

**CHRONICLE OF THE  
CATHOLIC CHURCH  
IN LITHUANIA**

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**CHRONICLE OF THE CATHOLIC CHURCH IN  
LITHUANIA No. 75**

**A Translation of the Complete Lithuanian Original  
LIETUVOS KATALIKŲ BAŽNYČIOS KRONIKA Nr. 75  
Documenting the Struggle for Human Rights  
In Soviet-Occupied Lithuania Today**

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**Albin Kudirka**

**COVER: Bishop Vincentas Sladkevičius as Auxiliary to the Bishop of  
Kaišiadorys in 1957. From 1959 until he was permitted to return to his diocese  
as Apostolic Administrator, he lived under virtual house arrest. On May 30,  
1988, he was designated as the first known cardinal for Lithuania in modern  
times. He was presented with the red hat on June 28, 1988, in Rome.**

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**Introduction**

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

**Vincentas Borisevičius, Bishop of Telšiai, was arrested on February 3, 1946, and condemned to death after a secret trial. Before year's end, his auxiliary, Bishop Pranas Ramanauskas, was also arrested and deported to Siberia. Bishop Teofilus Matulionis of Kaišiadorys and Archbishop Mečislovas Reinys of Vilnius were deported to a Siberian labor camp. Archbishop Reinys perished in prison at Vladimir, November 8, 1953. By 1947,**

Lithuania was left with a single bishop, Kazimieras Paltarokas, of Panevėžys. He died in 1958.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Rev. Casimir Pugevičius  
Translator

**Appearing since 1972  
Read this and pass it on!**

*This issue is dedicated to Father Jonas-Kastytis Matulionis, back in Lithuania  
after three years of imprisonment in the Soviet Gulag.*

**CHRONICLE OF THE CATHOLIC CHURCH IN LITHUANIA, NO. 75**

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**Lithuania . . . . . November 1,1987**

## IS IT RESTRUCTURING OR JUST PLAIN "BRAINWASHING"?

The bishops and deans of Lithuania were summoned to the Supreme Soviet for a meeting at 11:00 A.M., September 17, 1987, with leaders of the Republic, the first meeting at such a level in post-war history. It evoked contradictory thoughts from everyone: What is it? A still more refined trick? Or the Soviet restructuring bo much in fashion among us? You be the judge-

Participating in the meeting were four bishops of Lithuania and a significant number of the deans. Invitations were not received by the exiled Bishop Julijonas Steponavičius or by Bishop Romualdas Krikščiūnas. (Bishop Steponavičius is prevented by the government from functioning as Apostolic Administrator of Vilnius, and Bishop Romualdas Krikščiūnas resigned his post in 1983. - Trans. Note) Bishop Vincentas Sladkevičius, shaken by the attacks on him from government officials September 13 in Šiluva, was ill, and so did not come to the meeting. The Administrator of the Archdiocese of Vilnius, Father Algirdas Gutauskas, was visiting Poland at the time at the instigation of the government.

The Chairman of the Presidium of the Supreme Soviet of the Lithuanian S.S.R., R. Sungaila, began the meeting with his report. For a good half hour, he gave the representatives of the Church an explanation, "of the economic and cultural achievements of the republic on the eve of the 70th anniversary of the October Socialist Revolution, about the process of restructuring going on in the republic, about ways of deciding new social questions and their perspectives." The report was boring, in the style of newspaper propaganda.

Secretary L. Šepetys, of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of Lithuania, tried to discuss questions of Church-state relations. In his words, with restructuring proceeding in the country, the possibility has arisen of implementing more fully the principle of freedom of conscience. And right here he corrected himself, saying that the state would determine the limits to which it would tolerate this freedom. The most important thing was that this freedom would not contravene state regulations. It means that the secret regulations issued by the state which are incomparably more important than Constitutional guarantees are not effected by the restructuring going on in the country.

In his speech, Šepetys praised those clergymen who "are in positions of loyalty with regard to the Socialist state and who occupy themselves with activities suitable for satisfying the requirements of believers."

He rejoiced that the celebration of the jubilee of Saint Casimir had taken place routinely enough. "Even now, in some of the churches, without breaking the law, jubilee celebrations of the 600th anniversary of the introduction of Christianity into Lithuania are taking place," said Šepetys.

In the government's opinion, they transpired best in the Cathedral of Kaunas, and in Vilnius. In other cathedrals — satisfactorily. There had been undesirable nuances: many young people, montages surveying the 600-year history of Christian Lithuania, "*Lietuva brangi*" ("Beloved Lithuania") was sung, etc. He ended his panegyric with the words: "Foreign agencies, most likely, will be annoyed that I praise loyal clergy."

Šepetys expressed regret that Vatican Radio does not support the loyal priests and sharply criticizes government officials.

The report assumed the customary well-known style of atheistic lecturers when he began, specifying "offenses" committed by priests and faithful: It was too bad that in 1986, during the religious celebration at Žemaičių Kalvarija, Father Jonas Kauneckas, Father Jonas Pakalniškis, and Father Algirdas Pakamanis spoke in their sermons about the demoralizing effect of atheism on the people of Lithuania. A similar offense was committed also in 1986 by Father Rokas Puzonas during the religious festival at Šiluva. The lecturer was especially annoyed by the annual processions of penance on the knees around the Basilica of Šiluva, which the faithful substituted for pilgrimages from Tytuvėnai to Šiluva, forbidden by the atheists. These new observances, according to Šepetys, are a demeaning of national dignity.

Central Committee Secretary Šepetys was also displeased by the fact that in several churches of Lithuania, laity spoke. At this point, he mentioned their names together with the "embellishments" so irresistible to the atheists: On May 2, 1987, in the church of Kuršėnai, the bandit Jadvyga Bieliauskienė was allowed to speak and on September 13, in the Basilica of Šiluva, Petras Gražulis, Father Antanas Gražulis' driver, a hardened anti-Soviet agitator, was allowed to speak. (Petras Gražulis, the brother of two priests, was sentenced on February 2, 1988 to ten months in labor camp. Harrassed by the government for participation in a peaceful demonstration in August, 1987, he was called to repeat military service. His objections on religious and nationalist grounds led to his subsequent arrest and trial. - Trans. Note)

Šepetys advised the deans, Father Stanislovas Ilinčius, and Father Vaclovas Grauslys, to give the matter serious thought. According to Šepetys, the believers should stop their drive for signatures and petitions to government agencies, because this is annoying to the Soviet government, and the officials are people who wish to have a peaceful and normal life.

Unease is also caused by so-called "nunny" women. The government would have nothing against them if they just prayed. But now, they interfere in Church life and what is worse, some of them - as an example he mentioned Nijolė Sadūnaitė — are even getting involved in politics, said Šepetys.

Things are no better at the seminary in Kaunas, for there, according to government figures, between two and four "new politicians" finish studies there every year. Greater accountability should be required of the pastors who

write recommendations for such candidates known for their anti-Soviet attitudes. "Who wrote recommendations for Father Antanas Gražulis, Vytautas Prajara, and Father Edmundas Atkočiūnas?" Šepetys wondered.

"What would the government like of the Catholic Church? First of all," Šepetys said to those assembled, "To avoid confrontation in Church-state relations, to support the Peace Fund more strongly - the saddest situation in this matter is in the Dioceses of Kaišaidorys and Telšiai, the best in the Archdiocese of Vilnius — but even it is surpassed by the Orthodox of Vilnius."

In his speech, Šepetys promised that the *Regulations for Religious Associations* might in the future be made more democratic, that the Church of the Queen of Peace in Klaipėda would be returned, that permits would be given to repair some of the other churches. In the hospitals, priests are allowed to minister to seriously ill patients and lately, priests are not being penalized even for having children serve at Mass or participate in processions. So, there have been a "limitless" number of changes and freedoms.

As always and everywhere, Šepetys did not forget to name all the good which the government is doing the Church, beginning with permission to print a limited number of prayerbooks, and ending with allotments for automobiles to the dioceses.

Finally, in the form of questions which the newspapers later called a "frank exchange of opinions", the bishops and deans were allowed to speak.

The first speaker was Dean Vincas Jalinskas of Lazdijai, who brought up the question of young men not admitted to the seminary by the government. "Would it not be possible to settle the question of candidates to the seminary without the interference of the Office of the Commissioner for Religious Affairs?" Father Jalinskas asked.

Šepetys mentioned that there is still much bureaucracy, even in the office of Petras Anilionis. At that point, Anilionis retorted that any other way is impossible because even though there is a screening, such candidates as Edmundas Atkočiūnas, Antanas Gražulis, Vytautas Prajara and others like them get into the seminary.

The Dean of Tauragė, Petras Puzaras, asked why temperance brotherhoods were not allowed to be established in association with the churches. The answer was that this would be a splintering of temperance work, so that is why it is not allowed.

Dean Zenonas Navickas of Saldutiškis spoke quite extensively. He noted that this meeting, like others of a similar nature, were monologues: Essentially, there was no interest in the opinions and wishes of the participants, that the *Regulations for Religious Associations*, once again mentioned in the report, nullify the freedom of conscience guaranteed by the Constitution, that it is impossible to keep them without transgressing a priest's conscience, that the time had come to re-evaluate those regulations from positions which would

be in keeping with equality of all citizens, among them believers, before the law; that the press not be allowed to attack religion or crudely and with accusations made up of whole cloth to libel priests and faithful.

As an example, he indicated the article by V. Balkevičius, published in *The Soviet Woman*, concerning Mary, the Mother of God; those of Jurginis and Lauraitis about Saint Casimir and Blessed Jurgis Matulaitis; attacks in *The Soviet Woman* against Father Eugenijus Bartulis, pastor of the parish of Deltuva, and those in the *Rayon* newspaper against himself. Father Navickas tried to find out on the basis of what specific law or regulation were Father Rokus Puzonas, Robertas Grigas and Nijolė Sadūnaitė kidnapped by the KGB and terrorized.

He demanded that the unfounded accusations and attacks against the bishops be finally stopped. For example, the way the Vice Chairman of the *Rayon* Executive Committee, together with the inspector from the Office of the Commissioner for Religious Affairs, attacked in the presence of other priests and servers, Bishop Vincentas Sladkevičius, as he was coming out to offer Mass, with threats that "If he did not straighten out the affair of Father Rokas Puzonas, it would be necessary to look for another administrator of the diocese."

Except for deviousness, these questions received no answers. The government regulations, in the thinking of government officials, are good; they may even be improved. Concerning any terrorizing of priests or faithful, they had heard nothing, and did not believe it; according to them, no higher officials could have driven the priests and other persons around all night. Unable to provide any answers, they promised that they would try to investigate the incident in Deltuva. On the whole, Šepetys did not know what Father Bartulis had done wrong.

(The press reported that during the meeting Father Navickas had "repeated utterly untrue reports from radio 'voices' (foreign radio services — Trans. Note) concerning alleged government brutality against certain extremist clergy and parishioners". - *Gimtasīs Kraštas (Native Land)*, October 7-14, 1987.)

When the Dean of Skuodas, Father Petras Palšis, asked why the government keeps delaying the registration of the church committee in Klaipėda, which could take over the church being returned and begin the work of remodelling, the question was left unanswered. True, there was the beginning of a response that everything would take care of itself, but it remained unclear how.

The Dean of Panevėžys, Father Juozas Antanavičius, urged that the KGB stop troubling candidates for the seminary, forcing seminarians to be hypocrites and to stop coercing them to insulate themselves to all authority. Father Antanavičius gave a number of specific examples of how the children of

believing parents are persecuted and spiritually traumatized, so that intimidated by their teachers, they are afraid even to enter the churchyard.

"There's no need for schoolchildren to visit the churchyard." answered the government official, "and anyhow, the priests, seminarian\* and seminary authorities themselves are to blame."

It seemed that the customary "brainwashing" should have ended there. However, with the country in the process of restructuring, mere brainwashing does not suffice. Shortly thereafter, in republic newspapers, *Tiesa*, September 18, *Gimtasis Kraštas*, October 7-14, and somewhat later in the *Peasants' Newspaper*, articles and news items appeared describing the aforesaid meeting, obviously with the appropriate elipses, exaggerations and even blatant distortions.

To: The Lithuanian S.S.R. Telegraph Agency

Copies to: The Bishops and Administrators of Dioceses

We, the undersigned, summoned to the offices of the Presidium of the Supreme Soviet of the L.S.S.R. for a meeting, went in all good will thinking that we might speak about questions of concern to us regarding Church-state relations. We were surprised to see how the mass media reported this meeting.

The media indicated that government officials, priests and bishops spoke. As a matter of fact, only Chairman R. Songaila of the Presidium of the Supreme Soviet of the L.S.S.R. and the Chairman of the Supreme Soviet of the L.S.S.R., Secretary L. Šepetyš of the Communist Party of Lithuania, spoke.

When questions were allowed, a number of priests and a bishop submitted questions. In their questions, they touched sore spots in Church-state relations. How is one to understand such reports as the one that Bishop Antanas Vaičius, seminary Rector Vytautas Butkus and Dean Petras Palšis (written in the newspaper as "Paisys") agreed with ideas brought up at the meeting, when in reality, everyone simply raised questions of concern to them and to the Church of Lithuania.

On September 18, *Tiesa* published a report by ELTA that Bishop Antanas Vaičius, seminary Rector Butkus and Dean Palšis expressed gratitude "for the conditions necessary to carry out religious ceremonies". There was no such expression of thanks. Is it necessary to express gratitude for rights guaranteed by law? By such an expression, one is given to understand that believers receive the right to religious services only as a special favor from our leaders. This apparently is how the reporters themselves understood it since later, this phrase no longer appeared in the *Peasants' Newspaper*. Meetings of such importance should be reported objectively and truthfully.

Telšiai, September 20, 1987

**Bishop Antanas Vaičius**  
**Deans of the Diocese of Telšiai, Fathers:**  
**Bernardas Talaišis**  
**Bronius Burneikis**  
**Jonas Gedvila**  
**Petras Puzaras**  
**Kazimieras Gaščiūnas**  
**Juozas Pačinskas**  
**Petras Palšis**  
**Jonas Bučinskas**

**THANK YOU!**

**To: The Esteemed Mrs. Coretta King**

Sincere Christian thanks to you who, continuing the work of your honorable husband, that great champion of human rights, Martin Luther King, Jr., support Father Alfonsas Svarinskas, a son of our Christian homeland, who is wearing the shackles of imprisonment for that same sacred cause of human rights. By way of thanking you, we are resolved to support you with our prayers. We ask Almighty God to bless you, your family and the cause you defend.

**The Faithful of Lithuania**

**We Thank Him for His Sacrifice**

On October 17, 1987, after serving a three-year sentence in the prison of Novoorlovsk (Region of Chita), Father Jonas-Kaštytis Matulionis returned to Lithuania.

Father Matulionis was arrested November 9, 19ūc, for visiting the cemetery in procession, together with the faithful, on the eve of All Souls' and praying there in public. On June 18, 1985 (under amnesty), he was released from Anachovo Camp (Region of Smolensk). On June 26, two KGB agents presented themselves at the apartment of Father Matulionis, and saying that they would like to talk, took the priest out. It later became clear that Father Matulionis had been re-arrested and without benefit of trial, taken to the Novoorlovsk Camp to finish his sentence.

They took Father Matulionis away from Vilnius July 4, by prison transport. Smol Voronezh, Chelyabinsk, Irkutsk and Chita prisons followed, until on the morning of September 8, he was brought to No 1986, the Commissioner for Political Affairs suggested that Father Matulionis write a petition for early release. Father Matulionis refused to write.

On December 10, 1986, an administrative commission demanded that he acknowledge his guilt. The priest categorically refused, and as a result, the persecution and ridicule by camp staff and even prisoners escalated. The amnesty proclaimed June 18, 1987, began to be implemented at the Novoorlovsk Camp at the end of August.

On September 2, Father Matulionis was summoned before an administrative commission consisting of: Camp Director Badmazhapov, his Assistant for Political Affairs Fedor, and Special Section Chief Shevchenko. Camp Director Badmazhapov asked whether the prisoner admitted his guilt and whether he admitted that the court sentenced him justly. Father Matulionis stated that he did not consider himself guilty; by the same token, it was the court which acted unjustly.

That same evening, one of the prison staff conveyed to him the political chiefs "instruction" to speak differently to the procurator; he made a statement to the camp director, in which he wrote, that he did not admit any guilt and did not intend to reform. In the statement, he explained, with arguments, that he does not believe in the decisions of administrative commissions or their power, since by decision of the administrative committee of June 1985, which consisted of more than fifteen persons, among them the procurator, he was released from Anachovo Camp, but on June 26, he was again apprehended and against the law — without trial — he was brought to Novoorlovsk.

In order that events not repeat themselves and, with a month of the sentence remaining, to avoid being brought by exhausting prison transport to finish serving his sentence, Father Matulionis refused the amnesty, especially since the aforesaid "amnesty" requires those released to admit guilt. He asked to remain in camp until the end of his sentence.

On September 25, a meeting of the administrative commission took place with the procurator participating. To the surprise of the camp administration, Father Matulionis again did not acknowledge any guilt, but presented the procurator with a copy of the aforesaid declaration. It is unique for a prisoner to refuse amnesty, said the camp staff. The procurator took the file of Father Matulionis, with the notation "for review", to Chita.

On October 14, another session of the administrative committee took place. Father Matulionis was not invited to it. In the evening, he was informed that the procurator had signed the amnesty. On October 15, Father Matulionis was released.

The morning of October 17, Father Matulionis, thanking the Lord for the path assigned to him, offered Mass in the Chapel of the Gates of Dawn.

On the evening of October 23, the people of Kybartai met Father Matulionis at the railroad station in Kybartai. Over one hundred people gathered to meet the returning priest-prisoner, including many children and quite a few teenagers. From the railroad station, the faithful escorted the priest

to church. Father Matulionis fell to his knees before the main doors of the church and prayed for a while in silence, while those who had accompanied the priest to the churchyard sang *Marija, Marija*. Father Matulionis thanked everyone for their prayers and blessed them. KGB officers and militia did not interfere in the reunion directly; they kept their distance.

On Sunday, October 25, the people of Kybartai and faithful -- mostly youth — from various corners of Lithuania: Kėdainiai, Zarasai, Vilkaviškis, Kaunas, Vilnius, Garliava, Šeštokai, Marijampolė and elsewhere, greeted Father Matulionis in church. All of them thanked him for his sacrifice, the example of loyalty to Church and country which he had given, and apologized for those fellow countrymen who, out of fear or the desire for advancement, had been afraid to defend him and others innocently sentenced, by their signature or word.

Father Matulionis recalled the priests still in prison, Fathers Sigitas Tamkevičius and Alfonsas Svarinskas, and all those persecuted for the truth. He sincerely thanked them for their prayers and letters which used to reach him in the far-away camp in Transbaikal. He thanked everyone: those in the homeland and those living abroad — U.S. Congressmen who have concerned themselves and do concern themselves with the fate of those under sentence.

Finishing his brief talk, Father Matulionis promised that in prayer, and the sacrifice of the Mass, he would continue to remember those who in one way or another help and support those innocently imprisoned.

#### ECHOES OF THE CELEBRATION

Several months have passed since some unusual events for the Church of Lithuania: the principal celebrations of the 600-year jubilee of the Baptism of Lithuania and the proclamation of Archbishop Jurgis Matulaitis as Blessed. With the passage of time, the thoughts of many return to the celebration, once again experiencing the holiday spirits and recalling those things which dimmed the joy of the aforesaid celebration.

The faithful of Lithuania had hoped that the Soviet government would allow our Holy Father, John Paul II, to come to the jubilee celebration, at least for a brief visit. However, the government acknowledges this right — of inviting the Pope to a jubilee — to the Russian Orthodox Church alone; in their day the latter took advantage of the Czar's favor. The Soviet government, it appears, continues the old traditions of the Russian Empire. Of all the religions in the Soviet Union, the Russian Orthodox Church is exceptionally privileged!

This tendency is quite apparent also in the "gift" of the Soviet government to the jubilee of the baptism of Lithuania - the publication titled *The Church in Lithuania*, published by *Minds Publishers*. When the Bishops' Con-

ference of Lithuania refused churches in Lithuania without including a picture of the main church in Lithuania, the Cathedral of Vilnius (converted into an art gallery), the government itself took on the editing and publication of this book.

Preparation of the album was turned over to the well-known KGB agent "concerning himself with" Lithuanians overseas, V. Kazakevičius and Lithuanian Communist Party Central Committee Lector, J. Sakalauskas, assisting regional newspapers with articles full of uninhibited and naive atheistic propaganda.

Let us turn attention to the title, *The Church in Lithuania*, (not churches or religions in Lithuania, but Church). Included are not only photographs of shrines of the Lithuanian Catholic Church, but also Russian Orthodox churches, Jewish synagogues and Islamic mosques. And everything is encompassed by the title *Die Church in Lithuania*.

In the future, it remains only to acknowledge the leading role in that "church", already "united" by the atheists, as belonging to the most loyal Orthodox Church, which allocates the most money to the Peace Fund, and the influence of the Pope of Rome, so unacceptable to the atheists, will be finished.

This publication is not the only example confirming that the guardians of Soviet "freedom of religious cults" have not stopped dreaming about that. It was also only the Russian Orthodox Church which was allowed to invite the Cardinal of the Philippines to Lithuania.

During the Easter holidays this year, on Holy Saturday, a delegation of four seminarians from the seminary in Kaunas, headed by fourth-classman Alionidas Budrius, was officially allowed to attend the Orthodox Easter Vigil. Such visits do not take place without the consent of the atheistic government. Is it fitting to send as yet unformed seminarians, who have not yet studied thoroughly the basics of their own theology, to ecumenical meetings, especially since none of the older priests or seminary instructors participated in that delegation? Will seminarians "shaped" in the course of such visits, upon becoming priests, not take it upon themselves to bring the master plan of the Soviet atheists to fruition - the inclusion of the Catholics of Lithuania under the administration of the Russian Church? Historical experience has been too painful for Lithuania, for its lessons to be ignored.

On May 24, 1987, the jubilee of the Baptism of Lithuania was commemorated in the Archcathedral Basilica of Kaunas. The impression was quite poor. True, Holy Mass was concelebrated by several bishops, and Bishop Antanas Vaičius preached. However, no jubilee decorations were to be seen in the basilica. The faithful had hoped that on the occasion of the jubilee festivities, they would be able to visit the tombs of those great figures in the history of the nation and the Church: Bishops Motiejus Valančius and Pranciškus Karevičius and Msgr. Maironis... It was promised but apparently a call from the "appropriate" agencies... and an extra lock was put on the doors of the crypt for the

jubilee, so that it really would not be possible for "mischievous extremists" to get near the graves of our national heroes. Only a small group of teenagers sang "*Lietuva Brangi*" ("Beloved Lithuania", written by Maironis) at Maironis' tomb and placed flowers there; they attached a palm branch to the doors of the great Bishop Valančius' crypt, which zealous "guardians of order" quickly broke up and discarded.

During the jubilee services, many people could not get into the cathedral. They stood outside, but they could see or hear nothing — there were no loudspeakers in the churchyard. The city government would not give, and perhaps no one seriously asked for, permission for a solemn jubilee procession around the outside of the cathedral. Only the procession at Easter is allowed. However, such a jubilee occurs only once in a hundred years, and on its account, the Soviet government really would not have collapsed!

Processions in the churches of Lithuania are an inseparable part of the traditions of all celebrations. During the difficult times of the Czarist oppression, such processions took place in the Archcathedral of Kaunas at the beginning and the end of 1900, when the nineteenth centennial of the Birth of Christ was celebrated. So the times are more difficult today for the faithful of Lithuania than the times of the Lithuanian press ban and the massacre of Kražiai.

On June 28, jubilee solemnities took place in Vilnius. It was well that a timely word was said by him who is despised by the government and labled extremist and disruptor, the exiled bishop, Julijonas Steponavičius. As a result, the jubilee was celebrated not only in the Church of SS. Peter and Paul, but in six churches. It is not difficult to imagine what a "holiday" mood there would have been with the rain pouring down and the crowd standing out in the dirt of the excavated churchyard which has still not been put in order. The faithful also missed jubilee decorations.

The Church of SS. Peter and Paul in Šiauliai succeeded in erecting an impressive memorial on the occasion of the jubilee, while the church of the same title in Vilnius erected only a poor, simple cross in its churchyard. *Akiračiai (Horizons)*, the Lithuanian-American liberal magazine and *Gimtasis Kraštas (Native Land)*, praised the pastor, Father Vaičekonis, for being able to "get out of the government much for the benefit of the Church."

This time, apparently, they were not successful in "getting" either paving stones for the surface of the churchyard or permission for a more imposing memorial. Hence, it was not fitting to begin the jubilee services with a tribute to Chairman Konstantin Kharchev of the Council for Religious Affairs in Moscow and his deputy in Lithuania, Petras Anilionis, with whose help, the Church of Lithuania is restricted in every way.

After the jubilee services, a knot of young people wanted to place flowers at the tomb of one of those responsible for the Baptism of Lithuania - Vytautas the Great - in the Cathedral of Vilnius. When they arrived at the

closed doors of the Vilnius Cathedral, the Cradle of Lithuanian Christianity, a sign had been hung on the door in anticipation: "due to technical difficulties". The youngsters were watched by civilians, among whom KGB agent Reinys was recognized. Shortly, a man and a woman with angry countenances approached the little group. The woman, introducing herself as a representative of the city government, demanded that they withdraw from Gediminas Square because allegedly by gathering there, they were interfering with some sort of unknown song festival. To the question why some citizens are allowed to stand around in Gediminas Square and others are forbidden, a civilian replied, "Get out of here before I call the patrol, and they take you out".

The group of youngsters now before the closed church doors prayed in silence while behind them, the uneasy security agents mumbled, "Go to some house of prayer!"

Three white flowers were left tucked in the doorway of the cathedral. The group of youngsters went off down Gorky Street to the closed Church of Saint Casimir where a militia car caught up with them. Hanging on the door of the closed church (a Museum of Atheism) was a notice that the museum was "Closed today due to technical difficulties".

Photographs of the young people praying before the cathedral were presented to the seminary in Kaunas, so that the seminary administration would not dare to admit a single one of them. This year, once more, applicants Gintas Sakavičius of Kapčiamiestis and Saulius Kelpšas of Garliava were not accepted into the seminary. The administration, intimidated by the KGB, would not even accept Kelpšas' records.

On July 8, 1987, the commemoration of the Baptism of Lithuania took place at Žemaičių Kalvarija. Participating were four bishops: Julijonas Steponavičius, Vincentas Sladkevičius, Juozas Preikšas and a guest from Latvia, the exiled Bishop Dulbinskis, this year celebrating the fortieth anniversary of his episcopate. The sermon was preached by His Excellency, Bishop Vincentas Sladkevičius, who spoke of the significance of Christianity for Lithuania. The bishop responded to suggestions by the atheists in the press that accepting Orthodox Christianity from Moscow would have been "more useful" than Roman Catholic Christianity from the Poles. If this had happened, we would today most likely no longer be speaking Lithuanian.

His Excellency, Bishop Juozas Preikšas, presided over the procession of the Passion of Christ to the hills. During the procession, the pastor of Skaudvilė, Father Jonas Kauneckas, gave three sermons extolling the importance of the cross in the life of the Lithuanian Catholic and the steadfastness of the Lowlanders, defending and maintaining the Catholic Faith received six hundred years previously, mentioning the spiritual emptiness which the atheism forced on the souls of contemporary youth creates today.

The services were taped by state television. The militia and the traffic patrol this year were less obtrusive and more courteous at Žemaičių Kalvarija.

When His Excellency Bishop Antanas Vaičius returned from Rome, Commissioner Petras Anilionis threatened to summon the Deans of the Diocese of Telšiai to the chancery and warn them about "offenses" during the festival at Kalvarija. The Commissioner was particularly annoyed by the sermons delivered by Father Kauneckas and the old national anthem sung after the procession around the hills on Priests' Wednesday.

The beatification of Archbishop Jurgis Matulaitis was the fulfillment of a long-standing hope of the Catholic Church in Lithuania, and of the Lithuanian nation. Pope John Paul II proclaimed its fulfillment to the whole world on June 28, 1987. To have our own intercessor and intermediary at the Throne of God is a special spiritual treasure. It is a joyous experience to have our nation's newly beatified looking at us not from pages covered with the dust of ages, nor from remote recollections in legends and tradition. He lived and worked, we might say, in our days. The steps in his noble and meaningful life, his steady and self-sacrificing rise to the honors of the altar, were observed by no small number of witnesses still living. The personality of Jurgis Matulaitis aroused and continues to arouse great wonder and admiration. Alas, not in all!

On June 30, 1987, an article by J. Sakalauskas entitled, "What Does the Vatican Bless?", was printed in the Kaunas *Tiesa*. The author of the article, asking on the basis of what merits the archbishop was beatified responds: "In proclaiming saints and blessed in all ages, it was first of all their devoutness which is revered combined with their asceticism, their renunciation of earthly life. Later, with the development of culture, when people agreed to be no longer impressed with such manifestations of religiosity, they began to look for more popular merits for those chosen."

According to Sakalauskas, the Vatican dared to beatify Joan of Arc and canonize Maximilian Kolbe and finally, "after lengthy inquiries", to choose Archbishop Jurgis Matulaitis.

Sakalauskas can not understand this choice at all. Since Archbishop Matulaitis "zealously adopted the clerical sociology based on Pope Leo XIII's *Renim Novarum*, gathered workers into Christian societies and organized a Catholic students' movement."

In Vilnius, under the government of Vincas Kapsukas, (early Lithuanian Communist - Trans. Note) although he did not mention the Bolsheviks by name, Matulaitis spoke of their vices and deceptions. Moreover, surely not without Bishop Matulaitis's knowledge, several public attacks by the clericals took place in Vilnius against the Soviet government. "Really, how did a Catholic priest dare to get involved in such activities? If he had studied Marxist-Leninist philosophy, assembled the workers of Communist organizations, edited the Communist newspaper, extolled the achievements of the Bolshevik

nation and subordinated the Church to the interests of the state (like the Orthodox), today he could boast the title of *A Hero of Socialist Work*."

The Communist Youth edition of *Tiesa* (*Komjaunimo tiesa*), for June 19, discusses this question even more "scientifically" in the article, "Whence Saints and Why?", by Docent J. Stankaitis of the Pedagogical Institute of Vilnius. Stankaitis calls this Archbishop Matulaitis's qualities of moderation in the use of this world's goods: asceticism, patience, obedience, forgiveness of enemies "objectively irreconcilable with human dignity, socially reactionary and injurious characteristics". (What lofty philosophical terminology!)

Stankaitis claims that the Vatican canonizes saints according to various political and diplomatic circumstances. This, the author of the article maintains, is the way we got Saint Ignatius Loyola, Saint Casimir, about one hundred American Saints (sic), missionaries to Africa, China and Uganda, and even Maximilian Kolbe (a routine atheistic paradox - to condemn facism and vilify its victims).

The most "reactionary" political significance is attached to the beatification of Archbishop Jurgis Matulaitis, Stankaitis rails, since how could such a "bitter servant of reaction, opponent of the revolutionary struggle, founder of anti-Socialist movements, clerical anti-Communist and even an intermediary between facism and the Church be raised to the honors of the altar?"

Worse offenses would be difficult to imagine, unless it were the "excavation of a tunnel from Bombay to London" (as in Abuladze's film, *Repentance*).

In reality, the person of Archbishop Jurgis Matulaitis can arouse positive or negative reactions: positive for those whose own behavior has been marked and is marked with wisdom, and a controversial one when the evaluators themselves lack tact, wisdom or justice. Many of his contemporaries were impressed with Archbishop Jurgis Matulaitis' wisdom, justice and spirit of brotherhood. "He had to carry the burdens of all and to take them to the Most High so that those left behind might have it easier," wrote Vaižgantas.

His life was based on love of neighbor, and in national matters - on truth and justice. Appointed as Bishop of Vilnius, he said: "I am prepared to serve everyone on an equal basis. Christ died for all nations, for all social classes, tendencies and views. Hence, it is my duty also to serve everyone, especially the people, from among whom I have been taken and to whom I have been assigned. My field is the Kingdom of Christ, my party is Christ!"

If it is possible to call his treatment of his neighbor perfect, then his treatment of his enemies can be called heroic. And enemies he did have, at all times, and many, although even the worst of them could not accuse him of much, especially of vengefulness: "We must rejoice and praise God that we are worthy to suffer for His name and for the Church," the Archbishop said more than once.



*Believers honor Matulaitis beatification in Marijampolė.*

In the words of Vaižgantas, "In every person, the student, the criminal, or the enemy, he first of all sought 'nuggets' of goodness."

The archbishop himself wrote that, "It would be easier in the eyes of God to justify too much leniency rather than too much strictness."

Father Stasys Yla has said, "Archbishop Matulaitis lived and worked for two realities -- the Church and the nation."

He sought that all his energies be dedicated to the good of the Church and to its growth. Love of country and nation is obligatory for every Christian; it is a natural law which Christ Himself confirmed by His example. Archbishop Matulaitis was guided by the motto, "To stand to and be dedicated to sacrifice".

He wished the same for all his countrymen: to live by unshaken Faith, in union with God, renouncing self, dedicated to the honor and glory of God, and service and the love of neighbor, energetically and boldly to defend God and the Church, and constantly to perfect one's interior life.

These are the qualities and guidelines characteristic of holiness which have taken Archbishop Jurgis Matulaitis to the honors of the altar. It is a noble and honorable road, which brought the archbishop to the Throne of God. This was the road of the saint, sometimes appearing hopeless, but promising much.

On July 12, 1987, in the church of Marijampolė, ceremonies in connection with the beatification of Archbishop Matulaitis took place. Almost three

days before the ceremonies, a retreat was conducted in church. The retreat was conducted by the Dean of Šakiai, Father Juozas Žemaitis. Saturday evening, Bishop Preikšas blessed the newly appointed chapel of Blessed Jurgis Matulaitis and on that occasion, preached an appropriate sermon.

On Sunday, the principal Mass was concelebrated by all the bishops of Lithuania and about eighty priests. The sermon was preached by Bishop Antanas Vaičius. The bishop shared with the faithful his impressions from the solemnities commemorating the Baptism of Lithuania and the beatification of the Blessed Jurgis Matulaitis in Rome and conveyed the Holy Father's exhortation to pay particular attention to religious education of children and youth.

Crowds of people flocked to the services starting the evening before. During the principal services, the crowd overflowed not only the church and churchyard, but the streets in the vicinity were also filled with worshippers. Only it was regrettable that a large part of the worshippers did not have the opportunity to go to Confession. Confessions were heard only in church. At the end of the services, the visiting priests hurried off to their parishes, so that the most determined individuals who got into church after services had to wait in line at the confessionals into evening.

In preparation for the solemnities, the pastor, Father Leščinskas, was warned by the "appropriate organs" that the services should in no way be different than for customary religious festivals. However, it was impossible to satisfy this wish of the atheists; all of Lithuania felt a holiday euphoria.

There were various interferences. For example, before the solemnities, the pastor of the parish, Father Leščinskas, agreed to have young people or just groups of worshippers pray and sing in organized fashion at the tomb of the Blessed Archbishop Jurgis Matulaitis all three days of the solemnities from after the principal Mass until evening prayers.

When the date of the solemnities arrived, loud organ music resounded in church every afternoon, performed by the emeritus Father Gracijus Sakalauskas. It was impossible to carry out the planned programs. The cathedral choir which had come specially from Telšiai was not allowed to sing the Way of the Cross around the hills at the agreed-upon time. Only Saturday evening, at the intervention of the priests, that possibility was granted. Any suggestions concerning the decoration of the church or the variation of the services met with the response from the pastor, intimidated by the atheists, "Over my dead body!"

Nevertheless, the celebration left an indelible impression and strengthened the Lithuanian nation's ties to the Catholic Faith it has cherished for six hundred years.

After the services, the faithful would not leave the church or churchyard for a long time. Gathered in groups, they prayed, sang hymns and folk songs and read verses specially dedicated to the jubilee and Blessed Jurgis Matulaitis.

## AN APPEAL TO ALL PEOPLE OF GOOD-WILL, WORLD-WIDE

In the history of mankind, there have been many international treaties. Some of them have been honorable, opening the road to peace and independent life for nations; others were dishonorable, helping to incite war and suppress the freedom of other nations. We will probably not find a more dishonorable or deceitful compact in history than that between Stalin and Hitler which brought mankind to its most terrible catastrophe, World War II, which exacted millions of innocent victims.

By secret supplementary protocols to the Molotov-Ribbentrop Pact of August 23, 1939, Stalin's Soviet Union and Hitler's Germany, trampling on international law, bilaterally blessed one another's imperialist aims, coordinated their up-coming actions and drew the boundaries for carrying out the seizure of the independent countries of Central Europe.

In this way the Soviet Union, which considered and still considers the free self-determination of nations as its propaganda vehicle, and which was the first country in the world to recognize the independence of the Baltic States in 1920, repudiated its international obligations and in 1939, occupied part of Poland and in 1940, part of Finland, all of Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania and part of Roumania.

During the very first year of the occupation, mass arrests and deportations to Siberia began. The Baltic nations will never forget the deportation of their people carried out by the occupying power, June 14, 1941, which was tantamount to genocide. That day, about 40,000 people were taken away from Lithuania alone.

As paradoxical as it might seem, the destruction of the nation was held up by the war which broke out between the Soviet Union and Germany. The land of Lithuania was mercilessly trampled by the Red and the Brown Shirt reorganizers of the world. The occupation by Hitler exacted the blood of many innocent Lithuanians. However, in the number of its victims, it did not come near equalling that of the Stalinist occupation.

After the victory against Hitler, Stalin resumed the genocide of the Baltic nations. The prisons could not hold all those rounded up. Thousands of families, including even children and the seriously ill, were hauled off to Siberia in cattle cars. Some of them, unable to withstand the unsanitary conditions, died on the way. Others died of cold, hunger, and overwork in exile in the *katorga*, while those who survived returned many years later physically weakened or as invalids.

In those days, the Lithuanian nation, for reasons of self defense, engaged in the one-sided war imposed on it, not so much for the restoration of its national independence (although the thirst for independence was not diminished), as for the right and possibility for a person to retain his humanity.

The Stalinist occupational government presented the Lithuanians with just two alternatives: dehumanization or a struggle to the death. The odds were uneven. So Lithuania, bathed in blood, called for help from other countries. But it called in vain.

For the leaders of most states, overcome by their temporary victories and the thirst for peace, were deaf to our cries themselves and prevented that cry from being heard by the people in their countries. The Soviet occupational government therefore called the participants in the resistance and continues to call them "sell-outs" to foreign intelligence.

The death of Stalin put an end to the mass arrests and deportations. However, later Soviet governments also did not have the good will to condemn the Stalin-Hitler Pact of 1939, and to nullify its results. On the contrary, they continue to call the armed resistance of the Lithuanian nation of those days banditry and the attempt of any person to disobey the regime - a defection to imperialism and to foreign intelligence services.

The wounds inflicted on the Lithuanian nation by the Molotov-Ribbentrop Pact, with its secret supplementary protocols, never healed. Hence, on August 23, 1979, on the fortieth anniversary of the signing of the Molotov-Ribbentrop Pact, a group of Baitis appealed to the governments of the Soviet Union, the German Federal Republic and the German Democratic Republic, to the governments of the countries which had signed the Atlantic Charter and to the General Secretary of the United Nations with the request to acknowledge that shameful pact as invalid and to abolish its results: to restore to the Estonians, Latvians and Lithuanians the right of free self-determination.

The request was not granted and many Baitis who had signed the petition suffered from the KGB for "libelling the Soviet Union" and for "the distortion of history". For the Soviet government claims to this day that the Baltic nations, in 1940, chose the Soviet government in free elections and joined the Soviet Union of their own volition. But this claim is a boldfaced lie since the elections in question took place after the Soviet Army had occupied the Baltic States, and international law states that it is impossible to exercise the right of national self-determination while an army of occupation is deployed within a nation's territory.

Lenin declares the same thing in his *Peace Decree*: "If a nation is not granted the right in free elections, without the slightest coercion to determine the form of its government after the withdrawal of the army of the annexing or generally more powerful state, its union constitutes forcible annexation."

Life does not stand still. In the Soviet Union, ever bolder voices are heard demanding that the policy of openness be not just proclaimed, as it is now, but implemented in reality - bringing the whole truth to light. Perhaps it will finally be understood that in the world peace and democracy are inseparable;

where there is no democracy, there is no freedom, and without freedom, there is no peace.

However, the forces obstructing the process of democratization in the Soviet Union are still very strong. Here are a few examples to confirm that fact:

— Our noblest priests, Alfonsas Svarinskas, Sigitas Tamkevičius and Jonas-Kaštytis Matulionis are still prisoners (Father Matulionis has been released since this was written. — Trans. Note).

— The Lithuanian patriots Viktoras Petkus, Balys Gajauskas (who has already served thirty-five years), Gintautas Iešmantas and Povilas Pečeliūnas are still being tormented in exile (Pečeliūna has been released since this document appeared. — Trans. Note).

— Bishop Julijonas Steponavičius is still prevented from performing his duties as a bishop.

— Raids are still being carried out at the homes of individuals suspected by the KGB of involvement in the publication of the *Chronicle of the Catholic Church in Lithuania*.

— In the Soviet Union, so relentlessly tracking war criminals hiding somewhere in the West, not a finger has been raised to punish or at least expose a single one of those many sadists, who organized and carried out mass killings and torture of innocent people during the Stalin era, and who still live here, even enjoying privileges.

— In connection with the August 23 commemoration in Vilnius, Riga, and Tallinn of the victims of Stalinism and Hitlerism, a flood of threadbare lies and slanders has been poured out in the Soviet press, on radio and television, aimed at that commemoration and its participants (e.g., Nijolė Sadūnaitė, who has an official twenty-year work contract, is said never to have worked, etc.).

KGB agents continue to use terror and violence, for example, August 28-29, 1987, Robertas Grigas and Father Rokas Puzonas were beaten; Nijolė Sadūnaitė was driven around in an automobile without license plates for thirty hours. All three were threatened with violence.

These and a host of similar examples show that lies and force have sunk their roots in the Soviet Union very deeply, that much effort will still be required not only of Soviet citizens, but also of the people in lands throughout the world, in order for openness and democracy to win out.

Hence we turn to people of good will of all nations of the world requesting:

— Do not hesitate in the face of injustice and the suffering of others!

— Publicize the plight of the Baltic nations with all the means of information at your disposal.

— Petition your governments to take up the question of the incorporation of the Baltic States by force into the Soviet Union for consideration in the next session of the UN General Assembly.

- Ask that the right of free self-determination be restored to the citizens of those states.

May God aid your endeavors!

Father Juozapas Razmantas (Žalpiai)  
Father Jonas Kauneckas (Skaudvilė)  
Father Vaclovas Stakėnas (Krokialaukis)  
Father Jonas Danyla (Bijutiškis)  
Father Antanas Gražulis (Alytus)  
Father Leonas Kalinauskas (Josvainiai)  
Father Kazimieras Gražulis (Šiauliai)  
Father Vytautas Prajara (Garliava)  
Father Petras Kastytis Krikščiukaitis (Čiobiškis)  
Father Rokas Puzonas (Kiaukliai)  
Docent Vytautas Skuodis (Member of the Catholic Committee for the  
Defense of Believers' Rights - Vilnius)  
Liudas Simutis (Kaunas)  
Nijolė Sadūnaitė (Vilnius)  
Liudas Dambrauskas (Kaunas)  
Vytautas Vaičiūnas (Kaunas)  
Robertas Grigas (Kiaukliai)  
Kazimieras Kryževičius (Kaunas)  
Jonas and Jadvyga Petkevičius (Šiauliai)  
Vidas Abraitis (Kaunas)  
Petras Gražulis (Sasnavą)  
Saulius Kelpšas (Garliava)  
Bronė Valaitytė (Sasnavą)  
Aldona Raižytė (Garliava)

1987

#### PETITIONS AND PROTESTS

To: Mikhail Gorbachev, General Secretary of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union

Copies to: Bishops of Lithuania

From: Priests and Faithful of Lithuania

#### A Petition

Twenty-six years ago, the Apostolic Administrator of the Archdiocese of Vilnius, Bishop Julijonas Steponavičius, was exiled from Vilnius by order of

organs of the Soviet government and forcefully settled outside the boundaries of the archdiocese in Žagarė. The bishop was punished for adhering to *Canon Law*, refusing to ordain unsuitable candidates to the priesthood and refusing to forbid priests to carry out one of their most important duties, that of teaching catechism to children; remove minors from the altar and from processions, as required by the civil government of those days.

For refusal to carry out these requirements, the bishop was punished by the civil government without any trial to an indeterminate sentence not provided in the *Criminal Code*.

This unjust decision is in effect to this day, the era of openness and restructuring. Academician Sakharov who was similarly punished has already been released from his exile in Gorky, but Bishop Steponavičius is kept in exile in Žagarė to this day.

We ask you, General Secretary, to see to it that Bishop Steponavičius be allowed to return to Vilnius and carry out his duties as the bishop of the Archdiocese of Vilnius.

We also request that the imprisoned priests be released: Alfonsas Svarinskas, Sigitas Tamkevičius and Jonas-Kaštytis Matulionis. They have been sentenced just for publicizing injustices and evils which occur in our society -- disregard for basic Constitutional civil rights and instances of drunkenness and the proliferation of irresponsibility. Today, you are urged to bring those same evils to the fore; for daring to do just so, these priests are in prison.

We ask you, General Secretary, to order the appropriate agencies to review the cases of the sentenced priests and to release the priests.

Signed by the following people of:

**Pakruojis - 654**

**Viduklė - 46 (More to be added)**

**Žagarė-1003**

**Žemaičių Kalvarija - 586**

**Marijampolė - 2427 (More to be added)**

**Vilnius (Saint Michael's parish) - 1041 (More to be added)**

**Garliava - 954**

**Balbieriškis - 932**

**Simnas - 4490**

**Griškabūdis - 1677**

**Lazdijai - 2790**

**Krokialaukis - 851**

**Slavikai - 870**

**Merkinė-1064**

**Alksnėnai - 666**

**Pivašiūnai - 5560**

Rietavas - 1115  
Gargždai - 658  
Liudvinavas - 856

P.S. Altogether, the petition has been signed by 75,000 of the faithful.

To: The Editors of *Tiesa*

Copies to: The Bishops of the Catholic Church of Lithuania and the  
Administrators of Dioceses

Esteemed Editors!

The August 6 issue of *Tiesa* carried the reply of Petras Anilionis, Lithuanian S.S.R. Commissioner of the Council for Religious Affairs attached to the U.S.S.R. Council of Ministers, in response to the letter of V. Kazlauskas. The response was entitled, "Why Does the Bishop Live in Žagarė?" Anilionis, in an effort to justify my exile from Vilnius to Žagarė, effected by the civil government, writes that the Council for Religious Affairs suspended indefinitely my certification as administrator of the Archdiocese of Vilnius. He states that the leadership of the Catholic Church in Lithuania, in the person of Canon Juozapas Stankevičius, the former Administrator of the Archdiocese of Kaunas and of the Diocese of Vilkaviškis, wrote a report on January 26, 1961, to the Commissioner at that time about my appointment as emeritus to Žagarė which he offers as proof that it was not the civil government which removed me from my duties as Apostolic Administrator to Vilnius and exiled me to Žagarė, but the spiritual leadership which transferred me from Vilnius to Žagarė.

Since such a statement by Anilionis does not conform with the truth and is misleading, I feel obliged to present the real reason for my exile and the way in which it was carried out.

1. On January 4, 1961, Juozas Rugienis, then Commissioner for Religious cults, telephoned me to come to his office and bring with me the certification issued by the Commissioner. When I arrived at the Commissioner's office, he took the certificate from me and told me that by decision of the Council of Ministers of the Lithuanian S.S.R., I had been removed from my duties as Apostolic Administrator of the Archdiocese of Vilnius and was being transferred to residence in Žagarė, *Rayon* of Joniškis.

When I asked him to give me a copy of the decision of the Council of Ministers of the Lithuanian S.S.R., or at least to read it to me, the Commissioner refused to grant my request and offered me the certificate issued by the Commissioner of the Council for Religious Affairs registering me as priest-in-residence at the church in Žagarė.

When I refused to take the proffered certificate, explaining to the Commissioner that his office issues such certificates of registration only after receiving the bishop's or administrator's announcement of a priest's appointment, the Commissioner told me that if an appointment by the administrator, Canon Stankevičius, was necessary, then it would be obtained for me.

When he went to Capital Administrator Canon Stankevičius to obtain my appointment to Žagarė, he did not obtain it because the administrator said he could not give me the appointment, since he had no jurisdiction for such an appointment.

Then Commissioner Rugienis, desiring to expedite my exile from Vilnius, took administrative measures, turning the question of my exile over to militia and security organs. The militia cancelled my registration and at the KGB, I was told in no uncertain terms I could no longer work at the post of Apostolic Administrator of the Archdiocese of Vilnius and that I must leave Vilnius without delay and go to the place of exile assigned to me, to Žagarė. Moreover, the security officials added that if I delayed my departure from Vilnius for Žagarė, then I would be taken to Žagarė the way Archbishop Teofilius Matulionis was taken to Šeduva.

Once the Commissioner for Religious Affairs had removed me from my duties as Apostolic Administrator of the Archdiocese of Vilnius, once the militia had cancelled my registration and the security police were threatening to take me by force from Vilnius to Žagarė, forced by the civil government, I left Vilnius on January 18, 1961 for Žagarė, where I began life as an exile.

In Žagarė, I took up residence in the apartment assigned to me by the Commissioner, which had already been agreed upon earlier by the Commissioner with the Chairman of the Joniškis *Rayon* Executive Committee. That was the communal three-room apartment, publicized by Anilionis, whose living space was 34 square meters, which is a hovel without conveniences, without running water or plumbing and without central heating.

Hardly had I arrived in Žagarė when I was summoned to the Žagarė Executive Committee, where I was handed an order and told to register without delay. Knowing that without appointment by religious superiors and a certificate of registration from the Commissioner for Religious Cults they would not register me, and that without registration, they could apply administrative penalties or even take me to court, and wishing to take up spiritual duties at the church of Žagarė, I applied to the Administrator of the Archdiocese of Kaunas, Father Stankevičius, on January 23, 1961, in writing, requesting that he would grant me faculties as a priest of another diocese, and that he would give me a written appointment as Mass priest, or resident, in Žagarė and would obtain for me a certificate of registration issued by the Commissioner for Religious Cult Affairs.

On January 26, 1961, I received from the administrator, Father Stankevičius the following communication:

"We appoint Your Excellency in accordance with your request of January 31, 1961, as a Mass priest-dependent to Žagarė, and we grant you faculties in the territory of the Archdiocese of Kaunas and Diocese of Vilkaviškis to perform all spiritual duties."

Soon afterwards, the Chancery of the Archdiocese of Kaunas sent me a certificate of registration dated January 27, 1961, signed by the Commissioner for Religious Affairs.

Thus, from all that has been said, it is clear that it was not the Catholic Church authorities who transferred me to Žagarė, as Anilionis writes, but the civil government which exiled me. My assignment by the administrator, Canon Stankevičius, January 26, 1961, as Mass priest, in accordance with my request while living in exile, was not my transfer to Žagarė but only a favor done for an exile so that I might register in my place of exile and carry out spiritual duties in the church of Žagarė.

2. In that reply from Anilionis, we read, "Bishop Julijonas Steponavičius, as Apostolic Administrator of the Archdiocese of Vilnius, broke the law and did not respond to warnings given him."

What laws I broke, Anilionis does not point out specifically. Since by his statement Anilionis probably wishes to remove the blame from the civil government which exiled me and to mislead the public which does not know the reason for my exile, I therefore declare that I was removed from my duties as Apostolic Administrator of the Archdiocese of Vilnius, and exiled to Žagarė, not for breaking civil law, but for refusing to violate the law of the Church, *Canon Law*.

This was confirmed by the security officials whom I was summoned to see before my exile. When the security people stated that I must leave Vilnius without delay and go to Žagarė, I asked what I was being punished for, what crime I had committed and if I had broken civil law, then the Soviet government should take me to court and try me.

They then told me that according to them, the whole problem was that there was nothing for which to bring criminal action against me, but the worst thing was that it is impossible to reason with me, since according to them, I failed to carry out government directives and demands which the Commissioner gives me. Those demands or regulations given me were such:

— To forbid the teaching of catechism to children preparing for First Confession and Communion and to forbid group questioning of those children already prepared, allowing them only to test the children individually;

— To forbid minors to participate in liturgical ceremonies: boys to serve Mass and girls to take part in processions, strewing flowers;

- To forbid priests to plan retreats for the faithful or invite priests to assist at religious festivals without permission of the *rayon* government;
- ~ To forbid priests to engage in pastoral visits to the faithful, or a larger group of priests to gather for a priests' retreat;
- To leave without a parish and without priestly work those priests whose certificate of registration the Commissioner revokes;
- ~ To ordain to the priesthood all candidates proposed.

The Commissioner demanded that I proclaim those demands to the priests in writing, even though he informed me of them only verbally. Moreover, he threatened that priests who did not abide by the regulations would be punished, and the bishop, if he did not help carry out those requirements, would be removed from his duties.

Since those regulations are in violation of *Canon Law*, the regulations of the archdiocesan synod and my episcopal conscience, therefore, disregarding the Commissioner's threats, I refused to promulgate them to the priests. After all, refusing to carry out regulations detrimental to religious and Church life, and the defense of the rights of the Church, of the faithful and of oneself, are not a violation of the law for Par. 50 of the Constitution of the Lithuanian S.S.R. guarantees citizens freedom of conscience, that is, the right to profess any religion and to practice religious worship.

3. Finally, I wish to call attention to the false statement by Anilionis that in 1981, Pope John Paul II had made the decision to appoint me to the position of Apostolic Administrator of the Diocese of Kaišiadorys. As proof of his claim, Anilionis offers an excerpt from a letter from the Council for Public Affairs of the Church to Bishop Liudas Povilonis. That communication from the Council for Public Affairs of the Church is a document from the Vatican office which at the direction of the Holy Father carries out the preparatory work in the appointment or transfer of bishops.

Hence, in this document which was sent not only to Bishop Povilonis but to me, it was announced that the Holy Father had decided to appoint me Apostolic Administrator of the Diocese of Kaišiadorys and it also directs that I inform the Council for Public Affairs of the Church through Bishop Povilonis of my acceptance of the appointment.

I immediately wrote two letters: one directly to the Council for Public Affairs of the Church and the other to Bishop Povilonis. In my letters, I thanked the Holy Father for granting me the possibility of returning to episcopal duties and I requested that I be appointed Ordinary of Kaišaidorys and not Apostolic Administrator.

Since efforts were being made at that time to obtain the Holy Father's appointment for three candidates proposed by the civil government as bishops, I therefore requested the Holy Father that the return of the impeded bishops - - Bishop Vincentas Sladkevičius and myself — to episcopal duties not be tied to

the appointment of new bishops and that permission be given first to put the impeded bishops to work, with the Holy Father appointing them to any diocese of Lithuania to episcopal duties and that after that, negotiations be carried out concerning the appointment of new bishops for Lithuania.

Apparently, an agreement was not reached to separate the question of putting the impeded bishops to work from the appointment of government-proposed candidates for bishops. Hence, neither were the impeded bishops restored to their episcopal duties nor were new bishops appointed. Only later, in 1982, when the Apostolic See agreed to appoint the proposed candidate as Bishop of the Diocese of Telšiai was Bishop Vincentas Sladkevičius, the impeded Apostolic Administrator of Kaišiadorys, allowed to return to his diocese.

Concerning my return to duties as Apostolic Administrator of the Archdiocese of Vilnius, Anilionis either does not wish to speak or in speaking, he gives answers similar to that which were published in the September 6, 1987 issue of *Tiesa*.

Having written to the Council for Public Affairs of the Church regarding my appointment by the Holy Father to Kaišiadorys, and not having received the document of appointment signed by the Holy Father, I do not feel I have offended the Apostolic See by disobedience, even though Anilionis accuses me of that. Similar letters from the Council for Public Affairs of the Church were received at that time by Bishop Vincentas Sladkevičius and the three candidates proposed for the episcopacy who were not appointed bishops. Perhaps Commissioner Anilionis, using the letters sent to them by the Council for Public Affairs of the Church, will someday tell also of their disobedience to the Vatican.

If the Apostolic See would have seen disobedience in my actions when negotiations were being carried on regarding my return to episcopal duties, it would have applied the appropriate penalty to me, for example, relieving me of the post of Apostolic Administrator of the Archdiocese of Vilnius. But it did not do so. For every year, I am listed in the directory of dioceses and bishops of the world (*Anuario Pontificio*) as Apostolic Administrator of the Archdiocese of Vilnius (*Impeditus* - prevented from functioning).

Only Anilionis, censoring the 1985 *Catholic Calendar-Directory*, demanded that in the calendar next to my name there not be the title of Apostolic Administrator of the Archdiocese of Vilnius.

It is surprising that during this time of openness, when much is spoken and written concerning the repair of mistakes and injustices in your newspaper, the statement of Petras Anilionis, not corresponding to the truth and misleading the readers, was published in your newspaper. One gets the impression that Anilionis, giving the press the aforesaid statement, is seeking to remove from the civil government responsibility for my exile, to justify it and to make me out as the criminal. Does Petras Anilionis by such action not abuse his position at work by spreading disinformation?

In order that the moral wrong perpetrated by Anilionis be repaired, I request the honorable editors to print this letter in their newspaper.

Respectfully,  
Bishop Julijonas Steponavičius

Žagarė, September 8, 1987

To: General Secretary of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union,  
Mikhail Gorbachev  
Chairman of the Council for Religious Affairs,  
Konstantin Kharchev  
Council of Ministers of the L.S.S.R.  
Bishop of Telšiai, Antanas Vaičius  
From: The Community of Catholic Believers of the City of Klaipėda

#### A Petition

We are glad, General Secretary, that under your policy of openness and democratization, the Church of the Queen of Peace in Klaipėda is being returned, which we had erected with our own money and which, in 1961, by order of Nikita Krushchev, was taken away from us. We ask you to use your influence with the officials of our republic concerned with this question, that the question of the return of the church be settled *as soon as possible*, since we continue to be inconvenienced: Still having only a small church barely 214 sq. meters in area, we are forced to stand outside while inside, people faint from the stuffiness. Hence we request:

1. *That we be left the present church*, since the Church of the Queen of Peace has only 1500 sq. meters of space, and we will not fit in it. When in 1954 they gave us permission to build it, about 80,000 residents lived in Klaipėda, and now there are over 203,000. Smaller cities such as Telšiai, Panevėžys and Šiauliai have two churches, two religious associations and church committees apiece. If the present church is closed, the faithful will again be dissatisfied since no one wishes to stand on the street and they will fight for it.

2. To allow *the religious association for the Church of the Queen of Peace, which is scheduled to be returned, to be formed and to be confirmed*. The committee and pastor of the little church now functioning are overburdened with work and with the concerns of ministering to the faithful, so they do not have and will not have the ability to concern themselves with the reconstruction of the church being returned. The faithful, waiting for any kind of ministrations, are forced to waste time and wait for hours, and this indirectly effects productivity. Hence, it is essential for Klaipėda to have two parishes - two religious associations.

3. *To allow the bishop to appoint a pastor for the church being returned, who would see to reconstruction of the church; we would like to see Father*

Bronius Burneikis, who built this church, appointed, since no one will be able to perform this work better.

4. We wish to reconstruct the church in a business-like way, with funds appropriated by the state; we the faithful will contribute unpaid labor.

5. As has already been announced, the church is being returned not in two years, but by July 1, 1988 or earlier, so we request that both buildings: the church and the residence, be returned as soon as possible.

We trust that these requests of ours will be heard, and that our troubles will be over. We will be very grateful.

Attached: 69 pages with the signatures of 17,600 believers.

Klaipeda, August 31, 1987

P.S. the faithful of Klaipėda, together with the church committee, wrote petitions to the government of Lithuania and the City of Vilnius in which they express their pleasure with regard to the government's decision to repair the wrong done to the faithful. However, they feel uneasiness and dissatisfaction at the fact that the intention is to go from words to deeds only after two years have passed.

In the petitions they write, "We, the committee of the Catholic religious association of Klaipeda and the faithful, received with pleasure the news of the decision to return the Church of the Queen of Peace to us. This decision, however, caused not only joy... the two year time lapse envisioned for the return of the church in the decision causes us uneasiness. In our opinion, the question of the return of the church is not new, so the time for its return is unduly protracted. Why should we be to blame for the fact that the mistake perpetrated was not repaired for so long; why should we, after the essentially good new decision has been taken, still have to suffer this wrong for two more years? This is hard to understand in view of the new era of social restructuring.

"Let us imagine what the decisions taken by the government on various questions of restructuring would be worth if their implementation began not immediately, but a couple of years hence! The ideas of restructuring must touch not only the material but also the spiritual sphere. In speaking about the speedy return of the church, we have in mind precisely the satisfaction of the spiritual requirements of the faithful, which is just as necessary as the material program for the renewal of society.

"Requesting the speedy return of the Church of the Queen of Peace, we have in mind too its auxiliary structures, the rectory and the churchyard, without which the church cannot function normally, since there are located the sanitary conveniences, three garages, storage spaces, a laundry for church vestments, a drying room and priests' quarters.

"We are concerned about the future of the present little church. It should be left to the Catholics of Klaipeda. We would think that would be self-evident since the population of Klaipeda, hence also the number of the faithful, has grown: The facts speak for themselves! If in pre-war Klaipeda there were 51,000 residents and five churches, then, at the present time, there about 102,000 Catholic residents. Why would it fall to only one church to serve them?" (Text unedited - Ed. Note)

This year alone, about 170,000 faithful signed petitions demanding the return of the Church of the Queen of Peace in Klaipėda.

To: The Chancery of the Archdiocese of Kaunas and of the Diocese of  
Vilkaviškis

Copies to: Father Antanas Gražulis, Associate Pastor of Alytus II Parish  
Canon Juozas Berteška, Dean of Alytus

From: Father Antanas Liesis, in residence at the parish of Alytus II

#### A Petition

On September 23, 1987, I received your letter, No. 888, written September 21, in which you appoint me as pastor of the parish of Alytus II until the return of the pastor, Father Pranas Račiūnas, from the U.S.A. These duties I cannot assume for the following reasons:

1. I am not well, and so I shall not be able to be pastor of such a large parish.

2. According to *Canon Law*, in case of necessity, it is the associate pastor who takes over for the pastor. In this instance, with the pastor gone to the U.S.A., the pastor's duties should automatically without any letter of appointment, fall to the associate pastor, Father Antanas Gražulis, who is healthy and strong enough to fulfill them. The chancery, before sending me this appointment, did not ask me whether I would be able to be pastor. Moreover, the chancery made this appointment without any request from Father Račiūnas (this the pastor, Father Račiūnas himself, told me). Hence it is quite obvious to me that the chancery made this appointment not of its own free will, but in accordance with the dictates of Petras Anilionis, the Commissioner for Religious Cults.

The Church is separated from the state, and Anilionis has no right — not only moral but religious either — to dictate to the bishops the appointment of priests, so I protest against this interference of the government in the affairs of the Church, and I do not accept this assignment dictated by Petras Anilionis.

**Open letter to the Procurator General of the U.S.S  
Copies to: Bishops of Lithuania and Administrator**

On August 28, 1987, at about 5:00 PM, Nijolė Sadūnaitė was riding to Kaunas in an automobile. Beyond Vievis, the car was stopped by six or seven militiamen and several persons in civilian dress. A balding civilian and a militiaman told Miss Sadūnaitė to alight and to get into a light yellow *Zhiguli* without a license number, which was standing by.

When Miss Sadūnaitė asked on what grounds they were apprehending her, the civilian angrily shouted, "You knew that you had no right to leave Vilnius... just on account of Sunday's demonstration (On August 23, residents of Vilnius remembered the victims of Hitler and Stalin and Nijolė Sadūnaitė had given a speech), shooting is too good for you..."

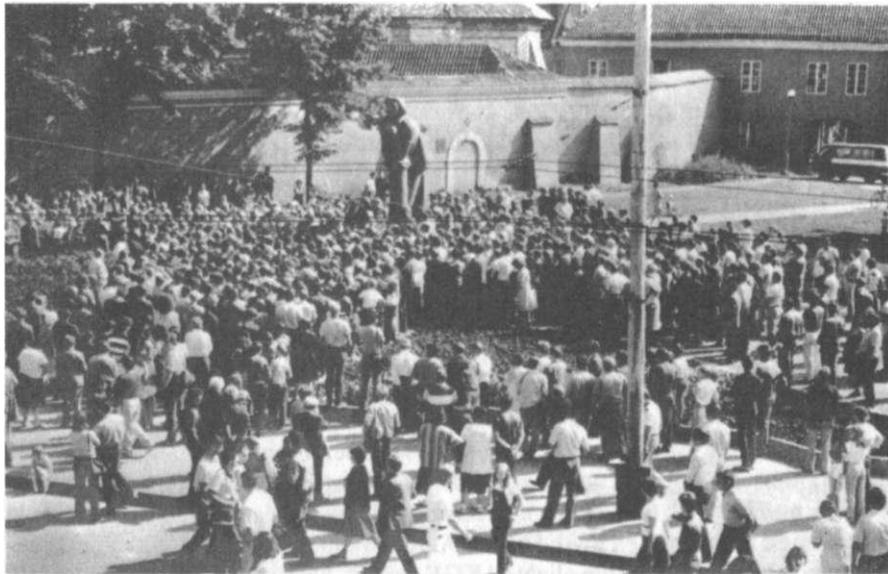
They seated Nijolė Sadūnaitė between a militiaman and a KGB agent who had taken her from Antakalnis to KGB headquarters when she was arrested April 1, 1987. They spoke between themselves only in Russian. The civilian began again to threaten her in Lithuanian, saying that the dissidents needed Stalin. He, the KGB agent said, would shoot all demonstrators. They did not take her to Vilnius, but in the direction of Byelorussia, by side roads and through woods.

About midnight, they returned to Vilnius. In the Valakampiai Swamp, a change of guard emerged from the shrubbery - three civilians whom the KGB is said to call Dzerzhinski's younger brothers, mentally retarded. They drove her back to Byelorussia to the City of Molodechno. At about 2:00 P.M., they returned to Valakampiai, where yet one more change of guard emerged from the bushes and drove Nijolė Sadūnaitė all over Lithuania: Ignalina, Sniečkus, Zarasai, Utena, etc., until 11:00 P.M.

The militia twice stopped the *Zhiguli* without a license number, but as soon as the driver showed his identification, they would salute and let the automobile through. In Ignalina, they broke the traffic law, but after checking their documents, the militiaman instead of a fine gave a salute and drove away. At 11:00 P.M., they took her right up to the door of Nijolė Sadūnaitė's apartment. They ordered her not to go out anywhere at night and on Sunday, not to leave Vilnius.

All night long, Nijolė Sadūnaitė's apartment was guarded by two men who paced back and forth under the window, smoking.

At about 11:00 P.M. that same night, Robertas Grigas, sacristan in the parish in the *Rayon* of Širvintai, together with resident Algirdas Masilionis, gave a worker at the rectory a ride home. On his way back, Masilionis stopped the *Zhiguli* in front of an automobile in which five characters were riding who did not even try to hide the fact that they were KGB agents.



*Participants at the August 23, 1987 demonstration in Vilnius.*

They dragged Masielis and Grigas out of their automobile. The latter, they pushed into the *Zhiguli*, after several times striking Robertas in such a way that one of his molars broke, and he lost a shoe. They took Grigas to Širvintai where the KGB conferred with the militia about something or other, ostentatiously asking one another questions. Taking a shovel and threatening to kill him and bury him, they took him out to some woods.

After remaining in the woods about a half-hour, they drove on. They took away Grigas' spectacles so that he would not recognize his surroundings, and never returned them. The perpetrators spoke among themselves in Lithuanian, with a Russian accent.

At about 8:00 A.M., they stopped in a strange city and began explaining that their actions were a "warning" for participating in a peace demonstration in Vilnius. Toward morning, two of them went off somewhere while those remaining dozed.

Grigas leaped from the automobile, and thinking that he was somewhere in Russia, ran shouting in Russian, "I'm Robertas Grigas, a citizen of Lithuania. If anyone kills me, you'll know that it was the work of the KGB."

Some passersby told him that the kidnappers had brought him to Joniškis, in the Archdiocese of Kaunas. Grigas ran to a church, where he found the sacristan. Later, two priests showed up: the pastor, Father Juozas Dobilaitis

and the associate pastor, Father Alvydas Grabnickas. The faithful gave the escapee shoes and a jacket (he had been in shirtsleeves), and money to return home. Grigas went to Confession, assisted at Holy Mass and received Holy Communion, and afterwards, travelled about Lithuania telling people about the KGB actions.

Since the telephone in the rectory of Kiaukliai had been disconnected, the pastor, Father Rokas Puzonas, called from elsewhere to the Širvintai militia, reporting the brutal kidnapping of Grigas. The militia department replied that apparently "someone perpetrated a practical joke...".

Then, Father Puzonas, together with his guests Vytautas Bogušis, Julius Sasnauskas, Algirdas Masilionis and Andrius Tučkus, left in two *Zhiguli* automobiles for KGB headquarters in Vilnius to find out about Robertas' fate. Both their cars were followed the whole way by an unmarked *Volga*.

At one of the intersections in Šeškinė, Father Rokas Puzonas's automobile was stopped at 12:30 A.M. by Department of Motor Vehicles *Zhigule* number 112. One of the inspectors, in Russian, demanded documents and ordered them to open up the trunk. At that moment, *Zhigulis* and the other *Volga* showed up. From them alighted KGB agents. They seized Father Puzonas to drag him into an automobile carrying the license number VAZ 210011 LID 32-37.

Bogušis began calling to the traffic police, "Men, why are you obeying the instructions of this KGB agent? And you (to the KGB agent), don't pretend you don't recognize me."

The KGB agent then began to scold, using profanity, and several times struck Bogušis. The highway patrolman and three KGB agents dragged the priest into their automobile. When he protested, they struck him several blows and Father Puzonas fell. Picking him up off the ground, they dragged him to their car and ordered the pastor's *Zhigili* to be towed to the motor vehicle department.

That night, Bogušis and Masilionis reached Kaišiadorys by way of southern Lithuania. Here, they informed Bishop Vincentas Sladkevičius about the incident.

Father Rokas Puzonas was driven by three KGB agents through the *Rayons* of Vilnius and Trakiai. When the priest demanded that they drive him to militia headquarters, the kidnappers replied, "You'll soon see where we take you".

Through Vilnius, Nemenčinė, Pabradė and Švenčionis, they drove him to some forest in Byelorussia. There, stopping several times, they conferred among themselves. One of the KGB agents warned, "You're tired of living like a human being, so you'll see what it's like to live like a dog."

Driving him to the town of Svyriai, they released him at about 11:00 A.M.: "Go on home, as you wish. This time, you got little from us. If you keep

mentioning the Molotov-Ribbentrop Pact in your sermons, it's going to be harder on you. Go straight home, without stopping anywhere."...

During his sermon, Father Puzonas told the parishioners why he had been missing for over a day.

Since, on September 30, there was still no news about the fate of Robertas Grigas, four residents of Vilnius: Nijolė Sadūnaitė, Antanas Terleckas, Vytautas Bogušis and Petras Cidzikas sent Gorbachev a telegram.

Nijolė Sadūnaitė, Vilnius, Architektų 27-2  
Robertas Grigas, Širvintų *Rayon*, Kiaukliai  
Father Rokas Puzonas, Širvintų *Rayon*, Kiaukliai  
Algirdas Masilionis, Vilnius, Ramunių 29-A  
Vytautas Bogušis, Vilnius, Savičiaus 13-8

Vilnius-Kiaukliai

September 1, 1987

To: D. Tvirbutas, Vice Chairman of the Širvintai *Rayon*  
Executive Committee

From: Faithful of the Kiaukliai Parish

A Petition

Vice Chairman, we are shocked and pained by the way officials have treated our pastor, Father Rokas Puzonas, and our sacristan, Robertas Grigas. The night of August 28, security agents assaulted them, beat them and dragging them by force into automobiles, drove them around all night threatening them. Those who acted so showed neither identification nor a procurator's order. That is hooliganism! Take measures to see that such assaults would end and that the kidnapers be made to answer before the law.

Moreover, on September 11, three members of our church committee were summoned from work to the communal farm office. An official dictated to them an order according to which the sacristan, Robertas Grigas, was to be discharged from his position as of September 19, because according to them, the sacristan engages in activities having nothing to do with the carrying out of religious services.

In the office, they threatened that the church would be closed and the pastor arrested if they did not terminate the contract with Grigas. We, the majority of the church committee of twenty, and the faithful of Kiaukliai, wish to state: The only kind of individual who cannot work as a sacristan is one who acts immorally or fails to perform the duties he has assumed. We have no complaints about the morality or the conscientiousness of Robertas Grigas; we are satisfied with him. We consider non-binding the termination of a contract by force. If we have a peoples' government, please give consideration to the wishes of the majority.

September 17, 1987

**Signed by: 102 faithful of the Kiaukliai parish, including twelve members of the parish committee.**

**To: General Secretary of the Central Committee of  
Communist Party of the Soviet Union, Mikhail Gorbachev  
Copies to: The Bishops and Administrators of Dioceses of Lithuania  
From: Faithful of the Parish of Žagarė and all Lithuania**

**A Petition**

From of old, in the crypt of the Old Church of Žagarė, the believing public have been visiting and venerating the remains of Barbora Žagarietė, the Seventeenth Century martyr for chastity. People would come from all over Lithuania to pray at the tomb of this heroine of faith and morality. In 1961, during the atheistic campaign begun by Nikita Krushchev, the church of Žagarė was confiscated and closed.

In 1963, the remains of Barbora Žagarietė were taken from the crypt of the suppressed church by government officials and taken to some unknown destination.

We have heard that in commemoration of the millenium of the Baptism of Russia, the remains of some Orthodox saints, taken by the Soviet government, have been returned to the faithful.

We request that this year, in commemoration of the 600th anniversary of the Baptism of Lithuania, the remains of Barbora Žagarietė be returned to our church.

1987

**Signed by:**

**Bishop Julijonas Steponavičius**

**Fathers:**

**Kleopas Jakaitis  
Brorūas Antanaitis  
Boleslovas Stasiutis  
Jonas Povilaitis  
Jonas Gedvila  
Pranciškus Ščepavičius  
Pranciškus Matulaitis  
Antanas Jokūbauskas  
Vladas Požėla  
Kazimieras Žukas  
Vaclovas Polikaitis  
Leonardas Jagminas  
Viktoras Brusokas**

**Gustavas Gudanavičius  
Vaclovas Tamoševičius  
Ladislovas Balionas  
Jonas Boruta  
Juozas Dobilaitis  
Algirdas Pakamanis**  
and about 4720 believers from throughout Lithuania

**Open Letter to the Editors of the Širvintai *Rayon* Newspaper, *Lenin's Flag***

**Esteemed Editors,**

In the August 13 issue of the Širvintai *Rayon* newspaper, an item appeared reprinted from the Kapsukas official publication *New Road*, tendentiously describing some events from the celebration of the Blessed Jurgis Matulaitis. It reads:

"A group of individuals gathered on the corner not far from the church and began singing hymns. Having attracted the curious, they obstructed people exhausted from the crowd in church from going downtown. After some time, those 'hymn-singers' could be seen in the churchyard. There, some of them began shouting that they lacked certain freedoms. It was difficult to know what these individuals wanted, but where has it ever been seen that a few self-willed persons could, without interference, spoil the holiday spirits of the participants."

Further on, government officials are urged to be more zealous in restricting such "violations" and "disturbance of the peace". In a postscript, the editors say that they learned from the competent organs that one of the organizers of the violation was Robertas Grigas, sacristan at Kiaukliai, inciting believers to anti-Soviet actions, not for the first time, and already warned by the organs of justice.

The editors of the Širvintai *Rayon* newspaper added that the aforesaid citizen did not seriously consider that his unlawful activity deserves stricter evaluation by the organs of law and order and the condemnation of the believers since "religious services have nothing in common with disturbance of the public order and with violations against the Soviet system."

Concerning this, the accused sacristan of Kiaukliai would like to address you. First of all, the inconsistency of those who signed the complaint, S. Butkauskas and four other unknown residents of Kapsukas (the papers did not publish their names)... On the street corner and in the churchyard, it was not a "group" of individuals, but a large portion of participants in the holiday who sang the Lithuanian national anthem and applauded it; hence, it would be naive to claim that this spoiled their holiday.

Incidentally, what is the value of central and republican press statements against censorship — which has discarded many treasures of our national-cultura heritage - and Vincas Kudirka's national anthem continues to arouse in some an inexplicable fear as a "disturbance of the public order"?

In vain, their efforts - after all, the absolute majority of the nation values the spiritual treasures preserved throughout the sufferings, the more they are banned, the more precious they are. "The Lithuanian nation will never be atheistic, because atheism destroys the highest values and narrows our horizon with material things."

I also wish to call your attention to the relative nature of the concept of "anti-Soviet actions". In the churchyard of Marijampolė ("City of Mary", the traditional Lithuanian name for the Town of Kapsukas, renamed for one of the early Lithuanian Communists — Trans. Note), to those who were willing to listen, I spoke about that which is a source of heartache to me and to all thinking Catholics. I can repeat it even now, accepting full responsibility:

Regardless of the joy over the beatification of Archbishop Jurgis, we testify on behalf of the three priests unjustly imprisoned: Sigitas Tamkevičius, Alfonsas Svarinskas, and Jonas-Kaštytis Matulionis - and other Lithuanians sentenced just for the peaceful expression of their views; we mourn before the closed churches, especially the Cradle of Lithuanian Christianity, the Cathedral of Vilnius; for the Church of Saint Casimir, transformed into a Museum of Atheism in a crude mockery of the faithful.

We are sorry for the youth from whom the possibility of knowing the beauty and universal harmony of Christ's teaching has been criminally taken away; over the youth which thus is being pushed into the grasp of atheism, prostitution and various "punk" attitudes.

Without anger, just with a sympathetic love, we appeal to all, not only our brother Catholics but also contemporaries smothering in the darkness of moral error, as well as the officials persecuting us, and we say, "Think about it!" Only a decent Lithuania will be a free Lithuania! And Lithuania will be decent only with Christ! \

Such is my conviction, too. For every word written here, I am prepared to go to prison, since I hold them to be true. International law and such documents as the *Universal Declaration of Human Rights*, the Helsinki Final Act and finally, the normal understanding of our common humanity, guarantees freedom of speech, the possibility of freely forming one's opinion, sharing it with others and criticizing the opinions of other individuals or groups.

From the applause of those participating in the holiday, I would judge that there was no one who was scandalized by the thoughts expressed, or at least that no one approached and expressed their dissatisfaction. On the contrary, more than four residents of Marijampolė, and not only the residents of Marijampolė, thanked us and expressed complete solidarity. This is understandable since

we Catholics have serious cause to talk about injustice. Ten years ago, the three imprisoned priests were already speaking boldly about the catastrophic spread of alcoholism, and they were called defamers of the Soviet system. And today, drunkenness is condemned from Gorbachev's tribune in phrases no less sharp; the magazine *Sobriety and culture* (unfortunately so far in Russian only) has begun publication.

The aforesaid priests unmasked the educational policy of recruiting pupils for atheistic organizations by force, regardless of their beliefs, and not even trying to convince them of the obligatory "truth" of atheism. For such ideas, they were accused of besmirching the educational system. The current *Tiesa*, Communist Youth Edition, openly writes about the mania for percentages which till now has been forcing most youngsters into Communist organizations completely independent of their beliefs.

Read the ruminations of Vilnius Middle School 47 Communist Youth Secretary, Daiva Česnulevičiūtė, in issue number 6 of *Student*: "Is it a small thing what we are taught to deny and not know? Since you have allowed me to speak, I will set forth one more doubt: Are the cornerstones of our worldview not denial? That there is no god we know from the elementary grades. Was that term 'there is no' explained in any way? No. One had to concentrate on it as though learning to write... Our entire materialistic worldview stood till now on very insecure foundations of scientific evidence. Hence, it is so simple to climb out of it."

It appears that here, too, the so-called calumniators were right. We would find the same thing upon analysis of every accusation of them and us, the Catholics of Lithuania, defending their rights. But this, as you well know, does not mean that they will be freed and we will not be threatened with arrest. There is no need to frighten anyone. I understand. My whole crime is that I have set forth my doubts and uneasiness without waiting for permission to speak, as the lady from Vilnius mentioned in *The Student*.

I set it out, using the natural right of everyone to condemn lies and violence. You call this "anti-Soviet activity", and threaten to turn the organs of law and order on us even though I never urged anyone to break windows or accost passersby. On the contrary, I urged everyone to forgive and to pray for those persecuting the Church and the nation, to disarm them with the steadfastness and goodness of martyrs (This is proclaimed by the motto of Blessed Jurgis Matulaitis on the facade of the shrine, "To overcome evil by good".)

I feel no envy for you. The fact that you participate in the accusations against your fellow countrymen and the campaign of driving them mad (how shockingly Abuladze's fine film *Repentance* reveals that phenomenon to us), may not be your personal fault but rather the creatures of education, environment and exaggerated obedience. But try to understand - the threat to society

arises not from those who hold to their beliefs and defend them at whatever cost.

The threat to society arises from structures spawning such Variam Araidzes; structures declaring as "offenders" all those who do not accept the only doctrine allowed which has proven a hundred times its inhumanity. One would not like to believe that during the post-war years, a log did not float from the north bearing the name of some relative of yours (c.f. *Repentance*).

And as for annoying the faithful, the claim that religious ceremonies have nothing in common with social action, would best be explained by the thought of Archbishop Desmond Tutu of the Republic of South Africa, "The Church which defends the oppressed and suffering unavoidably comes into conflict with the government, which accuses it of involvement in politics. But the Church cannot remain passive in the face of injustice."

Robertas Grigas

Kiaukliai, August 13, 1987

On September 5, 1987, journalist S. Jonaitis of the Širvintai *Rayon* newspaper *Lenin's Flag*, tried in his article to respond to Robertas Grigas' open letter to the editor:

In his September 22 letter to the editors, Robertas Grigas disagrees with the following reply from a Soviet journalist:

"Instead of giving the entire text of the letter and then discussing it as required by the concept of openness, you choose a few thoughts and try to deny them. For one who has not read the text as submitted, it is difficult in general to understand from the reply of Jonaitis what the question is. This is a dishonorable way of carrying on a discussion, and if it is repeated, the discussion will lose its meaning. Print everything, let the people have the possibility of comparing the arguments on both sides. This is how I understand democratization," writes Robertas Grigas.

In his letter, Grigas also responds to new accusations. We "sum" points from the letter:

"You ask, 'When and where believers were condemned and criticized for taking place in religious services?' If you wish witnesses, I can come to the editorial offices with a group of my contemporaries who will tell you what kind of 'system of criticism' and that, an anti-Constitutional system, the school, the workplace, etc., used to react to their participation in religious services. What kind of methods of ridicule, pressure and punishment were not invented!

"Even more angry is the response to citizens' efforts peacefully to express their disagreement with the state ideology or amoral activity by the state. A great number of our fellow countrymen did so August 23, at the Adomas Mickevičius Monument in Vilnius. Afterwards, during the night of August 28, without presenting identification or warrant, KGB agents assaulted us like

hooligans, pushed us into automobiles and drove Father Rokas Puzonas and me around all night. Vilnius resident Nijolė Sadnaitė they likewise kidnapped and drove around about thirty hours.

"By this, they showed once again that against our truth, against the word, you have but one argument - the fist and the death-threat - as was done in my case...

"Your newspaper needlessly encloses in quotation marks the expression 'victims of Stalinism'. The victims of Hitlerism were counted, they were honored with monuments and the condemnation of the brown plague is preserved in museums. War criminals were punished by the Nuremberg Trials. Why then does the mere attempt to speak out about people who perished innocently in the time of the so-called 'cult of personality' arouse so much dissatisfaction?

"Has everything been told about those crimes? No. Even our press admits that. Expressing regret over the gaps in our history textbooks, unmasked evil is not corrected. Inhumanity must be dragged out into the light of day and condemned, whether it hides under the black *swastika* or the Red Star.

"You attack us derisively and threateningly when we speak of Lithuanian independence, saying that we want a Lithuania of 'nobles and pastors'. These things, the 'nobility system' and the independence of Lithuania, have nothing in common.

"The right of Lithuania to secede from the U.S.S.R. is guaranteed by Par. 69 of the Constitution. Why is the bringing up of this question considered a crime, not to be discussed?

"You accuse me of defending 'bourgeois culture', but who determines what kind of culture is bourgeois? And what kind is 'progressive'? As we know from the Soviet press, in Kampuchea, in the name of Socialism, practically the entire rich historical heritage of the country was destroyed after proclaiming it 'bourgeois'. It appears that the values destroyed constituted a golden treasure of national culture; now, alas, it cannot be returned. Do some of the nuances of this tragedy not repeat themselves in the history of Lithuania? Who has the gift of omniscience to judge what is acceptable for the public and what is not? Let the public to choose for itself."

## SEARCHES AND INVESTIGATIONS

**K y b a r t a i** (Vilkaviškis *Rayon*)

On August 5, 1986, Birutė Briliūtė of Čepajevo skg.19, Kybartai, was summoned to Vilnius by Investigator Reinys. During the interrogation, the chekist presented her with a whole list of questions concerning the *Chronicle of the Catholic Church in Lithuania*, No. 73. He demanded that she explain why

certain articles in *Chronicle* No. 73 were similar in content, and in some cases identical, to manuscripts and typescripts confiscated at Miss Briliūtė's apartment during the raid of May 6, 1987. Miss Briliūtė replied that everything taken from her was lying in KGB safes since March 6, so the KGB would have to take responsibility for what happened to them. The interrogation lasted about three hours. Miss Briliūtė refused to sign the record of interrogation.

#### K y b a r t a i

On September 8, 1987, a search was carried out of the living quarters and storage areas belonging to Ona Šarakauskaitė, Birutė Briliūtė and Ona Kavaliauskaitė, all residing at Cepajevo skg. 19. In charge of the search were Vilnius KGB agents V. Baumila and A. Stepučinskas. Besides the individuals mentioned, there were some chekists involved in the search who did not give their names. During the search they seized: a typewriter, an extra typing element and some books — five of them purely religious in content — carbon paper, etc.

After the search of March 6, Miss Briliūtė wrote a complaint to the Procurator General of the L.S.S.R., asking him to see to it that her personal things taken during the search be returned, and also to reprimand the security agents who carried out the search without presenting personal identification.

She received a reply that her things would not be returned as being associated with the illegal publication, the *Chronicle of the Catholic Church in Lithuania*, and that the security agents had been warned and in the future, similar incidents would not be repeated.

However, the search on September 8 showed otherwise: the security agents not only failed to present identification, but one of them even raised his voice and acted rudely during the search.

#### K a p s u k a s

On August 19, 1987, Father Kęstutis Brilius, Associate Pastor of the church in Kapsukas, was summoned to the Kapsukas KGB. A chekist from Vilnius asked the priest about the *Chronicle of the Catholic Church in Lithuania*, its reproduction, editing, newsgathering, etc. Father Brilius said he knew nothing, and so could not tell them. They also inquired who allowed young Robertas Grigas to make a speech and the young people to sing hymns and recite poetry in the churchyard of Kapsukas after the celebration in honor of the Blessed Jurgis Matulaitis. The answer to this question was the same, he did not know.

#### V i l n i u s

On October 14, 1987, Nijolė Sadūnaitė was summoned to the Procurator's Office at Gogolio 4, to see Investigator Jurkšta. The investigator explained that Nijolė Sadūnaitė had been summoned as a witness in an investiga-

tion of the publication and distribution of the *Chronicle of the Catholic Church in Lithuania*.

A whole list of questions followed: Does the *Chronicle* accurately present material about various stages of her life? What was the role of Nijolė Sadūnaitė herself in preparing the autobiographical material, etc.

She explained that the *Chronicle* reports only the truth, and what it writes about her, she did not know. To the question, "What was her role in preparing the material?", she did not respond and stated she would reply to that question only in court.

Investigator Jurkšta was interested in the book by Nijolė Sadūnaitė published in 1985 by *the Ateitis* (Future) Publishers in Chicago, *KGB akiratyje* (Published in English by Trinity Communications as *A Radiance in the Gulag* - Trans. Note).

"Are you really the author of this book? Tell us about its composition, distribution and why you did it," asked the interrogator.

Sadūnaitė said that she was the author if the book in question, but she refused to give any more information, arguing that the Soviet government considers her a second-class person - it does not give her letters and packages from abroad.

Asked whether the autobiographical material in the book was accurate, Sadūnaitė explained that all of Soviet reality is depicted in a restrained fashion, and how the publisher printed it, she did not know, since she did not see the book herself.

"I wrote the book and gave it to the publishers to print, but how I did this, I'm not going to tell you," said Sadūnaitė.

At the end of the interrogation which lasted about an hour and a half, Procurator Bakučionis and one other person came in. Bakučionis read Sadūnaitė a warning concerning the demonstration August 23, in Vilnius, while the stranger who had come in to the office with Bakučionis videotaped her.

On October 15, 1987, Sadūnaitė, protesting against the illegal taping without her consent, wrote a statement to U.S.S.R. Procurator General Rekunkov, saying, "I consider the taping an infringement on my personal dignity, since I do not know where and for what purpose the videotape will be used. All the more since the taping was done by individuals inimically disposed toward me on account of my activities in connection with the defense of human rights. I demand that such actions be discontinued and that the aforesaid videotape be destroyed."

## OUR PRISONERS

Father Alfonsas Svarinskas writes:

"...At about 2 o'clock in the morning on Good Friday, we arrived at the new place. In quarantine two weeks, I think that before Low Sunday I shall see my new companions. The journey took fifteen days, but I was on the road only six days, and spent seven days in Yaroslavl' and two days in the prison at Perm.

"I left springtime behind in the homeland, and here, it's still winter. There is much snow. Yesterday and today, I volunteered to clear snow. The trip back was rather tiring. There is physical filth in the jails and railroad cars, but much worse is the moral filth: the most horrible profanity, 75% of their speech consists of profanity!

"From Yaroslavl', I was alone in the compartment, so I had the opportunity to pray. Discovering that I was a priest, something I never concealed, soldiers and prisoners showed a measure of respect. How strange, many are proud of saying, 'I'm a thief!' or 'I'm a drug addict!'...

"My first impressions of my new location are good. I was given two white sheets, a pillow with a pillow slip, a clean blanket and even a radio. But this is Holy Week, so I'll enjoy the music after Easter.

"I am well. For everything I thank God and all of you who support me with your letters, prayer and good words. May the Risen Christ repay you all with eternal life!"

April 14,1987

"... When I start writing you, my feelings are mixed: I am glad that I can visit you at least with a little letter, but it is sad and painful that the letter takes at least two months to reach you! How little our civilization has advanced!

"I have been working in the kitchen for two weeks. I peel potatoes, dust, and even prepare supper. The work isn't hard but it leaves little time for oneself, especially for prayer. I try at least in snatches to spend some time with God. I do what I can and I trust that the Lord will not blame me for it. Always and everywhere, I try to remain obedient to His holy will.

"In the new location, all conditions, physical and spiritual, are better, easier. But the climate here is much worse (we are 800 - 900 meters above sea level), there is less oxygen, so my heart gives me trouble, and my feet feel like they belong to someone else, although I try to walk as much as possible.

"I put in a requisition for a rake and broom for tomorrow. I plan to go out and police the area."

May 3,1987

Father Sigitas Tamkevičius writes:

"... For a prisoner, a letter is no less precious than a slice of bread for a hungry man. Besides, every letter reminds me that in Lithuania, there are people vividly mindful of Christ's law of love, 'Visit the prisoner'. (Mat 25,36) This is a sign of the Church's vitality.

"Not long ago, they promulgated the instruction of June 18 regarding amnesty. They cut my remaining time in half, so that next spring, May 27, I am preparing to leave Mordovia and spend a couple of years in Siberia. I am neither happy nor sad. I want even my being here to serve the good of the Church. The Master knows best where we are most needed.

"In my life, there is nothing interesting or unusual. It can all be summed up in two words: work and prayer. I remember from my childhood seeing on the wall of the pastor's room a large crucifix and the words: '*Ora et labora* -- pray and work!'

"It appears possible to carry out this program just as well in camp. And more. Father A. Skeltys once gave me the book *A Young Man's Religion* to read. There I found the letters A.M.D.G., and what they mean and who their author was. 'All for the Greater Glory of God!' — and I can put this into practice.

"What more do I need? In my free time, I walk paths well known to you, count my fingers instead of rosary beads and remember those who walked here before me and those who, in the homeland, labor in the Vineyard of Christ one way or another.

"I read in *Tiesa* about the meeting of the bishops and deans and the members of the government at the Presidium of the Supreme Soviet. From the brief news item, it's difficult to form an impression how much *perestroika* has effected Church-state relations. It seems to me that in time, the institution of the Council for Religious Affairs will have to be significantly reformed. This would be useful not only for the Church, but also for the state.

"...In my daily prayer, especially in the company of the Lord, I always remember those on whom God has laid heavy and responsible duties... let us remain united in prayer!"

September 28, 1987

To: L. Šepetys, Secretary of the Central Committee of the  
Communist Party of the Lithuanian S.S.R.  
From: Gintautas Iešmantas

#### A Petition

"Not long ago, the news reached me that during searches last year in 1986, my poetic work which had avoided imprisonment at the time of my arrest March 17, 1980, fell into the hands of the KGB agents. It comprises my creative

work from 1947 to 1979, so it is just about my entire conscious life, its essence. The manuscript consists of almost a thousand poems (the collections *Spring Freeze*, *Search for Essence*, *God's Wink* - quatrains, *Knife to the Heart*, *Hope's Clearing Gift of Being* as well as the poem 'Such is Life', etc.)

"In the court's decision, December 22, 1980, a consciously distorted and tendentious interpretation of my poetic work was presented. Such a political evaluation of creative work apparently fitted in with the spirit of lies which reigned at the time. But now, it is becoming obviously clear that the view of reality expressed in the poems accurately reflected historical developments, and the imperative of changes in the life of society which have begun today.

"My pen was guided by Truth, and served only the quest for Truth and Goodness. Hence, keeping my work in the KGB safes cannot be justified and is contrary to the process of democratization and the international concept of human rights.

"Generally speaking, the persecution of creative work, its confiscation and its occasional destruction, and punishment of the author for what his conscience dictated to him, is tantamount to a crime against humanity, against literature and against culture. Moreover, it is an offense against the mind and against the socialism which you propagate.

"Those who commit this crime try to justify their actions demagogically by saying that they are defending the state, the system, the public order and the like. But at all times and everywhere, once the blindness and the intoxication of insanity has passed, it becomes clear that such action inflicts irreparable damage on that very state and system, marking with the sign of condemnation and shame all who persecute creative efforts, regardless of what artistic results have been attained by them.

"Unfortunate is that society in which security forces (or secret police) have the right to intrude in cultural, literary and artistic affairs. And no one fears the light of publicity more than the security organs. I think you understand why.

"Far be it from me to place too high a value on the significance of my long-term labors. But this does not mean that I have to keep silent and reconcile myself to actions interfering with positive processes in society. I therefore appeal to you to take decisive measures that the aforesaid fruits of my creative efforts be returned to me without delay.

"I have in mind not only the aforesaid works. Taken from me were things written not only during my confinement in the state security committee's isolation unit for interrogation (about 270 verses and the poem *The Road*), but also in Camp BC-389-35, where I spent 1981-1985.

"I wrote about this in my letter to the Supreme Soviet of the Lithuanian S.S.R. (I sent a copy also to the Office of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of Lithuania.) Today, those confiscated items are undoubtedly being kept at the security committee.

"Much of my work is at the L.S.S.R. Procurator's Office (more than 150 triolets, poems, prose and other verses). Also to be returned are verses confiscated by KGB agents in 1975 and after a search of my apartment carried out September 4, 1979.

"I trust that you will be able to understand me. After all, you are, in a certain sense, a man of certain creative inclinations. My concern for the fate of my entire life is also an uneasiness concerning the future of democratic restructuring. I would like to believe that the latter are real and that the winds of change will not miss Lithuania.

"Alas, so far what hits the eye is an obvious paradox. Truth, incisive works, are demanded. But those which have been created on the basis of its rules and regardless of the danger of angry reaction are imprisoned in the KGB's dungeons, and their author is persecuted. What kind of restructuring, then, are we taking about?

"Truth and justice must triumph. Surely you, to whom governmental power belongs today, will try at least now to abolish injustices, standing up to lies and injustice which try to sidle up to the new conditions."

August 11, 1987

Povilas Pečeliūnas writes:

"I will answer many questions briefly. It's not worth writing about the weather or my health.

"First, to address the most important one...

"Why did I not make use of the 'possibility' of returning to Lithuania at the end of January?

"Yes, there was such a 'possibility', but at what price? At the price of lack of principle and compromise. During the so-called 'trial', during my final statement, I already emphasized that I never compromised with my conscience, that from the very beginning of my conscious life I am deeply convinced that compromises and lack of principle are incompatible with personhood, that a person can be free only in truth, that nothing can make anyone free except Truth.

"It is possible to be in concentration camp, in an isolation cell and on the most desolate transfer journey, and be free. It is possible to ride around in limousines, to advance by leaps and bounds in one's career, to be smothering in material goods and not be free. Such 'freedom' is only apparent. Compromise and lack of principle, no matter how you explain them, are the mark not of personhood, but of a man in the process of degradation or already degraded. To my soul, this is an entirely foreign thing.

"Those few words, (I promise not to break the law), even though they don't constitute a direct admission of guilt are an absurdity and fly in the face of logic. If a person is not guilty, then why does he have to 'obligate himself not to break the law'? After all, he never broke any for one thing. Moreover, he did

quite the contrary: he did not break any himself and he was concerned that others not break any, that everyone abide by the law, not only in word but in deed.

"Such a person had to endure all the terrors of concentration camp, interrogation, transfer journeys and isolation cell for raising his voice at a time when everyone was silent, because he was not a coward, and spoke the truth, bitter as it was. And now, it is demanded of such people that they promise to keep the law. Is this not absurd?

"Moreover, who is demanding it? Why those who broke the law or those who were responsible for carrying it out. See at what a paradox we have arrived!

"Thus, what I have written here was said by me, directly and openly, not only to the KGB but also to representatives of the Procurator's Office who came to 'liberate' me in such an absurd fashion.

"What is this? An attempt to excuse those whom no laws bothered or bother now? Or perhaps an attempt indirectly to make the point that such as I must be guilty of something? That is probably how it is. What a waste of effort!

"In a word, they were talking to the wrong man — something I told them to their face. The address is known; let them go see those who prepared such 'cases' in such 'trials' as the one which took place December 15-22, 1980.

"He who chooses the way of Truth must follow it to the end, regardless of what happens to him. Of course, this is no credit to me. Father Jakštas was right in saying that 'it is not our own light which we radiate.' Without God's blessing all of us would be helpless.

"During my so-called 'trial', I had the opportunity in my final statement to quote the words of Sacred Scripture: 'He who does not disown me before men, I will not disown him before my father...' (and vice versa)

"And after the trial, nothing gave me more pleasure than the fact that I had said those words recorded in the Gospel. I was thinking about neither the terrible transfer journey, nor about the concentration camp, but was merely rejoicing that I had as a matter of principle publicly professed Christ at such a moment. Just for this, it was worth going to concentration camp.

"Principle, if it becomes a necessity for someone, deeply imbedded in the heart, surfaces at important moments. Obviously, this also is not my doing but the hand of Divine Providence accompanying us everywhere.

"From that handful of words, you can understand why I could not act otherwise. If I had been tempted by so-called 'freedom', I would have lost true freedom which can only be found in Truth.

"And these are not just words, but the bedrock and essence of my life! To lose this would mean to stop being human. It always seems to me that those people deserve pity, who fight against Truth, who try to conceal it, falsify it... A wasted effort!

"The Truth will make you free' — likewise words from the Gospel which I repeated with deep conviction in my final statement. Hence, neither the KGB nor the procurator's office nor any other officials can 'free' one and not some absurd signatures, but only Truth! Incidentally, I was never not free!

"As for the homeland, I was never separated from it! My homeland, Lithuania, which no one was able to take from me, was always with me! It is in my heart! Perhaps this is why it is so precious! Distance means nothing!

"To date, I am still 'an especially dangerous state criminal...' Why 'dangerous', and 'especially' besides? Dangerous to whom? Why to those who fear the truth, to those who still believe that it is possible to shut Truth up in a cave, to imprison it or so conceal it that no one can know about it. However, Truth is more powerful than anything, and the measures to conceal Truth are regrettable: intimidation, force... And again... but, ...but!...

"Life shows those means by which we try to imprison Truth give only temporary 'results'. The Lord's ways are inscrutable and woe to him who tries to oppose them.

"It appears that I have explained to you why I acted thus and not otherwise. Perhaps you are startled? Be steadfast and patient until the end in the homeland! May the Good God bless you!"

August 15, 1987

P.S. "Now concerning my mother! Every day, I waited for the telegram. She waited for me all those (almost eight) years, day and night, standing at the window. And when, three years ago, she took to her sickbed never to rise again, day and night she talked about me and prayed. She was sustained not by physical strength, but by the infinite desire to see me once more... But that strength will not be enough for her, and the Lord will summon her earlier, so she will also make that sacrifice no smaller than that of all of us.

"Concerning letters. I write to everyone who writes to me and reply to everyone. If anyone writes to me and does not receive a letter from me, it either means that theirs was not delivered to me or mine was not delivered to them.

"It appears that I have written about all the most important things."

*Mrs. Pečeliūnienė died in August without having seen her son. Pečeliūnas was allowed to attend his mother's funeral which took place August 21.*

To: Procurator of the Lithuanian S.S.R., A.A. Novikov  
Esteemed Procurator!

I have been moved to write to you about Petras Anilionis's article published in the *Peasant's Newspaper*, October 11, 1987. In an effort to show

the baselessness of the author's statements and even threats, I attach to this letter my communication written April 22, 1984, to the Central Committee of the Communist Party of Lithuania, which your office refused to convey to the addressee and returned.

If we are to consider as anti-Soviet everything which hurts the Soviet Union as a state, then the author of the aforesaid article should be included among the real anti-Soviets.

1. Petras Anilionis explains Par. 50 of the U.S.S.R. Constitution in a deliberately distorted way, affirming that "separation of school from Church... must be understood as a prohibition against ...teaching children religious matters..."

2. Petras Anilionis, in matters of religious education, indirectly rejects Par. 19 of the U.S.S.R. law "concerning the U.S.S.R. Council of Ministers", adhering to "international agreements entered into by the U.S.S.R."

3. Petras Anilionis indirectly ignores Articles 26 and 27 of the law of the Vienna Conference concerning international agreements, accepted by the government of the U.S.S.R., and the principles of the declaration regarding international laws dealing with friendly relations and cooperation among states in accord with U.N. guidelines.

4. Petras Anilionis, by his anti-Church article, showed that he does not acknowledge:

A. Article 18 of the *Universal Declaration of Human Rights*;

B. Part 4 of Article 18 of the *International Covenant on Political and Civil Rights*;

C. The section of the *Helsinki Final Accords* which speaks about the obligations of the participating states regarding the question of human rights and basic freedoms;

D. The Section of the final document from the conference among those same states in Helsinki containing the obligation to improve their own laws and administrative regulations in the area of human right and basic freedoms.

All the above-named documents provide a basis for perfecting Soviet law or they already enjoy actual juridical status in the Soviet Union. Hence, all of Petras Anilionis' tendentious explanations are purely subjective. They have no juridical basis since the *Regulations for Religious Associations* mentioned by him are contrary not only to the above-named norms of international law recognized and confirmed by the U.S.S.R., but also to the Soviet Constitution itself. That this is the real state of affairs is demonstrated in the enclosure to this letter.

I remind you, as was mentioned in the XXVII Congress of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union, and is still being discussed in the Soviet press, that attached to it all are very many of the most varied rules, regulations, direc-

tives, orders, instructions, circulars and other administrative "laws" of this nature which have no real legal basis, or even violate the Soviet Constitution.

Among such "laws" are the *Regulations for Religious Associations*, which at this time during restructuring of the country must be repealed without delay or at least publicly acknowledged to be invalid. This must be done especially now that great attention is being paid at the Vienna Conference of thirty-five states to the question of the defense of the rights of believers.

It is dishonorable and not useful for the Soviet Union to be the only state in the world (not counting Albania and a few other undeveloped countries) in which an attempt is made by means of government resources to stifle religion to the point of utter destruction. With such policy, the U.S.S.R. will never win trust in the world community and among governments. Such policy, and the atheistic and anti-Church activity dictated by it, compromises the U.S.S.R. as a state, diminishes its international prestige, and weakens the foundations of the state itself.

So let Petras Anilionis and others of like mind not be offended if it is exactly in this sense possible to consider them all dangerous anti-Soviets, very greatly damaging by their actions the Soviet Union.

The war against religion by such measures..., which Petras Anilionis explains in his article, is also an insult to Leninism and an obvious ignoring of Vladimir Ilych Lenin and his teaching. That this is really so, let Lenin himself speak... (V. Lenin, *Complete Works*, Vol. 7, Page 1976, Col. 173) And yet even during Czarist times, even in Lithuania, those "shameful laws" never threatened punishment for teaching children religious truths. There were religion lessons in school.

Now with the spread and deepening of the policy of restructuring in all strata of the country, Petras Anilionis and his cohorts should consider: What would Lenin say about all those restrictions and prohibitions which abound in the *Regulations for Religious Associations*?

Here's a question also for you, Esteemed Procurator. Can the Office of the Procurator of the L.S.S.R. continue to remain ambivalent when the atheists, seeking their goals and as a matter of fact administering the Catholic Church in Lithuania and other religious associations, ignore or distort the Soviet Constitution and all international obligations in the area of human rights and basic freedoms?

Such ambivalence on the part of the state organs, especially in the area of religion and belief, also does not add to the strengthening of Soviet statehood and the perfecting and broadening of real democracy.

At the same time, may I inform you that I carried out my hunger strikes, begun on March 7, 1984, which are described in the attached. (In these conditions, it was not easy. Three times I felt faint, once to the point of losing consciousness.)

I will discontinue my fasting on my last day in camp.

They have informed me of your reply, in writing, of October 28,1987. (No. 13-4279-80) I thank you for it, since it fills out my information and conclusions regarding compliance with Soviet law in the practice of the guardians of justice...

Vytautas Skuodis (Benedict Scott)

Mordovia, Barashev. December 10,1986 - Human Rights Day

#### NEWS FROM THE DIOCESES

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

On the evening of July 15,1987, Cardinal Jaime Sin arrived in Vilnius from Riga. Even though officially nothing had been announced about it in advance, the Cardinal and his party were greeted in the churchyard of St. Nicholas by young people in folk dress and a numerous group of the faithful.

One girl presented the Prince of the Church with a white rosebud and explained that this was a gift of the imprisoned priests. The guest respectfully kissed the thorny stem of the rose to the accompaniment of the tumultuous applause of the assembly.

The young people presented flowers to the cardinal's companions, Lithuanian and Filippino clergy. For about an hour, as long as the guests were in the chancery, the faithful did not disperse. In the St. Nicholas churchyard, the young people's religious hymns rang out: "*Marija, Marija*" and "*Lietuva Bran-gi*" ("Beloved Lithuania"). The Lithuanian national anthem was sung.

As a sign of the unity of the Universal Church, those assembled recited aloud the *Pater Noster*, *Ave Maria* and *Gloria Patri*. When His Eminence reappeared on the steps with his party, the faithful greeted him with ringing, triple "*Mabuhai, Cardinal!*" (In Tagalog, "Long live the Cardinal!"), and shouts in Latin, "*Vivat Lituania libera et catolica!*" ("Long live Lithuania, free and Catholic!") Moved, the guest blessed everyone assembled in the churchyard. For a long time, unabating applause accompanied Cardinal Jaime Sin.

The following day, July 16, at noon, the Fillipino Cardinal celebrated Mass in the Cathedral-Archbasilica of Kaunas. In the sermon which he delivered through a translator, he repeatedly recalled the loyalty of the Lithuanian nation to Christ, witnessed and witnessing by heroic sacrifices. He spoke of the respect of the Pope and the Universal Church and their concern for our nation, and invited the assembled mothers to bring home to their infants a kiss sent by Pope John Paul II.

As the Cardinal and his party proceeded after Mass along a living corridor through the assembled crowd, four young men knelt at his feet with flowers

in their hands and one of them shouted in German, "We greet you, Your Eminence, in the name of the youth of Lithuania. We ask you, tell them everywhere that our priests are imprisoned, many churches are closed and the teaching of catechism to children is forbidden by law! Tell everyone that!"

The Cardinal was given a packet containing photographs of the priest-prisoners Fathers Sigitas Tamkevičius and Jonas-Kaštytis Matulionis, the exiled Bishop Julijonas Steponavičius, the deceased Father Bronius Laurinavičius and Father Juozas Zdebskis, photographed immediately after his death in the automobile, as well as views of the inside and outside of a vandalized church, confirming the truth of the spoken words.

#### **Tauragė**

On August 5, 1987, the pastor of the parish of Skaudvilė, Father Jonas Kauneckas, was summoned to the Executive Committee of Tauragė *Rayon*. He was presented with a warning from the Commissioner for Religious Affairs, Petras Anilionis, concerning his sermons delivered at the religious festival delivered in Žemaičių Kalvarija. Father Kauneckas is accused of giving sermons devoid of religious content and of reinforcing the Lowlander stubbornness in disregarding the regulations for religious cults. In the warning, it was stated that this was the sixth warning and in the future, sterner measures would be taken. Father Kauneckas stated in writing that the warning was unjust, since he had not spoken in his sermon about any laws, much less about disregarding them.

Anilionis similarly warned Father Kazimieras Gražulis, assistant pastor of St. George's in Šiauliai, about his sermons delivered at Žemaičių Kalvarija.

#### **Vilnius**

On July 28, 1987, *The Peasants' Newspaper* printed an article by Lithuanian Cultural Fund Committee Chairman D. Valatkevičius entitled, "To Work, Nurturers of Culture!". It states that the Archdiocese of Vilnius allotted 10,000 rubles to the Soviet Lithuanian Cultural Fund. This would be praiseworthy if the cultural fund used the money for the restoration of churches which are architectural monuments. However, as the author of the article writes, the money was allotted to:

- The refurbishing of the home and grave of freethinker M. Katkus in the Village of Ažytėnai, .Rayon of Kėdainiai;
- For the memorializing of places connected with revolutionary events and of fighters for the ideals of socialism;
- Finishing work on a memorial to heroic actions during the Great War for the homeland and the route of the Lithuanian 16th Division.

#### **D e l t u v a (Ukmergė Rayon)**

The August, 1987 issue of *Soviet Woman*, number 8, published author Mockuvienė's article, "The Pastor Tells Them To Separate," in which, by various fabrications, the pastor of the parish of Deltuva, Father Eugenijus Bartulis, is vilified and insulted.

Angered by such behavior on the part of Mockuvienė, the faithful of Deltuva wrote a letter of protest signed by 311 persons. The people of Deltuva demanded that their letter be published in the following issue of *Soviet Woman*.

A group of the faithful went to see Mockuvienė herself regarding this matter, but their demand that she retract the really low-brow article besmirching the title of journalist, or at least that their letter of protest be published, was ignored.

#### **A d a k a v a s (Raseiniai Rayon)**

On February 13, 1987, Monika Gavėnaitė, arrested in the the Village of Adakavas, was summoned before Skaudvilė District Chairman A. Mikašauskas. When she presented herself, Chairman Mikašauskas asked to see her papers. Taking the papers, the Chairman gave them to the worker at the passport desk and demanded that Monika Gavėnaitė's registration be immediately cancelled.

Thus, Gavėnaitė's registration in Adakavas was cancelled by force. The reason for the cancellation was absurd: She had been the housekeeper of the imprisoned Father Alfonsas Svarinskas.

Monika Gavėnaitė is trying to register at the address of a friend living in Šiluva, but here, too, the personnel at the document desk would not agree to register her.

On April 16, a meeting was called at the Raseiniai *Rayon* Executive Committee at which the responsible staff members passed resolution number 136. In the resolution, Gavėnaitė is accused of living since February 13, 1987, without registration and of having no permanent residence.

For not following the rules of the document desk, Gavėnaitė is being penalized by administrative procedure. She was given the order, "Register within a month!"

Upon receipt of the written decision, Gavėnaitė wrote a complaint to the Chief Procurator in Moscow, setting forth the entire facts and indicating that she was being discriminated against just because she had been Father Alfonsas Svarinskas' housekeeper.

On May 21, 1987, Gavėnaitė was finally registered in Šiluva.

#### **P a n e v ė ž y s**

On May 22, 1987, in Panevėžys, G. Petrauskienė, a teacher at Middle School 15, was buried with religious ceremonies. On the eve of the funeral, Prin-

Principal Kulvinskas and Vice Principal Pranskaitienė tried to convince the mother of the deceased, Eleanora Miežanskienė, to bury her daughter without Church rites. The mother disagreed, "My conscience does not allow me to bury her without the Church."

The visitors then began threatening that such stubbornness would have an effect on Miežanskienė's career, and the future life and education of Petrauskienė's little daughter.

Unable to frighten the relatives, Principal Kulvinskas forbade students and teachers to take part in the funeral of Teacher Petrauskienė.

#### *Palėvenėlė (Kupiškis Rayon)*

On June 13, 1987, faithful of Palėvenėlė erected a new wooden cross at the Palėvenėlė-Alizava crossroads, in place of the old one. Not for long did the people enjoy their cross. Executive Committee Vice Chairman Mečislovas Gudonis ordered Alizava District Executive Committee Chairwoman Danutė Paliulionytė to destroy the cross. Volunteers to destroy the cross did not show up. The evening of June 27, *Rayon* Executive Committee Vice Chairman Mečislovas Gudonis himself came, and together with Alizava District Chairwoman Paliulionytė, cut down the cross, cut it into pieces and threw them into the bushes next to the Palėvenėlė Middle School.

#### *Šiaudinė (Šiauliai Rayon)*

In the parish of Šiaudinė is the old cemetery of Kairiškiai, which the local people call the the Cemetery of the Vows. There, people from of old erected crosses, prayed, and now the faithful often assemble in the little chapel on the burial mound for prayer.

This jubilee year, too, services took place in the little chapel of the old cemetery of Kairiškiai, after which a cross was erected and blessed in thanksgiving to God for graces received. Participating in the services and the blessing of the cross were the faithful and the pastor of the parish of Papilė, Father Jonas Paulauskas and the pastor of the parish of Vieکشniai, Father Vincentas Gauronskis.

Some time after the celebration, Juozas Dapšys and Albina Kuodytė were summoned to the Kairiškiai Soviet farm where they were lectured by Director Zamarienė, Party organization Secretary Bučiūtė and a representative of the *Rayon* Executive Committee. The government officials scolded Dapšys, laughed at his beliefs, and said that the erection of crosses was forbidden.

At the end of the interview, an announcement was issued that Dapšys and Kuodytė were supposed to go to the *Rayon* Executive Committee to explain themselves.

On June 30, 1987, Dapšys and Kuodytė were scolded at the *Rayon* Executive Committee. For the erection of the cross, they had to pay a 30 ruble fine,

and they were ordered to tear down the cross, otherwise the government would do so and they would have to pay for the labor.

FROM THE ARCHIVES OF THE *CHRONICLE*  
Criminal Case Number 15678

Initiated February 21, 1949, in the Lithuanian S.S.R. State Ministry of Security, Division A.

*Decision to arrest*

**Benediktas Andriuška, son of Jonas.**

**Born 1884, in a peasant-bourgeois family in the Village of  
Vilkaičiai,**

**County of Alsėdžiai, District of Telšiai (sometimes noted as  
Bernatavas, Lieplaukė).**

**The family had 40 hectares of land.**

**Advanced education, theological.**

**No permanent address or occupation.**

**The father died in 1907, the mother, Eleanora, in 1917. Also  
deceased are eleven brothers and sisters.**

I found that he has been working against the Soviet government for a long time. He finished the School of Theology at the Papal University in England, 1917-1919-1923, he received information and conveyed it to English and Polish intelligence. With the assistance of the German Provincial, Bley, and the German espionage resident, Kipp, he organized the Jesuit order in Lithuania in 1923, and headed it until 1945. He edited *77ie Star*, worked on the magazine *Catholicism and Life*, and published articles against the Soviet government. He was the author of many of anti-Soviet books and founder of organizations.

During a raid July 16, 1948, anti-Soviet literature, manuscripts and a diary of an anti-Soviet nature were found. In 1947, he regularly gave sermons of an anti-Soviet nature. Living illegally. District of Telšiai. Searches to be made and he is to be arrested.

February 14, 1949.

Captain Balaitis,

Operative Agent, Subsection 1, Section O,  
of the State Security Ministry.

Chief Chechurov,

Section O, Subsection 1

The decision to arrest is confirmed February 16, 1949 by: Section O Chief, Lieut. Col. Shliapnikov; chief of the Investigation Section, Col. Soloid; Vice Minister Martevičius, sanctioned by Procurator Bacharov.

The search was made February 21, 1949, from 5:00 to 9:00 P.M., in the parish of Varlaukis, County of Skaisgiris, District of Tauragė. Found was an autobiographical book, *How I Became a Jesuit*.

He was arrested and a lien placed on his property: an iron bedstead, an old wooden basin, a new overcoat and mattress, an old mottled three years old cow, a six-year-old goat and six pairs of old underwear.

In charge of the case is Captain Golitsyn.

From the record of the interrogation (1949):

1. The questioning began February 24 at 11:00 A.M. and ended at 5:00 P.M.

Recorded biography:

Attended Russian elementary school of Lieplaukė. 1901, finished the progymnasium in Palanga, entered the seminary in Kaunas, discontinued studies after 1.5 years and left for Austria, 1903. March 3, 1903, entered the Jesuit Order. At the expense of the Polish Province, finished high school and, in 1909, the Papal School of Philosophy in Cracow.

Until 1913, he taught Russian language and liturgical singing at the senior Jesuit High school of Chirov, in Austria. In 1913, he left for England and enrolled in the School of Philosophy at the Papal University in Hastings. Ordained to the priesthood in 1915, in 1917 he finished theological studies. Until the summer of 1918, he studied ascetics and completed his tertiary in Canterbury. In the summer of 1918, he came to London and again studied privately, specializing in philosophy.

In 1919, he left England for Lithuania and taught philosophy, physics and liturgical music at the seminary in Kaunas. In 1920, he went to Cracow where he worked in the Jesuit Fathers' publishing house until 1921, publishing Catholic books and magazines in Polish.

In 1921, he went to Belgium where he worked as a prefect and taught Russian at the commercial institute in Antwerp until he returned to Lithuania, May 23, 1923.

Until 1930, he was a professor at the Kaunas Theological Seminary, teaching Latin, world history and other subjects. From 1930 until 1936, he lived at Vilniaus 245 in Šiauliai, as Rector of St. Ignatius Church. From April 21, 1936, until 1941, he was Provincial of the Jesuits in Lithuania, residing in Kaunas at the Jesuit church of St. Francis Xavier.

From the winter of 1942 until August, 1944, he lived in Pagryžuvis, teaching Philosophy. From 1944 until August 20, 1948, he was Rector of St. Ig-

natus Church in Šiauliai. Later, at his request, Administrator Juodaitis of the Diocese of Telšiai assigned him to work in Ukrėnai, in the District of Mažeikiai, County of Žydikai, and after that, in Varlaukis.

2. March 7. Interrogation began 8:00 P.M., ended 11:00 P.M.

Q - "You admit that up till 1940, in articles and books, and after 1944, educating youth in a spirit of religion and nationalism, you resisted the Soviet government?"

A - "I admit that I struggled against atheistic Bolshevism in the press, meetings, personal conversations with the faithful and lessons. I did so because I am a priest, because I do not recognize Bolshevism - in essence atheism -- because I do not agree with the destruction of the Catholic religion by the Bolsheviks.

"I look negatively on the introduction of the Soviet government in my native land because I know that it will destroy the Catholic Church in Lithuania. My whole struggle against Bolshevism, all my statements against Bolshevism, specifically its leaders, had as its purpose the defense of the Catholic religion - - to save it from destruction.

"To this end, I invited others to join the struggle with Bolshevism. I admit that I also educated children in the spirit of nationalism because love of nation helps to educate them more effectively in the spirit of religion. It is for this purpose that the monthly youth conferences were organized in Šiauliai. To all political questions put by the youth, I would answer, 'Now the most important thing is to be a good Catholic'."

3. March 10. Interrogation began 1:00 P.M. and ended 5:00 P.M.

Q - "You established the Jesuit Order in Lithuania. How?"

A - "I only revived it. The idea of reviving it originated in 1902 at the Kaunas Seminary. From 1903 to 1923, living abroad, I sought this goal, prepared the ground for it and wrote to the Father General in Rome. Ledochowski sent two Jesuit priests to Lithuania: the Frenchman Bubė and the Italian Zechini to find out what nationalities of Jesuits could do religious work in Lithuania. Zechini remained in Lithuania as papal representative and Bubė reported to the Father General that same year, 1922, that the Lithuanians were equally hostile to the Poles and to the French.

"For the same purpose, in 1922, two German Jesuits came to Lithuania, the Provincial Bley and his assistant, Drueding. He announced that although Germans were not particularly liked in Lithuania, it would be possible to work carefully if there were no German propaganda.

"In 1923, the Father General, Ledochowski, issued an official decision that Lithuania was to be controlled by the German Jesuits as a mission country. In the same decision, it was written that the Father General was transferring me from the Belgian Province of the Jesuits to the German Province. The German

Provincial, Bley, sent the German Jesuit Father Kipp to Lithuania at the end of July that year to restore the Jesuit Order.

"Thus, Father Kipp and I restored the Jesuit Order in 1923 in Lithuania, with its headquarters in Kaunas. At the beginning, the center was classified as a mission, in 1924, as a residence, and since the establishment of the Jesuit gymnasium in Kaunas — a college — up till 1929, there was but one Jesuit church in Lithuania, in Kaunas.

"I was the only one stationed there. Father Kipp was the Rector of the the high school, and till 1936, the Provincial. In 1936, by decision of the Father General, Ledochowski, the Jesuits of Lithuania were separated from the German Province, a separate Province was set up, and I was appointed provincial, assuming my duties April 21.

"In 1940, the Lithuanian Province had eighteen priests, Lithuanian and German.

"Several score Lithuanian Jesuits were also studying abroad. Three churches were functioning, in Kaunas, Šiauliai and Pagryžuvis.

"I asked Father General Ledochowski many times to relieve me of duties as provincial. In August, 1941, I handed over the duties to the newly appointed provincial, Father Gruodis, whom I had recommended."

Q - "Did Father General Ledochowski have your consent to transfer you from the Belgian to the German Province?"

A - "He didn't need any consent, since I offered my services in the restoration of the Jesuit Order in Lithuania."

Q - "When and how did you request to be relieved of duties as Provincial?"

A - "In 1939, I sent the Father General a petition in which I requested that he relieve me on account of poor health. I suggested Father Gruodis, a professor at the Kaunas Theological Seminary, but there was no response."

Q - "When and in what way were you informed about your release?"

A - "Father Gruodis said that before the war, the document had been forwarded through the American Ambassador in Moscow, but he had probably not received it since he never informed me. Only in 1941, when I was in the Province of Kaišiadorys, Parish of Žaižmariai, visiting Msgr. Sužiedėlis, did I receive an announcement from Father Gruodis that I had been relieved and he had been appointed. Father Gruodis had learned about it from a letter of Father Karl Fulst."

Q - "Why did you send Jesuits abroad illegally in 1940?"

A - "More than once in 1940-41, the Soviet government was requested to allow young Jesuits to study abroad, but we did not receive permission. I concurred with the suggestion Father Ritmeister to organize the education of Jesuits by crossing the border illegally. Who helped and who fled, I don't remember."

Q - "At the end of 1940, with the help of the German, Begner, four Jesuits fled to Germany. The four were: Venckus, Mikalauskas, Slabšys, who was the fourth?"

A - "I don't remember!"

4. March 16. Questioning began 8:00 P.M., ended 1:00 A.M. the 17th.

Q - "What organizations did you establish and which did you lead?"

A - "In 1925, together with Professor Venckus, we established the Apostolic Union for priests (*Unio Apostolica*), whose purpose was to improve the clergy's spiritual life. Permission to establish the union was given by Archbishop Juozapas Skvireckas. I headed it until 1936. Later, it was headed by Bishop Bučys. Between twenty and forty priests belonged to the union. I was concerned with each one's spiritual life and religious education, conducting retreats for them in Pagryžuvis.

"In 1923, I conducted several conferences in Kaunas for members of the Third Order in an effort to renew and enliven their religious life.

"In 1919, together with Msgr. Januševičius, I revived an organization which had died in Lithuania, the Saint Vincent de Paul Society. Its purpose was to provide material and moral assistance to the sick and poor. From 1923 on, many priests joined this organization, it grew greatly, and was active throughout Lithuania, but I did not work with it.

"In 1923, I revived the Apostleship of Prayer, and directed it until 1930. In the apostolate were about 100,000 members. Its purpose was to pray for intentions specified by the Pope. One of these intentions was that Russia would enter on the path of religious rebirth. From 1930 on, this organization was directed by Father Paukštys.

"From 1919-1923, I conducted several conferences for *the Ateitininkai* at their request, and participated in their Congress. During 1926-27, I edited the magazine *Žvaigždė (The Star)*, which the Lithuanian Jesuit Province published until 1940. Its circulation grew from 5,000 to 50,000. After me, it was edited by Father Paukštys and Father Bružikas.

"I wrote articles for the magazines *Tiesos Kelias (The Way of Truth)* and *Draugija (The Society)*. The Christian Democratic organ *Rytas (Morning)*, published several of my articles."

Q - "Where were your anti-Soviet articles published?"

A - "I remember two anti-Soviet articles in the magazine *Draugija*."

Q - "How many of your books were published?"

A - "From 1923 till 1940 more than 20 books religious in content were published."

"I translated about the same number into Lithuanian from English, German and French."

5. March 18. Interrogation began 11:00 P.M. Ended March 19, 2:00 A.M.

Q - "Why did you issue Petras Venckus a forged document? He used it to obtain a passport."

A - "I gave him a certification that he is a priest. I know that personally and will always testify. The rest of the information I wrote on this word. I must admit I did not know the photograph was falsified."

6. March 21. Interrogation began 8:00 P.M. Ended March 22, 2:00 A.M.

Q - "What was your relationship with Dr. Rutkauskas?"

A - "He borrowed 3,000 rubles. This was known to Delininkaitienė and Kuzmickas."

Q - "What are their beliefs?"

A - "They are people loyal to the Soviet government."

Q - "You used to give medical supplies to members of the underground and helped them?"

A - "They did not come to me. Besides, the Jesuits used to say among themselves that we shouldn't place ourselves or religion at risk - we shouldn't interfere."

Q - "Do you remember to whom you gave bandages?"

A - "To no one. It is true that in 1946 or 1947, some girl asked for bandages because there are none at the hospital. Who she is I do not know. Anyone who came to me asking for material or spiritual assistance I did not refuse. I gave them what I had. Who they were, what their views were, or whether they belonged to the underground, I did not ask and I don't know."

7. April 4. Interrogation began 8:00 P.M. Ended April 5, 2:00 A.M.

Q - "On July 16, 1948, during a search of the church loft, they found anti-Soviet literature, a diary, and a list of residents of Šiauliai deported in 1940-1941. Is that your literature?"

A - "Only the diary is mine. I don't know to whom everything else belongs. I only remember that Maskvitis the book dealer asked permission to put prayer books up there. I gave permission, but I don't know what he put up there."

Q - "Why were you hiding the diary? "

A - "I wished to preserve it and give it to some historian to write a book about the history of the Jesuits in Lithuania. After all the entire diary speaks only about the restoration of the Jesuit order."

Q - "In the diary are there anti-Bolshevik notes? "

A - "Yes since I am anti-Bolshevik."

Q - "Where is the continuation of the diary?"

A - "I lost it traveling from Pagryžūvis to Šiauliai in August of 1944."

Q - "On July 19, 1948, the *Vytis* symbol was found hanging on the church wall together with an anti-Soviet motto and an announcement that there would be a youth conference. Who hung that up?"

A - "It was hung up at my direction. I believe Father Šeškevičius hung it up. True, I did think at first the *Vytis* might annoy the Bolshevics but they convinced me and I agreed."

Q - "Who convinced you?"

A - "I don't remember."

Q - "How do you understand the slogan, 'For Country and Church'?"

A - "To pray for country and Church."

Q - "For what country?"

A - "For such as it is."

Q - "For a Soviet one?"

A - "No, to pray for our homeland Lithuania, rejecting the present political system."

Q - "Who conducted the youth conferences and whose idea were they?"

A - "Under my direction, Fathers Šeškevičius, Masilionis and I used to conduct them."

Q - "On May 26, 1947, you said in the sermon, 'The Bolshevics are trying to draw the people away from religion. They won't be able to do anything if we believe deeply and strongly. We must never turn away from God. Faith is the basis of our life.' Did you say that?" A - "I probably said it, since those are my thoughts."

Q - "In 1942, in the church of Pagryžuvis, in a sermon against drunkenness, you said that liquor diminishes human worth, brings disbelief nearer, and can call down on one a punishment from God, 'The Bolshevics will return and take you away.' Did you say that?"

A - "I said it."

Q - "On December 21, 1943, in Kelmė, did you deliver an anti-Soviet sermon?"

A - "I did. I won't conceal the fact that I'm a priest, so I have been, I am, and I will be the enemy of the atheistic Bolshevics."

8. April 6. Interrogation began 9:00 P.M. Ended April 7, 2:00 A.M.

We talked about his acquaintance with the diocesan administrator Juodaitis, about assignments and about the fact that after Father Juodaitis' departure in 1948, Administrator Stankevičius assigned as pastor of the Jesuit church in Šiauliai, Father Šovis, the pastor of the church in Radviliškis; why the appointment in Kaunas was made in consultation with Father Gruodis, is he a Jesuit, etc.

9. April 11. Interrogation began 11:00 A.M. Ended 3:00 P.M.

The question was raised why Father Šeškevičius left in July, 1948, for the Diocese of Kaišaidorys; in August 1948, Father Masilionis to Raseiniai and why Father Šovis was appointed. Father Andriuška said that Administrator Stankevičius made the appointments and that Father Šovis had probably been without an assignment.

10. April 11. Interrogation began 8:00 P.M. Ended April 12, 3:00 A.M.

Q - "Why did you wish to go to Soviet Russia in 1918-1919?"

A - "In 1917, in Canterbury, England, I received a letter from Father General Ledochowski. He suggested I go to Petersburg and with the Polish Jesuits, carry out Catholic work.

"From the Procurator of the Jesuits, I received 100 Pounds, Sterling. In London, I applied to the Swedish and Norwegian Consuls. They promised me a transit visa if I presented my visa to Petersburg. At the end of 1917, I looked for the Soviet Russian representative in London. He had been arrested, and I spoke only with his wife, Litvinova, who did not advise me to go to Petersburg. I asked the British police chief for a visa, but he did not give me any.

"Wrangel came. I asked him by letter for his assistance. In a letter written in his own hand, he informed me that when it was possible, he would help me. In his opinion, there would be no religious oppression in Russia. Everyone would enjoy complete religious freedom."

Q - "Why did you apply to the defeated White Guard, Wrangel?"

A - "I was interested in the anti-Bolshevik general's opinion of the situation in Russia, so I went to him. He did not expect a defeat of the counter-revolution and he had no strong opinion about the proletarian revolution which had occurred."

Q - "In your diary, there is a plan for an apostolate in Russia. It was discussed at the Vatican and given approval. What is the purpose of this plan? Why did you write it?"

A - "In 1921, in the City of Engen, Belgium, I discussed that question with the Professor of Theology, Dr. D'Herbigny. He was also interested in the Russian apostolate, and was preparing to go to Rome, so I presented him with my plan. Later, I found that the plan had been considered by Father General Ledochowski. The purpose of the project was to strengthen the Catholic religion in those countries bordering on Russia, within the depths of Russia, and to seek a union of the Orthodox and Catholic Churches."

Q - "Were there no anti-Soviet purposes?"

A - "My purpose-plan was to struggle against atheistic Bolshevism. It was not concerned with the political or economic system of Russia."

Q - "Is it possible to separate or distinguish a struggle against atheistic Bolshevism from a struggle against the Soviet government?"

A - "Since the Bolsheviks, in their war against religion, use physical and other government force — administrative measures — it is difficult to separate the Communist system of government from atheism. Hence the conclusion: the struggle against atheistic Bolshevism is a struggle against the atheist government, but I consider Communism the aggressor in this struggle."

11. April 12. Questioning began 1:00 P.M.

Q - "When did you become acquainted with Aleksandras Markevičius?"

A - "In 1937, in Kaunas. He was ill and I helped him materially. Josef Ritmeister, Rector of the Jesuit Order, looked out for him. Later, Markevičius studied in Holland."

Q - "Why did he wish to cross the border in 1941?"

A - "He was not yet a priest and he wanted to complete theological studies. I know that he did not succeed in crossing the border and went to prison."

Q - "Who ordained him, and when?"

A - "Archbishop Skvireckas, in 1943."

Q - "Why did he deliver anti-Soviet sermons?"

A - "There was no anti-Soviet meaning to his sermons. I had forbidden him, and he obeyed. Under my direction, he taught religion to youngsters and high school students in Šiauliai."

12. April 13. Questioning began 1:00 P.M. Ended 5:00 P.M.

Q - "Why did you write the anti-Soviet article entitled 'Some Traits of the Pope'?"

A - "Rector Petrauskas of the Kaunas Theological Seminary suggested I read the lecture to the seminarians February 13, 1938, on the occasion of the Pope's coronation. The lecture was published in the magazine *Draugija*, in the 'Catholicism and Life' section."

Q - "You vilified and insulted one of the most honorable of Soviet leaders, the leader of the Communist Party."

A - "I did not mean to vilify or insult. I spoke the truth. After all, Lenin was widely written up in the foreign press. Of course, my personal opinion coincided with the ideas of the press."

13. April 14. Questioning began 1:00 P.M. Ended April 15 at 1:00 A.M.

Q - "What did you do in England from 1913 to 1919?"

A - "In Hastings, Canterbury and London, I studied Theology, financed by the Polish Jesuit Province."

Q - "When and how did you work with English espionage?"

A - "Never in any way did I work with any intelligence agency. I was known only to Lithuanian representatives Chainskas and Bizauskas. In June of 1919, I left for Lithuania."

Q - "In your diary, there's a point at which on the train en route to Lithuania, you met Lithuanian volunteers going to fight the Bolsheviks, and you blessed them?"

A - "Yes, I said, 'May God help defend our homeland from Bolshevism.'"

14. April 15. Questioning began 9:00 P.M. Ended April 16, 2:00 A.M.

Q - "Are you acquainted with a Grazhinov, living in the City of Radviliškis

A - "In letters, he asked to be accepted into the Jesuit Order. In March, 1940, he participated in a retreat for high schoolers. In 1945 or 1946, he went to see Father Danyla in Pagryžuvis. However, in our opinion, he did not have a healthy outlook and we refused to accept him."

Q - "How did you organize religious instruction for children in Šiauliai?"

A - "We met at the home of Dean Telksnys. Father Šeškevičius separated the children into groups, assigned to Fathers Lileika, Marcinkus and Kuzmickus. Elementary school children were taught by Sister Valentina Kėzytė. In February 1948, the Šiauliai City Executive Committee banned the teaching of religion in church. Hence, we used to conduct only monthly conferences. We had no permission for them. We said, 'Be good Catholics!'

"The Kaunas GPU tried to recruit Dean Telksnys. He refused to cooperate. After that, he received a suspicious letter from the chancery: The signature of Chancellor Mileškas was not authentic. He sent his own man to verify. It appears that the chancery staff did not write it. He decided that they were getting ready to arrest him, so he hid, that is, he left Šiauliai. Where he did not say."

Q - "Why did you leave Šiauliai?"

A - "They blamed me for the monthly conferences, even though the curia allowed them to be continued, so I left."

15. April 16. Questioning began 12:00 noon and ended 5:00 P.M.

Q - "What sort of memoirs did you write for 1942-1943? Where are they?"

A - "I wrote about events in Lithuania in 1940-1943. I wrote about the coming of the Red Army and our fear lest they slaughter or arrest us. I wrote about the illegal establishment of the government, the suppression of the high school and the magazines *Žvaigždė* and *Misija*, and the nationalization of the residence, the repatriation of the Germans, the beginning of the war with the Germans and the cruelty of the Bolsheviks."

Q - "Were they anti-Soviet?"

A - "Yes, since I wrote negatively."

Q - "Why did you write?"

A - "My purpose was to give my impressions of historical events as they were reflected in the life of the Jesuits. I filled about eight or ten notebook pages. I had three copies, one of which I sent out through a religious whose name I do not remember, to Kaunas, and two of them I destroyed in 1944 or the beginning of 1945."

Q - "What else did you publish during the German occupation?"

A - "In April, 1944, I finished publishing my diary up till 1930."

Q - "Who read it?"

A - "In 1943, in Pagryžuvis, it was read by Markevičius. It appears that the rector, Father Danyla, read the first part.

16. April 18. Questioning began 9:00 P.M. and ended at midnight.

Q - "During the search, eight anti-Soviet books were found:

1. Valuckas' *Collective Tyranny*
2. Koma's *The Jews Behind One of the Leaders of the Soviet State*
3. Zhigoriech's *The Red Terror of the GPU*
4. Vaičiūnas' *In the Grasp of the Chekists,*
- 5.- 8. *The Archives of Lithuania During the Bolshevik Era "*

A - "The books are not mine, I don't know whose they are. Perhaps Maskvitis left them. I didn't give them to anyone."

17. April 19. Questioning began 12 noon and ended 3:00 P.M.

Q - "Tell us about your piece, 'The New Order'?"

A - "I wrote it in 1916, in England. It is directed against Lithuanian Socialists living in Scotland. Its purpose was to stop anti-religious propaganda conducted by the socialists and to weaken their influence on the masses. The contents were more or less as follows: the Socialists wanted to create their own state, but were unsuccessful. The economy collapsed entirely, the Socialist forms of government are bad, the leaders of the Socialist state are unconscientious, of low morality, because they have rejected religion. The new order did not suit the people, and they fled. The story takes place in the Lithuanian communities of the Town of Belshire. Everywhere I tried to show the ill effects of anti-religious propaganda on the life of the Socialists; everywhere I tried to strengthen the faith of the Lithuanians living in England."

Q - "In your diary is an incident in which you told an English soldier 'I am not a Bolshevik, I am their enemy, just as you are'. Is that how it was?"

A - "That was at the beginning of 1919. To this day, I am an enemy of atheistic Bolshevism."

Q - "Why did you go to Rome in 1938 - March, I think it was?"

A - "I attended a meeting of the Jesuit Provincials."

Q - "Do the Jesuits now have ties with the Vatican?"

A - "They do not."

The investigation ended April 19, 1949. The indictment was drawn up April 20, 1949, in Vilnius:

Andriuška, Benediktas, Son of Jonas, is accused of being one of the most important figures in the Catholic clergy; of establishing the reactionary Jesuit Order in Lithuania; of heading it; authoring many anti-Soviet books; of carrying on for many years active and deliberate agitation against the Communist Party and the Soviet government. He did a lot of work zealously creating various Catholic membership organizations. In so doing, he drew the Lithuanian people away from the revolutionary struggle.

He wrote and published a 577-page diary of the years 1903-1930. He wrote anti-Soviet and libellous memoirs about the activities of Soviet organs, 1940-1941, reproduced them and disseminated them among priests and Jesuits. In 1925, he wrote a pamphlet entitled, "The Jesuits, Who Are They and What Do They Want?," in which Lithuanian and Russian officials struggling against the reactionary policy of the Jesuits were slandered.

In 1938, the magazine *Catholicism and Life* published a talk he gave to seminarians in Kaunas on the anniversary of the Pope's coronation, in which he slandered the Communist Party leader.

From 1944 till July 1948, he educated youth in church in a religious and nationalistic spirit; regularly preached anti-Soviet sermons in church; gave religion lessons and monthly religious conferences which used to draw youth away from Communist education and he kept anti-Soviet literature.

The Lithuanian S.S.R. Ministry of State Security recommends for Andriuška, Benediktas, Son of Jonas, ten years in prison and has decided to send the case for special discussion by the U.S.S.R. Ministry of Internal Security.

He is accused under Par. 58, Art. 2d of the *Criminal Code of the Russian Soviet Federated Socialist Republic*.

On May 25, 1949, a special consultation of the U.S.S.R. Ministry of Internal Security decided that for anti-Soviet agitation and the dissemination of anti-Soviet leaflets, Benediktas Andriuška is to be confined to prison for ten years, beginning February 21, 1949 (Dossier number 72693).

In the dossier are more decisions of various kinds which were made in Vilnius. Among the more interesting are:

1. Andriuška is suffering from cataracts, hence, unsuitable for physical labor.

2. The dossier is being sent for special discussion, hence, its entire contents is a secret.

3. Andriuška is an important figure in the Catholic clergy, the creator of the Jesuit Order in Lithuania, and its leader; from 1916 to his arrest, he conducted active agitation against the Communist Party and Soviet government, wrote Catholic books, established organizations, disseminated anti-Soviet documents and trained youth in a religious-nationalist spirit; hence, he is especially dangerous and must be confined in a special prison.

#### Criminal Case No. 15678

##### Material Evidence

Captain Golitsyn, Sub-section Chief of Division 1 of the Special Section of the L.S.S.R. Internal Security Ministry, has decided, and Lieutenant Colonel Chelnokov, Chief of Division 1 of the Special Section, has confirmed this decision:

1. The chief operatives in the search of July 16, 1948: Major Kulichevskiy, Lieutenant Balashov, Lieutenant Petrakin, Lieutenant Suvorova, with Assistant Pastor P. Masilionis and Sacristan J. Minalga as official witnesses, found a *Royal* typewriter, 3 kg. of coins, some white metal, one Russian bullet shell, a list of families removed from Šiauliai, three copies of nationalist pamphlets (nine pages), eight books, a diary (seven fascicles, 1903-1930, 577 pages, published 1941-1944) in which there are anti-Soviet notes, and which was to be used for writing a history of the Jesuits in Lithuania - "this material evidence is to be destroyed except for excerpts from the diary.

2. To Dossier 15678, add the excerpts from the 1938 magazine, *Catholicism and Life*, and excerpts from the pamphlet, "The Jesuits, Who They Are and What They Want". The anti-Soviet brochure and a stenographic record of the talk given in 1938 to the seminarians is in Dossier No. 6421. (Whose dossier this is, and why it contains Father Andriuška's booklet and a stenographic copy of his talk, no information is contained in Criminal Case No. 15678.)

Excerpts were translated into Russian by Translator Junior Lieutenant Linova, of the Special Section.

For three hundred years in Lithuania, and especially in the Lowlands, the reputation of the miracle-worker, Barbora Umestauskaitė, has been growing. She lived in the 17th Century, in the modest town of Žagarė. The believing public speaks widely about miracles performed through the intercession of Barbora Umestauskaitė. More than four hundred of them have been recorded.

These are not judicial documents with medical signatures, but simply sincere narratives brimming with the gratitude of those who have experienced supernatural assistance, attested to by their signatures. (The record book of the church of Old Žagarė with many reports of miracles disappeared during the Second World War. Miraculous cures acknowledged by the people are being passed on by word of mouth.)

Two kilometers away from Old Žagarė stood the strong castle of Raktuvė. Margis, the military leader of Kęstutis, Grand Duke of Lithuania, defending the northern borders of Lithuania from the Livonian Order, commissioned one of his soldiers, Kasčiuška, to erect a defensive stronghold. Margis himself took up residence at Pilėnai. The Castle of Raktuvė was more than once the witness of bloody wars between the Lithuanians and the Livonians.

The King of Poland and of Lithuania, Jogaila, gave the Castle of Raktuvė to its builder, and later it was inherited by the boyar, Umestauskas. Upon becoming owner of the castle, Boyar Umestauskas began building the Town of Žagarė on the left bank of the Svetė Stream, not far from the castle. The Umes-

tauskas Clan was, from of old, a renowned family of nobles whose members carried out various duties of state until the end of the 16th Century.

In 1628, Barbora was born into the Umestauskas family, its only child. Nothing is known about her mother, who died early, leaving her daughter to a stepmother. We can only believe that she was a Lithuanian woman descendent of local boyars, because according to tradition, Barbora is considered to have descended from local people.

Umestauskas' second wife was very cruel. We can imagine how much little Barbora suffered at the hands of her tyrannical mother. It appears that Barbora's real mother was very religious, and in her daughter's early childhood, she managed to graft onto her daughter's soul a shoot of her own devoutness.

According to the oral tradition of the old residents of Žagarė, which were handed on to them by their parents and grandparents, Barbora went frequently to church, not infrequently covering up to half a kilometer going there on her knees. Once there, she used to pray before the tabernacle, in total absorption, losing all track of time.

Without a doubt, such a life-style on the part of her step-daughter annoyed the pride of the boyar's wife. She hated Barbora and in various ways, made life difficult for the patient, silent girl.

Being sensitive of heart, Barbora loved the poor and the sick, and often interceded for the exploited serfs and came to their help. It is thought that at the Umestauskas estate, there was no attention given to charity and Barbora had to hide her good-heartedness from the eyes of her father and especially from her step-mother.

Having barely reached maturity, young Barbora tried to escape the bustle of the loose-living estate, seeking peace and the nearness of God. She entered the Benedictine Convent in Riga. This move on her part caused a great furor on the Umestauskas estate. Barbora was a sole heiress and the father would more easily have agreed to let her wed, even some moderately powerful boyar, rather than see his daughter religious garb.

The fact that Barbora was in a convent in Riga is attested to by a certification found in the convent archives. However, this attempt to escape the restrictions of the world was not successful for Barbora. The boyar's young daughter was forced with aching heart to return to her family. It is surmised that there could have been two reasons for this: her weak health and the constant opposition of her parents to her chosen state in life.

The Umestauskas Family was not noted for its spirit of Christian virtue. It is not clear even to which group of nobility they belonged, the Catholic or the Protestant.

We will never know what plans or goals young Barbora had upon her return to the world. There is no doubt that being wealthy and, as tradition has it, very beautiful, she had many opportunities to achieve much in the world. She

undoubtedly had secret and known admirers who dreamt of establishing ties to the well-known family. How many trials and difficulties she had to bear remains a mystery.

The life of Umestauskaitė was not a long one. A bright, pure flash, and all was extinguished. In 1648, at the age of twenty, Umestauskaitė defending her honor against the predations of an immoral father, leaped from the second story and died. In the eyes of the world, an unexpected tragedy; in the eyes of faith, a heroism crowned with the glory of martyrdom.

In the old documents, we find evidence that Barbora's remains were interred in the crypt of the Butleras estate, in the Village of Žvaigaič a kilometer and a half from the Town of Žagare. People from of old have called one cellar in the ruins of the palace "Barbora's Cellar". Later, she was interred in the public cemetery and for about one hundred years, rested in the earth.

With the reputation of her virtues and miracles spreading, the people began demanding greater honor for Barbora's remains. In the 18th Century, the faithful went to the Church leadership with the request to transfer the casket of Barbora Umestauskaitė (popularly known as Žagarietė) to the church. Solemnly, her casket was transferred to the crypt of the Old Church of Žagare.

The cult and the lines of devotees at Barbora's tomb grew even more when news spread that Barbora's body, after having lain one hundred years in the earth, remained uncorrupted.

When did devotion to Barbora begin among the people? Her devout life and her martyr's death were held in high esteem immediately after her death. Otherwise, she would have been quickly forgotten as the victim of a tragic event and among the people, the legend of Barbora's cellar would never have survived. So the people honored Barbora Umestauskaitė from of old, without even inquiring whether the Church had recognized her as a saint.

In the Old Church of Žagare, the people venerated a picture of "Saint Barbora, the Martyr" as "their Barbora's" picture. People were especially surprised by the fact that Barbora's remains did not decay. Local devout women would, from time to time, change her white dress when it lost its freshness. Such was the condition of Barbora Umestauskaitė's body until the incursion of the Swedes into Lithuania.

During the war with the Swedes, the church of Žagare burned down. The caskets in the crypt were extracted, piled in the churchyard and burned. Among them was Barbora's casket. After the fire, when the army had withdrawn, local inhabitants, setting the site of the pyre and the ruins in order, found Barbora's body in the ashes. It was only slightly blackened from the flames, but not consumed.

With great veneration, the remains of Barbora Umestauskaitė-Žagarietė were suitably adorned and placed in the restored crypt of the church. The remains of Barbora Umestauskaitė were not only a relic, but an archeological

and historical rarity, so they were honored by the spiritual leadership and tolerated by the government of the times.

From 1876 on, Czarist Russia began suppressing veneration of Barbora. Vice Governor Rishkov of Kaunas sent a special letter to the Bishop-Administrato of the Diocese of Samogitia, Aleksandras Beresnevičius, asking him to forbid the faithful from visiting the grave of Barbora Umestauskaitė, or to leave votive offerings which were later handed over to the pastor.

The Vice Governor stated that the disinterment of the dead and the spreading of information about their failure to corrupt could be considered as banned by law.

In 1889, orders were given to inter Barbora's remains. Pressured by the government, the bishop sent the Dean of Šiauliai, Father Tomkevičius, to Žagarė. The doors from the church to the crypt were walled up and the window was barred. But Barauskis still would not calm down.

Once more, he wrote complaints to his government to the effect that the crypt remained not completely walled up and that people were still praying before the window. The government then ordered Father Tomkevičius to seal the crypt. Thus, the crypt was left completely dark, and without ventilation. Barbora's remains were sealed in the crypt for five years.

A dampness appeared in the church itself. There was a danger that the main altar might collapse. Finally, the window of the crypt fell out, possibly in answer to the prayers of the parish and the pastor.

The people, accustomed to seeing "their Barbora", and praying at her tomb, could not rest. In 1897, it was noticed that in the church floor, under the high altar and around it, cracks were appearing and the bricks of the crypt vault, without air protecting them from dampness, became saturated and began scaling.

Since the high altar stood on the vaults, a new danger arose of the vaults and the church floor collapsing. To avoid the calamity, the pastor appealed in writing to the bishop requesting him to obtain permission from the government to install a ventilator in the crypt wall and to reinforce the vaults of the crypt.

Permission for the repairs was obtained in this way. The crypt was opened on that occasion and accessible to people. Barbora's casket was visited without interruption by devotees and steadily grew in reputation for miraculous events.

In 1937, a chilling event in Žagarė shocked the Lithuanian public. On the night of February 20, unknown culprits who crawled through a window into the crypt of the Old Church of Žagarė, desecrated Barbora's remains. Taking them from the casket, they tore them to pieces and scattered them about the town.

The next morning, when the deed was discovered, Barbora Umestauskaitė's remains were gathered up and replaced in a casket. The people's anger and pain was great...

In 1963, the Old Church of Žagarė was closed and turned into a warehouse. The government also tried to abolish veneration of Barbora. One night, a woman who happened to be going by the church noticed some men walking around the church. Before the basement window burned a light. Gathering up her courage, the woman approached one of the men keeping watch and began asking that if the law forbade venerating her in this crypt, Barbora's remains be interred in the cemetery.

The guard replied, "It's too late."

The next morning, Barbora Umestauskaitė's casket was not in the crypt. Thus, Samogitia lost Barbora Umestauskaitė's remains. For some time, various rumors about their fate proliferated. It was said that Barbora's body had been turned over for experiments, etc.

It was the people's conviction that Barbora Umestauskaitė, by her life and death - defending her chastity - merited veneration accorded to the saints, even though she was never registered in the Roman *Martyrology*. On account of Czarist oppression and the spread of Protestantism, the veneration of saints in Lithuania experienced many obstacles. Barbora Umestauskaitė was accorded the honors of sainthood by the faithful of Lithuania. Her devout life and heroic death were reasons enough to venerate her as a saint. This was never forbidden by the bishops of Lithuania. On the contrary, they agreed with the people's opinion and defended Barbora's remains from the arbitrariness of Czarist governors when the latter, out of nationalist sectarian motives, tried with brutal force to root from the people's consciousness her memory. With good grounds, it is thought that in those days, veneration of Barbora helped to preserve Lithuanian language and culture among the people, and prevented Protestantism from spreading.

The time has come to remind people of this historic personality whom our disturbed and materialistic era is attempting to root completely from people's memory. Even in Žagarė, the younger generation often calls her Barbora Radvilaitė, confusing her name with another historic personage, the wife of King Žygimantas Augustas.

Documents are disappearing, memories are fading, the guardians of old legends are dying...

We do not have the remains of Barbora Umestauskaitė-Žagarietė. The nation did not preserve her casket. May her memory be saved from oblivion.

## IN THE SOVIET REPUBLICS

### Ukraine

In the western regions of Ukraine, the activity of the Catholic (Uniate) Church has increased. Compared to former years, the faithful, adults as well as children, are going to church increasingly often. At the same time, the persecution of the faithful by the atheistic government has increased. This is evidenced by the terrorizing of priests and the numerous fires at functioning and non-functioning churches. Here are a few examples:

In May, 1987, for offering Mass, fines were imposed on Fathers Ivan Senkiw (Son of Josef), Father Vasilyk and Taras Senkiw. Confiscated from them were bibles, all liturgical vestments and church vessels (chalice, paten, etc.)

In June, they fined young Father Senkiw four times, up to 100 rubles. The KGB warned him that these were the last fines; that in the future, arrest would follow. Two days later, a search followed. From Father Senkiw, they confiscated a newly acquired bible, liturgical vestments, a chalice and crucifix, and the priest himself they interrogated.

In the Cities of Buchach and Borchshev, in the Region of Ternopil, where Uniates assemble to pray, they are regularly dispersed by an operative group of auxiliary police on alert. The auxiliaries act unacceptably in the churches, relentlessly vandalizing them.

On the night of April 13, 1987, the church in the Village of Yasenij, *Rayon* of Rozhniatovsk, Region of Ivan-Frank, was set afire and burned down. The determination of the faithful to rebuild the church was quite unexpected. Heedless of various obstacles posed by the atheists and the atheistic government, by their own efforts, out of their own materials and resources, they had, by Easter - a period of one week - erected on that same spot another house of prayer!

In the spring of 1987, the church functioning in the village of Piniw, *Rayon* of Nadvorno, Region of Ivan-Frank, was burned down. The faithful, without government permission, rebuilt the house of worship in a comparatively short time.

One night in March 1987, the suppressed Catholic-Uniate Church in the Village of Goshev, *Rayon* of Dolinsk, Region of Ivan-Frank, was set afire and burned down.

On a hill in the aforesaid Village of Goshev, a renowned Catholic monastery, possessing great architectural value, has just about gone to wrack and ruin. The monastery had been converted into an orphanage. Children had been housed in the monks' cells and the church itself had been turned into a storage house for the orphanage. The faithful of Ukraine visit this shrine in great numbers, even though the militia try by all means possible to disperse the pilgrims.

In the fall of 1986, with the militia and Party activists from the *Rayon* and the village participating, the government suppressed Catholic Church in the Village of Vyshkov, *Rayon* of Dolinsk, Region of Ivan-Frank, was bulldozed. The Village of Vyshkov is high up in the Carpathians, and borders on the Region of Transcarpathia. Workers from Czechoslovakia, laying a natural gas pipeline, refused to provide a technician for the demolition of the church. They condemned the Ukrainians for destroying their own architectural monuments.

In 1985, the church in the Village of Kozmach, *Rayon* of Kasovskij, Region of Ivan-Frank, was burned down. According to legend, Alexei Dovbush, the Ukrainian freedom-fighter killed in 1745, contributed greatly to the erection of this church.

In 1985, during the demolition of the suppressed church in the Village of Trushivka, *Rayon* of Kalusk, Region of Ivan-Frank, before a crowd of on-lookers who tried to prevent the destruction of the shrine, troops summoned to the village used tear-gas to disperse the crowds. Usually, to assist the demolition team, a reinforced detail of militia with dogs, militia trainees and a unit of the local garrison are called out.

In 1980, in Ukraine, government atheists tore down the last wayside crosses at edge of villages and homesteads of the faithful. They knocked down and demolished statues having ties to historical events or commemorating them, such as the abolition of serfdom in 1848.

Recently in many villages, the faithful, in an effort to guard their shrines from arsonists, have been taking turns on guard.

#### The 600-year Christianity Jubilee Celebration in Pelesa

On July 26, 1987, the celebration of the 600th anniversary of the introduction of Christianity into Lithuania took place in Pelesa (Byelorussia, Varenov-Rayon). The church in Pelesa is closed and has been converted into a warehouse. Lacking a church, the people of Pelesa gather in the nearby cemetery to pray. In 1985, in order to have shelter for public worship, the faithful erected a chapel of boards in the cemetery, but the chapel had to be demolished.

In preparation for the celebration of the 600th anniversary of Christianity in Lithuania, the faithful erected in the cemetery an open-sided tent where they prepared an altar with a picture of Christ carrying the cross. Near the cross an image of the Blessed Archbishop Jurgis Matulaitis was displayed.

The celebration took place at noon, July 26. Four priests and many of the faithful came from Lithuania to the celebration. Holy Mass was celebrated by three priests. The services were held and the sermon delivered in Lithuania, the gospel and a second sermon were delivered in Polish; in the area of Pelesa, there are people who no longer speak Lithuanian. Before and during



*The church at Pelesa.*

the services, Lithuanian hymns were sung. Many local people went to Confession and Communion. At the end of the services, a jubilee cross was blessed and erected in the cemetery, and the Baptismal promises were renewed.

The priests and guests who came distributed to the people of Pelesa prayer cards specially prepared for the jubilee. Before dispersing, the Lithuanians sang Maironis' "*Lietuva Brangi*" ("Beloved Lithuania"), and Vincas Kudirkas's "*Lietuva Tėvynė Mūsų*," ("*Lithuania, Our Native Land*" - national anthem of independent Lithuania - Trans. Note). Participating in the celebration

were about 500 people. Government officials did not interfere. After services, the people dispersed in high spirits, determined to demand that the church which they themselves had built of stone be returned to them.

The people of Pelesa take hope also from the fact that the government has promised to return to the faithful the Church of the Queen of Peace in Klaipeda.

The fates of the churches of Pelesa and of Klaipeda are similar. Both churches were erected by the faithful, parishioners, at their own expense and by their own labor; both were unjustly confiscated by the government and the belfry of each was demolished. Pelesa is a little Klaipeda. The injustice must be remedied.

Lithuanian, remember that:

Father Alfonsas Svarinskas

Father Sigitas Tamkevičius

Viktoras Petkus

Balys Gajauskas

Povilas Pečeliūnas

Gintautas Iešmantas

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

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