secretary of State Henry Kissinger and Ohio's Governor Brown. I am deeply grateful to them.

Unfortunately, all the invitations were turned down, here. No reason was ever given.

Over those years, I have written one letter of request to the Premier, with a copy to you, and the Premier's correspondence department notified me that the request itself was forwarded to the Internal Affairs Ministry; in other words, to you.

I wrote four letters of request to you, as Internal Affairs Minister. I sent all my requests by registered mail, but received no reply from either you or your office, nor any indication of whether you had actually received my registered letters.

I am invited to visit America by my brother Juozas, but he is doing so in concert with my sisters and my other brother: they are all inviting me. They are inviting me because it is a long time since we have seen one another, nearly forty years ago, and because we are all standing at death's door, being all old:

I am 75 years old; my brother Adolfas, a retired worker is 73; my brother Juozas, a doctor of medicine who is missing one leg, is 63; my sister Viktorija Miknienė, a surgeon, is 66; and my sister Stanislova, a hospital employee, is 58.

We would like to see one another before leaving this earth and say one last good-bye. It is true that this is a personal matter, but a very human, a very sensitive one . . .

When the replies are always negative, the heart is naturally wounded, as if imprisoned . . .

But people are still in charge here; they desire and seek good, but people, be they geniuses, make mistakes. Moreover, circumstances change: what was undesirable yesterday, might be useful today.

And on that basis, I have decided to express to you, a respected and responsible individual, some thoughts which might be beneficial.

I again sincerely assure you that I have no desire to offend or abuse anyone.

I ask you to judge whether I am mistaken in stating that the denial of permission to visit my relatives is illogical and detrimental.

My reasoning is as follows: Illogical.

1, an old and ordinary citizen, am not allowed to leave, while young, mature and extraordinary persons are allowed to leave, for example, A.(lexander) Solzhenitsyn with his *Gulag Archipelago* and his entire family; Bukovsky who spent over 10 years in psychiatric hospitals and labor camps; Pliushch allowed to leave directly from a psychiatric hospital after several years of misery; Simas Kudirka after the hardships of his trial and imprisonment; the Jurašas family, Tomas Venclova and others.

They leave full of experience, memories, feelings, thoughts. They leave free to speak and act.

What could I say in the West that the West still does not know? And if I were heedlessly to say something, what use would it be against the torrent of facts and statements which flow from the West over the radio broadcasts of various nations?

Does not this illogical attitude undermine the prestige of those in power?

2. Detrimental.

No attention is given here to the one principle which is suddenly and uncontrollably shaping people's decisions, namely:

Truth, freedom, order, cleanliness, well-mannered and educated behavior, justice, virtue, the well-being and satisfaction of people, friendship and similar things do not fear frankness.

Frankness is deathly feared by lies, deceit, disorder, exploitation, injustice, force, slavery, terror, conspiracy, planned destruction and the like.

The West is frank.

All anti-communists there have come to the conclusion that true democracy exists there, for, according to them, it is plain that true freedom exists there, that man is truly respected there, that society is flourishing there . . . The Russian Communists are secretive.

Another principle naturally begins to apply: Aha! the Russian Communists are hiding something terrible.

According to anti-Communists, the impression is formed that Communist leaders themselves—precisely those who in propaganda pass off Communism as peace doves, harvest wreaths, the rising sun—are the first to rate Communism poorly in reality, for out of deadly fear they keep it imprisoned, within iron walls, without

doors or windows, to prevent anyone from bringing out news, to prevent any critical eye from noticing . . .

We should seriously reflect on how much dishonor and harm results to Communism itself and its leaders when there is no frankness. For instance, someone in the West asked Bukovsky: "How many labor camp inmates are there in Russia?" He replied: "250 million."

Such a statement should be refuted without delay. But how can it be refuted when impenetrable secretiveness quite eloquently attests to it!?

The Lithuanian translation of Solzhenitsyn's *Gulag Archipelago* is quite widely circulated throughout Lithuania.

Reports from Bukovsky, Amalrik, Pliushch, Simas Kudirka, the Jurašas family, the *Chronicle of the Catholic Church in Lithuania, Aušra (Dawn)* and from other individuals and publications which are flowing from the West in all languages, reveal in detail the reality of Russian communism and degrades it in the sight of all.

We must defend ourselves.

An effective defense is openness: "Come, look, examine from all sides, assure yourselves!"

Permission to travel abroad is essentially linked to openness.

The leaders of Communism defend themselves, but with empty words, for they hide from openness, as from death.

According to anti-Communists, the categorical demand "Don't interfere in our internal affairs!" is illogical.

If great and important accords like the Declaration of Human Rights and the Helsinki documents have been signed, then, by that same solemn signing, all states have authorized one another to monitor how the agreements are applied.

According to anti-Communists, if such an understanding did not exist, then the accords themselves would not be worthy of great leaders, they would be empty lies, absurd.

Therefore, that categorical demand by Communist leaders not to interfere in their internal affairs is illogical, it is demeaning to them, to communism and their states.

Moreover, this demand is also a betrayal: it gives rise not only to the impression but also to the conviction that the information provided by the above-mentioned individuals, publications and documents is accurate.

It can therefore be seen from broadcasts that the West is convinced that secretive, closed Russian Communism is slavery; that

Russia is a labor camp; that communism is not loved there; that terror is used to instill it in minds and hearts; that it is unrealistic even in the economic field; that its leaders are nonetheless attempting to impose it on all humanity—enslave and terrorize it in the same manner.

Openness is vital to eliminate these impressions, people must be allowed to come and go.

Yugoslavia is very open: many thousands of her workers yearly go to the West to earn a living and again return. No one suffers from this. The parties of the West are seriously striding toward humanitarianism and openness. They thereby gain much empathy.

The Declaration of Human Rights and the Helsinki Accords are the inexhaustible sources of true freedom and blessing, yearned over the ages by persons, nations and mankind.

A storm-like spreading movement for these rights is currently occurring in mankind. The future is theirs.

Achieving them now is the honor crown of state leaders, fearing neither openness nor storms.

Thus, in view of all the points I have made above, and for the common benefit of all of us, I ask with confidence in you, Mr. Minister, to grant me permission to visit my brothers and sisters in America.

My documents could be in Vilnius, at the visa office.

What would I do if I am rejected again?

I would feel very deprived and enslaved.

I would then be inclined to decide never again to participate in any political meetings or elections.

It would merely be a new sign for my brothers and sisters, their friends and all American society, alas a needlessly given one, that the above-mentioned charges are true.

Why is this necessary?!

Remarks: I have forwarded copies to the bishops, diocesan administrators, the Premier and Commissioner Tumenas.

Very respectfully yours,  
Rev. Pranas Masilionis

May 14, 1977

Pasvalys *Rayon*, Krikliniai Post Office.

N.B. Upon receiving a copy of the request, Religious Affairs Commissioner K.(azimieras) Tumėnas, summoned the Rev. P.(ranas)

Masilionis, and warned him that if his request is printed in the *Chronicle of the Catholic Church in Lithuania*, the government will never allow him to go abroad to visit his relatives.

## CONDEMNED WITHOUT GUILT

Beginning in June 1974, State Security Police agents began a very intense surveillance of Nijolė Sadunaitė.

Her next-door neighbor, the teacher (Mrs) Aidietienė, became an informer for the Security Police. She kept close track of who came to see Nijolė and who left. She informed the Security Police by telephone when Nijolė herself left her apartment. Three days after Nijolė's arrest, Security Agent Vincas Platinskas boasted to her cousin Vladas Sadūnas, that (Mrs) Aidietienė telephoned the Security Police at 2:00 P.M. on August 27, 1974 and notified them that typewriter sounds were coming from Nijolė's apartment. Two hours later, a large contingent of Security Agents arrived, forced their way into Nijolė's apartment and conducted a search. The Security agents said to Nijolė, "You are a Catholic. How can you type the *Chronicle of the Catholic Church in Lithuania*, which contains only lies and slander about the so-called persecution of believers."

Nijolė boldly replied: "The accuracy of every atheist misdeed revealed in the *Chronicle of the Catholic Church in Lithuania* is confirmed by the tears of the faithful."

The agents also maintained that the article on the funeral of the late Canon Petras Rauda had probably been written by Nijolė. She denied this allegation, saying that if she had written it, she would have included many more details about the harassment by Security agents during the funeral. Later, the chekists began to ridicule the late Canon Rauda. Nijolė was outraged: "All of you put together are not worth a single toe of Canon Rauda!"

Two hours after the search was begun, one more Security agent arrived and ordered Nijolė's brother, Jonas Sadūnas, to go to Security headquarters for interrogation. Nijolė protested, saying that her brother had pneumonia and they had no right to take away the ailing man, but the Security agents disregarded this.

When the brother was taken away for questioning, his apartment was also searched, but nothing was found.

After Nijolė's arrest, her brother's health grew much worse and he spent one and a half months at the hospital.



**Nijolė Sadūnaitė**

After interrogating Nijolė for several weeks, Security Agent V. Platinskas complained to Vladas Sadūnas that the interrogators were very upset because Nijole refused to answer their questions.

The interrogators questioned many witnesses: Nijolė's relatives were summoned, as were her acquaintances, but they still found no evidence against her. All those interrogated were asked the same questions: "Did Nijolė give them the *Chronicle of the Catholic Church in Lithuania* or other religious literature to read? Did she ever speak about the publishers of the *Chronicle*, or about persecution of the faithful?" The replies were always negative.

At the beginning of 1975, the Security police intercepted a letter from Poland addressed to Nijole. Henrik Lacwik was not aware that she had been arrested. In his letter to Nijolė he wrote about his 1974 stay in Lithuania.

In February 1975, Security Agents V. Platinskas travelled to

Poland to see Lacwik. The Security agent asked about his visit to Lithuania, and also whether Nijolė had spoken about the *Chronicle of the Catholic Church in Lithuania*, persecution of priests or believers in Lithuania, and whether she had given him any reading material. The replies were negative.

Time was passing, yet the Security police still had no evidence against Nijolė, except for three issues of the *Chronicle of the Catholic Church in Lithuania* seized during the search, and several typewritten pages of the *Chronicle of the Catholic Church in Lithuania*.

The Security police were aided by Nijolė's cousin Vladas Sadūnas. At the direction of the Security police, he went to see relatives to ask whether Nijolė had given anyone the *Chronicle of the Catholic Church in Lithuania* or other religious literature to read, whether she had talked about the publishers of the *Chronicle of the Catholic Church in Lithuania* and so forth. He went to see his cousin Vytautas Sadūnas in the company of a Security agent.

On March 25, 1975 Regina Sadūnienė (wife of Vladas Sadūnas) took issue No. 8 of the *Chronicle of the Catholic Church in Lithuania* to Security headquarters, although at the trial she stated that she had found the said issue on her husband's desk, but did not know where it came from. Nijolė had not given her anything to read.

Vladas Sadūnas testified that Nijolė had given him the *Chronicle of the Catholic Church in Lithuania* and the book *Simas* to read.

School principal Povilaitis (see *Chronicle of the Catholic Church in Lithuania* No. 8) was called as a witness and testified that he had not forbidden students to attend the funeral of Robertas Andrijauskas, conducted with church rites, because the funeral had not taken place during the school year. When Nijole asked why, during the interrogations, he and Teacher (Miss) Šlimaitė had testified that the funeral had been held at the beginning of the school year, Povilaitis became flustered and replied that that was not relevant. It thus remained unclear when the principal had told the truth and when he had lied. Not a single student was summoned to the trial to confirm the testimony of (Mr.) Povilaitis.

The Security police had found one more witness who agreed to refute an item printed in issue No. 8 of the *Chronicle of the Catholic Church in Lithuania*, (this vital issue had been brought to Security headquarters by (Mrs.) R(egina) Sadūnienė, but the interrogators had poorly coached principal Povilaitis for the trial and he forgot the testimony he had given at the interrogation.

Witness Kušleika confirmed at the trial the accuracy of facts



**Nijolė Sadūnaitė in exile**

contained in the *Chronicle of the Catholic Church in Lithuania*, stating that his son had in fact been forced to join the pioneers.

Over a period of eight months, Security agents found not a single witness who could deny the accuracy of a single fact printed in the *Chronicle of the Catholic Church in Lithuania*. They did not find anyone because the *Chronicle* contained no inaccurate information.

Judge Kudriashov and Prosecutor Bakučionis were aware of the content of Nijolė's defense speech and, fearing lest Nijolė's speech be heard by witnesses, cleared the courtroom and only allowed her brother to remain. At the beginning of the trial the prosecutor had advised Nijolė not to speak in her own defense, for there would then be the possibility of reducing her sentence. "I am not a gambler, Nijolė protested, "and will not gamble with my convictions."

Later, the foreign press wrote: "At the trial, the defendant

changed places with the prosecutor. During her defense speech, Nijolė became the prosecutor, and Bakučionis the accused."

In his summation, Prosecutor Bakučionis admitted that violations of believers' rights still occur in Lithuania.

On June 17, 1975, Judge Kudriashev handed down the court's decision: "For duplicating and disseminating the *Chronicle of the Catholic Church in Lithuania*, she is sentenced to three years of loss of freedom, to be served in strict regime labor camps, and to three years of exile." This is more like blind savage revenge than an act of justice.

After the trial, Interrogator Pilelis confided to Nijolė, "Based on the offense committed your sentence is too severe."

One patient wrote Nijolė at the labor camp: "In our Soviet reality, we are accustomed to give everything different names: Truth is lying; good is evil; facts are slander. National heroes are wrongdoers or criminals."

The accuracy of these words is confirmed by the court's dealings with N. (ijolė) Sadūnaitė. The case was grossly fabricated, even the witnesses (Povilaitis and Vladas Sadūnas) were specially bribed and coached by the Security police.

When drunk, Vladas Sadūnas admitted to relatives that the Security police had forced him to testify that Nijolė had given him several issues of the *Chronicle of the Catholic Church in Lithuania* and the book *Simas* to read. The relatives asked why he had not explained this at the trial. He apparently replied that the security police would then have had his head.

Nijolė spent August 27, 1974 through June 20, 1975 at the State Security Committee isolation facilities and later in various cells set aside for prisoners. Nijolė was interrogated by several interrogators. At first, the interrogation was conducted by Chief Interrogator Petruškevičius, in charge of top priority cases. Nijolė did not reply to any of the questions posed by the interrogators, thereby protesting against this case. Consequently, a month later, the interrogation was handed over to Interrogator Pilelis. But even then Nijolė refused to reply to the questions asked.

The interrogators threatened, that if she refused to reply to the questions, they would commit her to a psychiatric hospital where she would be much worse off than in a labor camp, or to lock her up in a cold, damp and dark punishment cell.

During January and February 1975, Nijolė had bronchitis and strep throat, ran a high temperature and coughed heavily, but was not

given any medical attention.

During the long and exhausting trip to Mordovia she suffered much debasement and ridicule. Upon arriving at the labor camp and undergoing a physical examination, Nijolė learned that during the eleven months since her arrest she had lost 15 lbs. (33 lbs.). Camp food is very monotonous and of poor quality: barely mash without any fat, fish, left-over scraps of meat (cow udder, diaphragm, lungs). In the fall, cabbage soup is served for several months, but when the cabbage supply runs out another kind of soup is made for several months, but always the same soup.

Nijolė fell ill on October 10, 1975. She ran a high temperature, coughed heavily, felt dizzy and suffered from over-all exhaustion. Only in December was she admitted to the camp hospital. The diagnosis was not determined and she was released from the hospital without having fully recovered. Even though sick, she still had to sew gloves. In February 1976 Nijolė was again hospitalized. Again no diagnosis was made and on March 3rd she was released from the hospital, still sick.

Nijolė again fell ill on December 21, 1976. She ran a high temperature and was bed-ridden for ten days, but was not hospitalized.

At the end of the winter, N.(ijolė) Sadūnaitė wrote: "I am fortunate at work since I always fill the glove-sewing quota. Now things will be somewhat harder, for I am weak. But that's a trifle, spring is nearly here. The grass will awaken, and with them I will find renewed strength, for we eagerly eat dandelions, pigweed and flower blossoms. They contain vitamins and colories."

British newspapers wrote that over 200 letters sent to Nijole from England were returned. Even from Lithuania, not all letters reach the labor camp. Censors remove from the letters religious pictures, Christmas and Easter greetings, even the prettier postcards. Also, not all of Nijolė's letters reach the addressees. During January and February 1977 Security censors intercepted two of Nijole's letters.

Between March 13, 1977 and May 13, 1977 Nijole was held at the Saransk interrogation facilities in Mordovain ASSR. She contracted bronchitis. She often runs a high temperature.

She returned from Saransk with a more serious case of bronchitis: again a high temperature, complete physical exhaustion. Because she did not receive proper medical attention, it developed into bronchodilatation. Now plans are being made to hospitalize (Miss)

Sadūnaitė. In the meantime, the inhuman camp food and other conditions are completely undermining Nijolė's strength. Her health is growing worse.<sup>1</sup>

**'As of March, 1979, Nijolė Sadūnaitė, having completed her term in labor camp, was living in exile at Boguchany, in Krasnoyarsk.**

## ONE MORE KGB VICTIM

On April 26, 1977, *Tiesa (Truth)* printed a long article by the pastor of Sidabravas, the Rev. Vytautas Starkus, "Why I Left the Wrong Road", which tries to convince the reader that the most important factor in Father Starkus' "eye opening" is the Vatican Radio's slandering of the Soviet government. As an example, Father Starkus points to the fact that Vatican Radio accused Soviet motor vehicle inspectors of revoking the driver's license of a sober Father J.(uozas) Zdebskis. In the article, the author Starkus asserts that he has associated with Father Zdebskis and knows that he likes to drink.

Father Starkus writes that, while still studying at the seminary, he became convinced that the Soviet system respects the rights of the faithful.

Every clear-minded reader, who reads the article understands that it is written by the KGB, using Father Starkus' hand.

Father Starkus recounted to priests from Panevėžys the following events: Upon entering the seminary, he was recruited to work as a KGB agent. The Security police agreed to allow him to study at the seminary on the condition that he renounce the priesthood after several years of serving as a priest. Father Starkus agreed to this condition, thinking that he would somehow extricate himself from the KGB trap after being ordained.

That was the beginning of Father Starkus' tragedy. Morally broken, he was incapable of being a good seminarian and the seminary administration wanted to expel him, but he completed the seminary with the backing of certain priests.

Father Starkus related how the Security police drove him one night to the woods near Skaistkalnė (Latvian SSR) and threatened to shoot him if he failed to keep his promise.

Father J. Zdebskis has stated that he never associated with

Father Starkus and that the item in the article about Father Zdebskis' behavior is a blatant lie.

The priests of Lithuania are of the opinion that the diocesan chanceries should view more seriously the behavior of morally bankrupt priests and not allow them to undermine what zealous priests are building at great sacrifice. Moreover, the seminary should not allow into Christ's vineyard priests who are clearly unfit for such work.

## NEWS FROM THE DIOCESES

### Kaunas

On May 22, 1977, the following fifth-year seminarians were ordained priests:

1. Jonas Alesius
2. Ričardas Černiauskas
3. Česlovas Degutis
4. Vytautas Kadys
5. Jonas Kauneckas
6. Stanislovas Linda
7. Marijonas Savickas
8. Vincas Stankevičius
9. Petras Tarvydas

### The Village of Levaniškiai (R a y o n of Anykščiai)

The newly ordained priest, Marijonas Savickas, on the occasion of his first Mass at his birthplace, wanted to pitch a tent temporarily on the banks of the Nevėžys River near his homestead, but the local state farm chairman forbade him. Father Savickas then addressed Religious Affairs Commissioner K.(azimieras) Tumėnas. Shortly, the state farm chairman granted him permission to pitch his tent, adding: "If not for foreign countries, we would hang all of you." It seems that Tumėnas explained to the state farm chairman that interference with the first Mass ceremonies might cause an uproar which would be heard abroad.

### Kaunas

Newly ordained priest Jonas Alesius was constantly harassed by the Security police during the summer of 1976, seeking to recruit him as a KGB agent. Security agents came to his home by car,

waylaid him on the road, and, after taking him to Lazdijai, terrorized him.

Many seminarians are harrassed in similar ways.

### Vilnius

Easter services at St. Teresa's Church in Vilnius are yearly held in an atmosphere of disquiet. The solemnity of the services is disrupted by youths otherwise disposed.

In 1977, on one occasion many young people streamed into the church and prevented people from praying. Most of them were tipsy and spoke Russian. During the procession they ridiculed the Blessed Sacrament with various forms of mimicry, insulted the girls strewing flowers, buzzed back and forth from the altar to the main door during the Holy Mass, causing a disturbance and insulting the praying people in various languages, and deliberately formed a bottleneck at the door (in the seven minutes prior to the Consecration,) . . . One churchgoer counted about 50 of these characters filing down the middle of the church.

The entire street from the State Philharmonic to Aušros Vartai (Gate of Dawn) was congested with such rowdy and drunk youths. Although four militia vehicles were on the scene, the militiamen did not use strict measures.

This contrarily disposed "cultivated" youth is the result of atheist upbringing. Earlier, Security agents used to be sent against the faithful, now the Security police sends vocation school students—amoral youth—to religious services.

### Vilnius

(Miss) Aldona Kezytė worked in education from 1949 to 1975. She studied at the LSSR Conservatory from which she graduated in 1956. That same year she was assigned to set up the Biržai children's music school. She worked as principal and teacher at that school. In 1958 she was a member of the Biržai City Workers' Council of Deputies. In 1959, she was assigned a position as instructor at a vocational school by the Vilnius Cultural-Educational Department. At the same time, she worked as a teacher at the present B. Dvarionas Children's Music School. From 1960 to 1975 she held top positions at that school. (Miss) Kezytė was offered the position of principal and art department head, but she turned down the offer. She worked at the B. Dvarionas Children's Music School in the choral department as head of the required piano classes (until 1975).

It would thus seem that the Education and Culture Ministries showed unusual confidence in Miss Kezytė.

However, not all agencies were pleased with Miss Kezytė. About eight years ago the KGB became interested in her. Annoying surveillance began at the school. Teacher Darvydas diligently performed the task assigned him by the Security police and seized on every word that Teacher Kezytė uttered. Teachers J. Andrievas, Štarkienė, (Miss) Abromaitytė, K. Kalibatas and Marina Levshina were not far behind.

One of the reasons of the Security police became interested in Miss Kezytė was her faith. It is possible that the Security police suspected the teacher of being involved in underground activity.

For a long time Miss Kezytė was harassed by her neighbors, the Choroshkhovs, who regularly broke into her apartment and rummaged through her things. Because the teacher remained silent, the Security representatives became even bolder and began to harass her constantly. Upon returning from work, she would find her things in disarray, the table all scratched, her thermos bottle full of spittle and the like, although she always locked the apartment door before leaving. No longer able to bear this intimidation and aware that it was useless to complain, Miss Kezytė took the opportunity to leave her apartment at R.(audonosios) Armijos prosp. 25-79 and moved to the Karoliniškiai *Rayon* at Sudervės g. 20-130. It seemed that things would be more peaceful at the new location because the immoral Russian neighbors had been left far behind. Unfortunately, similar incidents soon began in this apartment also. While she was at work, someone would enter her apartment, search it and very often destroy something. Miss Kezytė began receiving all her letters. Once she found three opened envelopes in her storage closet, but did not find any letters in them.

What does all this mean?

### Klaipėda

On April 10, 1977 (Holy Saturday), Religious Affairs Commissioner K.(azimieras) Tumėnas came to Klaipėda. The group of faithful who met the Commissioner at the church door asked him:

"Mr. Commissioner, we the believers of Klaipėda ask you to intercede with Soviet authorities to return to us the church which we ourselves built."

"And who are you?" Tumėnas asked the woman who had spoken.

"A representative of the believers of Klaipėda. There is a whole

group of us here." explained the woman to the Commissioner. "We do not fit in our small church. Come this evening or Easter morning, Mr. Commissioner. You will see for yourself and be convinced. People faint in the overcrowded church — is that normal?"

"I will come. We will see how many fainting or dying people are carried out," mocked Tumėnas.

"Give us back our church and we will build you a philharmonic hall!" suggested one of the faithful.

"And the new church spire will rise in no time to replace the one torn down. We will rebuild it with our own hands," added another.

"We'll see, we'll see," Tumėnas demurred.

"What concrete promises can you make us? Can we address you in writing?" The people would not give in.

"You can do it in writing," replied the visitor. "You have your church committee, let them write, not you."

"Doesn't the people's voice mean anything?" protested the people. "We did not elect any committee and know nothing about it," a voice was heard saying.

Without saying anything clear to the faithful, the commissioner left. Holy Saturday evening and Easter morning the people noticed Tumėnas in church. He was personally able to ascertain the situation of the Klaipėda faithful. Although the weather was very unpleasant, crowds of believers streamed into the church, the yard and the street. Throughout the night before Easter youths and school children kept vigil and sang.

## Šiauliai

A parish retreat was held at the Church of St. George in Šiauliai from March 25 to 27, 1977. Following High Mass on March 26, after the pastor had left and the number of faithful had diminished in church, emboldened school-children gathered to adore the Blessed Sacrament. But their joy was short-lived. The pastor, Father Jakubonis intruded suddenly on the adorators and seeing the school children, began to scold them: "I don't want to see a single child at the altar—you can pray in church or behind the altar rail! I want to finish building this church, and children adoring the Blessed Sacrament can upset my plans and cause unpleasantness."

Father Jokubonis even ordered the mothers who had brought their children for the adoration to leave. One woman asked as she was leaving, "Father, why are children in other places allowed to

adore, but not in Šiauliai? Will you be arrested because of this? If we fear unpleasantness, what will happen to our nation? Why will we need churches if there will be no people in them? If you drive children from the church, then later there will be no religious families, and still later no devout old people."

Atheists are fully aware that a tree must be bent while still young. Thus, the Church of SS Peter and Paul in Šiauliai was granted permission to ring its bells on the condition that Father D. Mažanavičius not allow children at the altar. The condition was accepted. On Easter morning the church bells of SS Peter and Paul rang out after twenty years of silence, but the living bells—children's voices at the altar—were silent. What a painful concession! But it is only a concession?!

### Mažeikiai

A former teacher, Reserve Officer Zenonas Margevičius returned to Lithuania after ten years imprisonment and wanted to find a job. As a former teacher he was told by Security agents, "If you work for us, we will give you a good school; you will be able to work and live in peace."

The teacher refused to work for the Security police, and therefore had to work a strenuous physical job in construction until he retired.

### Mažeikiai

During the night of April 12, 1977, the church in Mažeikiai was vandalized. The thieves entered through a window, vandalized the tabernacle, scattered the Blessed Sacrament, and stole three chalices and two communion cups.

### Telšiai

To: The publishers of the *Chronicle of the Catholic Church in Lithuania*

Would you please answer the following question: For what purpose do government officials film and photograph in churches?

We have learned that at the end of April of this year government officials, in the presence of K.(azimieras) Tumėnas, made a film inside the Telšiai cathedral. High clergymen were at the pulpit and altar during the filming. Is this not a concession to atheist goals? Will not such films serve atheist goals, their propaganda? After all, a church is not a theater and priests are not actors. How can all this be reconciled? We feel it is disrespectful to the Blessed Sacrament

kept in the church, before which we believers kneel, while the film crew behaves disrespectfully.

Reply: There is no doubt that the films are made for propaganda purposes. His Excellency Bishop L.(iudas) Povilonis acted very honorably when he refused to be filmed during Easter services.

N. Radviliškis

To: The Rev. Dubnikas, Juozas, son of Martynas, of the  
Nemunėlio Radviliškio Catholic Church

Based on the decision of the LSSR Council of Ministers, Art. 96 of the LSSR Constitution, LSSR Supreme Soviet Presidium Decree No. 181 dated August 10, 1976, and the January 23, 1918 decree "On the Separation of State and School from the Church", the N. Radviliškis Worker's Council of Deputies calls the following to your attention: according to information before the N. Radviliškis District Worker's Council of Deputies and the N. Radviliškis Middle School, you have violated the above-mentioned official decrees by allowing minor children to serve at Mass and other rites.

Soviet laws governing religious cults state that a religious community is a local alliance of believer citizens, at least eighteen years of age, of one and the same cult, for the common fulfillment of religious needs. Therefore, under-age citizens, not being members of religious communities, cannot be organized to carry out religious rites: serving at the altar, strewing flowers, carrying cult articles in procession, singing in church choirs and the like.

All religious functions must be carried out by adult members of the religilus community.

The N. Radviliškis District Worker's Council of Deputies Executive Committee reserves the right to monitor how you carry out the applicable official decision regarding religious rites.

N. Radviliškis District Worker's Council of Deputies  
Executive Committee Chairman (signature and seal)

N. Radviliškis Middle School Principal  
(signature and seal)

N. Radviliškis Middle School foremost Party organization  
Secretary (signature)

Radviliškis 4/8/77

Copy received: (Rev. Dubnikas' signature)

Reply to the N. Radviliškis Worker's Council of  
Deputies Executive Committee

In reply to the charges brought against me by the N. Radviliškis Worker's Council of Deputies Executive Committee, I wish to state the following:

1. Art. 96 of the L. (Lithuanian) SSR Constitution accords freedom of religion to all citizens, without distinction as to age or position and without setting any limits.

2. The said Soviet laws governing religious cults which limit freedom of religion up to the age of eighteen are clearly contrary to art. 96 of the Constitution, for under standards of common law, all laws which are contrary to the Constitution are invalid.

3. The January 23, 1918 decree clearly speaks of "the separation of school from church" but not of the separation of students—people—from the church. A distinction must be made between the institution (school) and the students (individuals), whom the decree does not mention. It is improper to extend the law by interchanging terms, which is not provided by the law.

4. Art. 145 of the Criminal Code stipulates penalties for individuals who prevent citizens from performing religious rites. Thus, by interfering in strictly internal Church affairs with this writ, the Worker's Council of Deputies Executive Committee violates Soviet laws (art. 145 of the Criminal Code).

5. In view of the above, I conclude that the writ sent by the N. Radviliškis Worker's Council of Deputies Executive Committee, being contrary to the law and the Constitution, does not apply to me.

Rev. J. Dubnikas

I have sent a copy of this letter to the Bishop of Panevėžys.

Kaunas

Juozas Gražys returned from labor camp in April 1977 after serving his sentence. He was convicted for collaborating in the distribution of the *Chronicle of the Catholic Church in Lithuania* (see issue No. 13 of the *Chronicle of the Catholic Church in Lithuania*).

Vilnius

Security agents paid a visit to the relatives of Ona Pranckū-

naitė, asking whether the prisoner had ever suffered from any nervous disorder. Plans are probably in the making to confine her to a psychiatric hospital.

#### Vilnius

In June the case of Vladas Lapienis was completed and the accused was allowed to review the case documents.

#### Kaunas

On May 15, 1977 a seminar for guides was held at the Kaunas tourist bureau regarding a tour to Eastern Aukštaitija, during which Rokiškis, Svėdasai and other towns were to be visited. In Svėdasai a tour was made of places associated with the life of the writer Vaižgantas. After the tour left the town, it was overtaken by a militiaman and a man dressed in civilian clothing who checked the itinerary. They then began to berate them for visiting the church (not during services!) as a group.

Let us commend the efficiency of the Security police!

Since when and in what code is it considered a crime to set foot in a church?

#### Raseiniai

The daughter of ailing (Mrs) Elena Baltkojienė came from the village of Klusai at 11:00 P.M. on August 8, 1976 to summon the priest to the patient's bedside. The priest asked whether the invitation had been cleared by the hospital administration. The reply was no. The priest then asked that permission be secured from the hospital administration. An appeal was made to the doctor on call, (Mrs) Verbienė. She refused to allow the priest to see the patient because it was supposedly forbidden. Because no such prohibitions exist, the patient's relatives again went to see Doctor Verbienė. The doctor assured them that the patient would not die and did not allow the priest in. Elena Baltkojienė died shortly thereafter.

#### Pociūnėliai

On October 26, 1976, the Rev. A. Jokūbauskas wrote the LSSR Prosecutor with the complaint that the Radviliškis *Rayon* executive committee administrative commission had unjustly imposed a 50 ruble fine on him for instructing children, and the Radviliškis *Rayon* people's court had upheld this unjust decision.

Radviliškis *Rayon* Prosecutor K. Mikšys replied on November

15, 1976 that Father Jokūbauskas had been fined justly.

The Rev. A. Jokūbauskas again wrote the LSSR Prosecutor on November 23, 1976, asking whether Prosecutor Mikšys had acted properly by accusing him of carrying out his direct duties.

The LSSR Prosecutor's Office charged the Rev. A. Jokūbauskas with supposedly assembling children and directing activities not related to the practice of cult rites.

On December 30, 1976 Father Jokūbauskas wrote the LSSR Prosecutor's Office: "I did not direct any children's activities unrelated to the practice of religious rites. Only activities relating to the practice of religious rites were conducted: On appointed days, children were questioned on whether their parents had properly taught them their prayers, on whether the catechism was properly explained to them; children were prepared for the reception of the sacraments, taught to consciously participate in cult services and serve at Holy Mass. Nothing unrelated to cult services was ever taught: no sports, dancing, photography, nor anything similar . . .

"Because children came with their parents' knowledge to the activities related to the practice of religious rites, and were taught nothing but prayers and the truths of the faith, the fine imposed by the administrative commission and the court is unjust. Under Soviet law, the principles of Lenin and international commitments, the private instruction of religion in church is permitted. A priest is not guilty of any wrongdoing for teaching children their prayers, for explaining the catechism in order that they might properly receive the sacraments and consciously participate in religious rites. It is the priest's direct duty for which he cannot be punished . . ."

The LSSR Prosecutor's Office again affirmed that Father Jokūbauskas had been justly fined for teaching children catechism.

The Rev. A. Jokūbauskas again sent two letters to the LSSR Prosecutor's Office in January 1977, without any results.

Lithuanian Communist Party Central Committee Secretary Griškevičius made no reply to Rev. A. Jokūbauskas' complaints.

On February 3rd, the Kėdainiai *Rayon* court bailiff attached the possessions of Father Jokūbauskas in order to collect the fine by force.

Before Easter, Father Jokūbauskas was notified that the fine had been cancelled, on the pretext that the time limit for collecting it had expired.

In 1975 Rev. A. Jokūbauskas purchased a private house in Pociū-

nėliai from Česlovas Mickevičius, but state farm chairman Stumbrys interfered with the finalization of documents.

On October 30, 1976, Česlovas Mickevičius (Soviet Union Communist Party member) refunded to Father A. Jokūbauskas the money paid for the house, and stated that at the party's order he had sold the house to the Pociūnėliai state farm and apologized for not being in a position to do otherwise.

On November 2, 1976, Father Jokūbauskas was notified by State farm chairman J. Stumbrys to move within a week's time from the house, which the state farm had bought.

On December 4, 1976, the order was repeated.

After countless complaints, a plot of land for a new house was subdivided for the Rev. A. Jokūbauskas.

### Druskininkai

During a retreat at the Druskininkai church on April 15th of this year, someone broke the church windows with stones during the evening Mass.

### Merkinė

In 1977, a book by J. Jermalavičius was published in Vilnius entitled "Atheist Upbringing in Soviet Lithuania" which contains a statement on page 110 that, on June 22, 1941, when the Nazis entered Merkinė, the pastor informed the organist J. Miškevičius to local degenerates and the organist had to stay in hiding for one and a half years.

In fact: 1. The Nazis entered Merkinė not on June 22nd, but somewhat later.

2. At the time, the pastor of Merkinė was the Rev. A. Juknevičius. He could not have informed the organist because he was already dead on June 24th. He was arrested by Red Army soldiers while walking in the Kaišiadorys churchyard and taken to the woods outside town, where he was shot. Another priest was also arrested with him, but he survived because he was taken elsewhere.

3. The people of Merkinė do not recall an organist named J. Miškevičius.

## IN THE SOVIET SCHOOL

To: Minister of Education, LSSR

Copy to: Director of the Mičiurnas State Farm Vocational School in Kaunas.

A statement from: Sprindžiūnas, Vytautas, son of Juozas, student at the Mičiurnas State Farm Vocational School in Kaunas, born in 1960, residing in Kaunas, Botanikos 6.

When I arrived for my field study class on June 13th of this year, I was summoned by the school's director who asked where I had been yesterday, June 12th. I replied that I had gone to Alytus to congratulate my friend, a priest, who had graduated from the seminary this year. Then the director and another individual unknown to me forced me with threats and intimidation to write an untruthful statement that I was withdrawing from the school of my own will. When, after I recovered from the initial effect of fear, I wished to withdraw my statement, the director would not return it to me and did not allow me to continue attending my field study classes.

Since the priest had graduated from a state approved seminary, I did not commit a misdeed by congratulating him. No one has the right to expel me from the vocational school for this; I never intended to withdraw from the school voluntarily, and wrote the statement only under coercion.

I ask you, Comrade Minister, to take up my defense, reject the forcibly obtained untruthful statement and enjoin the director to allow me to continue studying at the school.

Kaunas, 6/14/77

V. Sprindžiūnas

Telšiai

The Lithuanian SSR Education Ministry has announced that the statements of (Mrs) Šeduikienė have been looked into and the Telšiai *Rayon* Education Department will not be able to offer her employment due to lack of vacancies. (Teacher (Mrs) Šeduikienė was discharged from her position because of her religious beliefs.)

Švėkšna

Švėkšna Middle School teacher Sigitas Urmolevičius gives believer students atheist books, orders them to study and talk on atheist subjects. On February 9, 1977 he summoned two students, 7a-grade student Jucys and 9-grade student Lam-sargis to the teacher's room and struck them for not answering atheist questions.

## Valkininkai

On February 19, 1979, 7b-grade homeroom teacher (Mrs) J. Šironienė of the Valkininkai Senatorium Boarding School was forced to write a statement (that she was resigning) of her own will from her teaching position (she had barely six months left until retirement), although she had often been awarded commendations from the Education Department and the Communist Youth League Central Committee for educating her students and pioneers well and for her conscientious work. Her homeroom classes always took first place in various contests held at the school.

The school administration and Party-member teachers had noticed that (Mrs.) Šironienė was a believer.

In December 1975, the then pioneer leader (Mrs) B. Bendoraitienė decided to test the students' views during a biology class by asking questions about the origins of the earth and life. Some students said that God had created everything. During the next class, the teacher called on student D. Bazytė and assailed her with the purpose of learning whether she attends church. After class, (Mrs) B. Bendoraitienė interrogated students Česnulevičius and Kuncevičius who were residents of the children's home.

Students of grades 7a, 7b and 8 were given questionnaires with the following questions: Do you believe in God, have you been baptized, have you received Confirmation, who taught you the truths of faith? Students of grades 8 and 7a were warned by the teacher to reply, "non-believer." In grade 7a five out of fifteen students dared to answer honestly; and in grade 7b (Homeroom Teacher J. Šironienė) fourteen out of twenty-two students admitted being believers.

Then a campaign of persecution of believer students was launched. School Principal S. Gilius, Chief Homeroom Teacher (Mrs) O. Končienė, and Party Secretary (Mrs) Skliutienė began to ridicule homeroom teacher Šironienė and upbraid and threaten her for providing poor atheist upbringing. The above-mentioned teachers would daily detain the homeroom teacher until late evening. Her students also suffered, they were interrogated two to four hours per day. S. Gilius and J. Skliutienė harassed the orphan student A. Juozaitis in particular. He had boldly admitted to being a believer and is devoted to homeroom teacher J. Šironienė as to a mother. He was forbidden to ever again visit the teacher's apartment. The letters he wrote his brother were read and confiscated.

During the 1976-77 academic year, Principal S. Gilius assigned

student T. Lebenskas to follow his friend A. Juozaitis. The new home-room teacher was Soviet Union Communist Party member (Miss) B. Gaidelytė. She conducted a search of students' desks; 8b-grade students O. Šokaitytė and T. Anulytė were also assigned to search desks. Atheist upbringing has led to complete moral collapse: students no longer trust one another, they have begun to drink alcoholic beverages, smoke and lead dissolute lives.

Principal S. Giliushas forbidden Grade 8b girls to help former boarding school teacher (Mrs) R. Maciukonienė who is suffering from atherosclerosis and is bedridden, simply because (Mrs) Šironienė, who is now unemployed, visits her.

#### Vištytis

Without the knowledge of his parents, Rimas Vasiliauskas, a student at the Vištytis Middle School, was enrolled in the Pioneers. At the beginning of the 1975 school year, when the school pioneer leader (Mrs) Zina Daugėlienė learned that Vasiliauskas served at Holy Mass, she strongly berated the student and threatened that he would never receive good grades. On another occasion, the pioneer leader again scolded Rimas and, grabbing him by the hair, shouted: "You know that a Pioneer cannot attend church! I will trample you on the spot, then you won't go any more!"

When summoned, Rimas' mother warned the teacher, "Teach the children knowledge and manners and don't ever pull my child's hair again!"

## FROM THE ARCHIEVES OF THE CHRONICLE OF THE CATHOLIC CHURCH IN LITHUANIA

Priests from the Diocese of Panevėžys who were either murdered  
or who suffered in jails and Siberia

### Murdered in 1941

1. Rev. Benediktas Šveikauskas murdered in the *rayon* office in the city of Rokiškis.
2. Rev. Stasys Baltrymas murdered in Zarasai.
3. Rev. Vladas Didžiokas seized in the cathedral of Panevėžys and murdered.

Tortured and murdered in jails or Siberian camps:

1. Rev. Petras Liepa arrested in 1949, died 1955.

2. Rev. Antanas Reuba arrested in 1947, died 1951.
3. Rev. Kazys Čiplys arrested 1949.
4. Rev. Balys Beinoravičius arrested 1950.
5. Rev. Petras Margevičius arrested 1949.
6. Rev. Antanas Žakevičius arrested 1950, died 1955.

Priests who returned to Lithuania from Russian jails or Siberian camps broken in health and died:

1. Rev. Kostas Šimašis arrested in 1950, returned in 1955, died in 1955.
2. Rev. Kazys Mikelinskas arrested in 1947, returned in 1956, died in 1957.
3. Rev. Jurgis Šimonėlis arrested in 1950, returned in 1956, died in 1957.
4. Rev. Juozas Lomanas arrested in 1952, returned in 1956, died in 1959.
5. Msgr. Mykolas Karosas arrested in 1951, returned in 1954, died in 1955.
6. Canon Vladas Butvila arrested in 1950, returned in 1955, died in 1961.
7. Rev. Mykolas Juodelis arrested in 1950, returned in 1956, died in 1968.
8. Rev. Jonas Matulis arrested 1947, returned 1952, died in 1967.
9. Rev. Jonas Bubas arrested in 1951, returned in 1955, died in 1969.
10. Rev. Juozapas Matelionis arrested in 1950, returned in 1954, died in 1964.
11. Canon Petras Rauda arrested in 1947, returned in 1956, arrested in 1957 returned in 1962, died in 1974.
12. Msgr. Povilas Šidlauskas arrested in 1949, returned in 1956, died in 1973.
13. Canon Jurgis Danys arrested in 1949, returned in 1956, died in 1977.
14. Rev. Gasparas Spudas arrested in 1950, returned in 1956, died in 1960.
15. Rev. Juozas Laurenčikas arrested in 1949, returned in 1954, died in 1965.
16. Rev. dr. Juozas Čepėnas arrested in 1951, returned in 1954, died in 1976.
17. Rev. Liudas Rekašius arrested in 1947, returned in 1954, died in 1966.

18. Rev. Stasys Masilionis arrested in 1945, returned in 1955, died in 1962.

19. Rev. Mykolas Silickas arrested in 1949, returned in 1955, died in 1970.

**Priests who returned from Russian jails and Siberian camps and who in 1977 were still living:**

1. Rev. Juozas Bardonas arrested in 1947, returned in 1954.
2. Rev. Jonas Jatulis arrested in 1949, returned in 1956.
3. Rev. Jonas Juodelis arrested in 1950, returned in 1956.
4. Rev. Jonas Jurgaitis arrested in 1949, returned in 1956.
5. Rev. Antanas Juška arrested in 1949, returned in 1956.
6. Rev. Alfonsas Kadžius arrested in 1949, returned in 1957.
7. Rev. Stasys Krikštonaitis arrested in 1951, returned in 1956.
8. Rev. Petras Kuzmickas arrested in 1947, returned in 1953.
9. Rev. Anicetas Meškauskas arrested in 1949, returned in 1955.
10. Rev. Antanas Mitrikas arrested in 1949, returned in 1972.
11. Rev. Jonas Nagulevičius arrested in 1947, returned in 1952.
12. Rev. Steponas Pelešynas arrested in 1950, returned in 1957.
13. Msgr. Lepoldas Pratkelis arrested in 1950, returned in 1956.
14. Rev. Henrikas Prijelgauskas arrested in 1949, returned in 1957.
15. Rev. Izidorius Puriuškis arrested in 1949, returned in 1956.
16. Rev. Petras Senulis arrested in 1947, returned in 1955.
17. Rev. Mykolas Stonys arrested in 1947, returned in 1956.
18. Rev. Matas Šermukšnis arrested in 1949, returned in 1956.
19. Rev. Ignas Šiaučiūnas arrested in 1949, returned in 1956.
20. Rev. Jonas Buliauskas arrested in 1947, returned in 1956.
21. Rev. Leonginas Tamašauskas arrested in 1949, returned in 1956.
22. Rev. Eduardas Vaišnoras arrested in 1950, returned in 1956.
23. Rev. Titas Vikšnelis arrested in 1949, returned in 1956.

**Priests, whose rights were taken away to do pastoral work:**

1. Rev. Juozas Antanavičius 1964-1965.

2. Rev. Jonas Buliauskas 1960-1962, and in 1957 was fined 2000 roubles for teaching religion to children.
3. Rev. Mykolas Gyls 1962-1963.
4. Msgn. Kazimieras Dulksnys exiled from the Dioceses of: Merkinė and Nedingė 1959-1963.
5. Rev. Alfonsas Gražys 1962-1963.
6. Rev. Vytautas Masys 1958-1959.
7. Rev. Petras Nykštus 1965-1967.
8. Rev. Alfonsas Strelčiūnas 1962-1963.
9. Rev. Povilas Svirskis 1967-1968.
10. Rev. Juozas Šumskis 1964-1965.
11. Msgn. Povilas Šidlauskas exiled from the Diocese and died in exile, 1961-1973.
12. Rev. Sigitas Uždavinyš 1965-1966.

Parishes without priests in the Diocese of Panevėžys:

1. Baltriškės, 2. Dambava, 3. Dapčionys, 4. Eriškės, 5. Imbradai,
6. Palėvenėlė, 7. Panemunė, 8. Smilgiai, 9. Uliūnai, 10. Velykiai.

*The Chronicle of the Catholic Church in Lithuania* requests the priests of other dioceses to make similar lists.

## UNDERGROUND PUBLICATIONS

"Tiesos Kelias" (Way of Truth). In June, the 4th issue of this publication made its appearance. It deals with factual events in the lives of priests. It would be advisable for all the priests in Lithuania to read the article "What Kind of Priest I Would Like to See".

"Rūpintojėlis" (Suffering Christ). In May of 1977, the first issue of *Rūpintojėlis*, an underground publication made its appearance. In the Preface of this periodical it is stated: "We have chosen the title Rūpintojėlis, since we want this publication to symbolize all that a wayside shrine used to symbolize of the roads of Lithuania." Even though many of its readers received the magazine warmly, they would like to see more articles dealing with actual problems, especially those dealing with our youth. Of benefit also would be to increase the number of copies printed.

"Laisvės Šauklys" (The Herald of Freedom). In May of 1976, there appeared the first issue of a public newspaper of free Lithua-

nians. Up to now 6 issues of this periodical have been printed. The number of issues printed is very small. "May these pages bear witness to the unquenchable longing of our nation for freedom, about the efforts of those individuals who by almost inhuman means continue the traditions of a free people", proclaim the editors of the first issue of this publication.

*Dievas ir Tėvyne*" (God and Country). Four issues of this publication have already made their appearance. In the last issue 2 letters of Nijolė Sadūnaitė written from her exile camp and another by the Rev. Antanas Ylius were printed. The Rev. Ylius demanded that the procurator of the TSR that libelious articles and books would be removed from circulation. The following publications dealt in a libelious fashion with the Rev. A. Ylius: "You are not telling the truth, Father", "The Way Against the People", and "Class Struggle in Lithuania (1940-1951)". Thirty-two pages of *Dievas ir Tėvyne* are taken up with the article "An Inquisition of Christians and Non-Believers." This article deals factually with the inquisitions during the Middle Ages and compares them with the Godless inquisitions of Hitler's Germany, Soviet Russia, China and other socialist countries.

Lithuanian, remember the following

Petras Plumpa, Povilas Petronis, Nijolė Sadūnaitė, Sergejus Kovalev. Ona Pranskūnaitė, Vladas Lapienis, J. Matulionis bear the shackles of imprisonment so that you may freely believe and live.

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SEND YOUR TAX-EXEMPT DONATION, OR WRITE TO:

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



Places mentioned in the CHRONICLE OF THE CATHOLIC CHURCH IN LITHUANIA, No. 28