

**CHRONICLE OF THE  
CATHOLIC CHURCH  
IN LITHUANIA**

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**CHRONICLE OF THE CATHOLIC CHURCH  
IN LITHUANIA No. 54**

**A Translation of the Complete Lithuanian Original  
LIETUVOS KATALIKŲ RAŽNYČIOS KRONIKA Nr. 54  
Documenting the Struggle for Human Rights  
In Soviet-Occupied Lithuania Today**

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**On the cover.  
Bishop V.A. Vaičius in the church of Kretinga**

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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, 73 monasteries, 85 convents, three archbishops, nine bishops, 1271 diocesan priests, 580 monks, of whom 168 were priests. Four seminaries had 470 students. There were 950 nuns.

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

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

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

On June 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 Liudvikas Povilonis was appointed auxiliary to Bishop Labukas, and succeeded him after his death in 1979.

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

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

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

*Rev. Casimir Pugevičius*  
Translation Editor

**Read this and pass it on!**  
**Appearing since March 19, 1972**

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**Lithuania.....**

**August 15, 1982**

## OUR JOY, HOPE AND CONCERN

In July, 1982, the Apostolic See, with the agreement of Moscow, appointed the exiled Bishop Vincentas Sladkevičius Apostolic Administrator of the Diocese of Kaišiadorys, and named Father Antanas Vaičius bishop, appointing him Apostolic Administrator of the Diocese of Telšiai and of the Prelature of Klaipėda. Lithuania is especially happy that one exiled bishop has been able to take over an episcopal see, but asks with uneasiness what the fate of the other bishop will be.

Today in Lithuania no one can tell why the Soviet government consented to the appointment of these two bishops. What advantage could it hope for? Does this appointment mean, as some foreign radio broadcasts commented, that the Soviet government is relaxing its oppressive stranglehold? Quite the contrary! Lately, even greater pressure is being felt by priests to conform with the Regulations for Religious Associations, the purpose of which is to strangle the Church. Those who try to defend the rights of the Church or of the faithful are being attacked even more vehemently.

Perhaps the most correct answer would be this: When the Soviet government's plan to raise to the episcopacy candidates favorable to itself fell through last year, this year it decided to carry out its plan more subtly: to allow first the arrangement acceptable to the faithful, and then, to take advantage of the momentum to try to push through candidates favorable to itself. For this reason in Lithuania, among the clergy and the laity, much uneasiness is felt, with reason, but everyone believes in the Providence of God and the vigilance of the Apostolic See. The faithful and priests of Lithuania want to find "in their shepherd spiritual care, zeal, and encouragement to persevere in faith" (John Paul II), But they are seriously afraid of experiencing the tragedy of the Orthodox Church with the hierarchy going one way, and the believing public — another!

Lithuania needs bishops who would be able to accompany the believing nation to jail, labor camp, and even to death; not those who would hinder from "below" the spiritual renaissance which has begun.

At the present time, of the six dioceses of Lithuania, only the question of the Archdiocese of Kaunas and the Dioceses of Telšiai and Kaišiadorys has been resolved. The Diocese of Vilkauskis is assigned to the Archdiocese of Kaunas, and clearly wants to have its own suitable shepherd, and to take care of its own affairs.

The situation of the Diocese of Panevėžys is downright tragic, and the Soviet government will most surely try to prolong the status quo, so that the diocese might undergo as much damage as possible. Meanwhile, the episcopal throne of the Bishop of Vilnius has been waiting more than twenty years for its rightful occupant — the exiled Bishop Julijonas Steponavičius, who is especially beloved in Lithuania. Anyone who tried to contribute to the moral destruction of this bishop, would become a cancer as much in the nation as in the Church in Lithuania.

### **HIS EXCELLENCY, BISHOP VINCENTAS SLADKEVIČIUS, ASSUMES THE EPISCOPAL SEE OF KAIŠIADORYS**

In June 1982, it became known that the Soviet government was agreeing that His Excellency, Bishop Vincentas Sladkevičius should return from exile to his diocese, and, at the same time Father Antanas Vaičius, Administrator of the Diocese of Telšiai, should be consecrated bishop.

On July 16, western radio broadcasts officially announced the news. Everyone waited impatiently for the exiled bishop to take possession of the Cathedral of the Diocese of Kaišiadorys. On December 25, 1957, Archbishop Teofilus Matulionis, a national and religious martyr, consecrated Father Vincentas Sladkevičius bishop without the consent of the Soviet government. In an attempt to subjugate the ecclesiastical hierarchy of Lithuania to its own interests, the Soviet government did not allow the newly consecrated bishop, who had already managed earlier to fall into disfavor with the government for his loyalty to the Church, to assume his duties. Bishop Sladkevičius remained in exile for twenty-three years, and a non-functioning bishop almost twenty-five years.

All that time believing Lithuania prayed for the bishop in exile: priests and faithful wrote petitions, and even went to the labor camps, and now . . . the exile has been allowed to assume the See of Kaišiadorys.

The solemn entry of Bishop Vincentas Sladkevičius into his cathedral is one of the greatest victories of the Catholic Church in Lithuania, built on great sacrifices.

On August 8, 1982, early in the morning, the church in Pabiržė (Diocese of Panevėžys) was full of people wishing to bid farewell to Bishop Vincentas Sladkevičius.



**His Excellency Bishop Vincentas Sladkevičius (third from left) entered the Cathedral of Kaišiadorys on August 8, 1982, during the singing of a hymn to the Holy Spirit. (From left to right) Bishop A. Vaičius, Bishop L. Povilonis, Bishop V. Sladkevičius and Bishop J. Steponavičius**

Along the way to the Diocese of Kaišiadorys, hundreds of faithful from the parishes of Pasvalis and Pumpėnai met the exiled bishop. For these escorts, the priests of Pasvalis had to explain themselves at the *Rayon* of Pasvalis Executive Committee Headquarters.

The government allowed the arriving bishop to be greeted only at the gates of the Kaišiadorys Cathedral church yard. Regardless of the government's efforts to down-play the occasion as much as possible, the faithful gathered in very great numbers. The crowd, bearing flowers, filled the little street from the church yard to the main street. At 12:30 p.m. the cathedral bells began to peal solemnly. When the bishop appeared, the crowd laid flowers on the automobile and on the ground, applauded—each one expressed his or her joy as well as they could. From the windows and doors of the city's Executive Committee Headquarters, officials, militia and security agents watched the ceremonies. It was a good lesson for the government atheists of Lithuania: How vain their efforts are to discredit bishops and priests loyal to the Church!

Participating in the ceremonies were Bishops Liudvikas Povilonis, Julijonas Steponavičius and Antanas Vaičius. All concelebrated

Holy Mass with Bishop Vincentas Sladkevičius. During the Mass, the Bishop of Kaišiadorys himself spoke. Following is a summary of his sermon:

"Exactly fifty years ago, in 1932, here, in this cathedral, I stood as a little twelve-year-old boy behind the flag of the *Ateitininkai* (Lithuanian Catholic Action organization — Trans. Note). With childish but enthusiastic voices we used to sing the *Ateitininkai* hymn. Now, after fifty years, I again stand before you as the Holy Father's appointed Apostolic Administrator of Kaišiadorys, your bishop and shepherd. You gaze at me curiously, as if to say, 'What will you be like?' This question I shall not and I cannot answer. The answer will be given by my whole life, by history, and by the judgment of God. I can only tell you what I should be, according to the mind of Christ and the Church's assignment. This is best revealed by the telegram of our Holy Father Pope John Paul II, sent to the president of our country's episcopal conference, Bishop Liudvikas Povilonis. Our Holy Father, by sending such a meaningful, wonderfully encouraging telegram, showed our country unusual kindness. Now let us all hear the words of the Holy Father's telegram:

'Urged on by love and concern for the Church of Lithuania, most dear to us, we address our brother bishops this blessed day on which the new bishop, Antanas Vaičius, is being consecrated, who is to govern as Apostolic Administrator of the Diocese of Telšiai and the Prelature of Klaipėda. We share in the joy of that Catholic community, especially since at the same time, the honorable shepherd of souls Vincentas Sladkevičius assumes his episcopal role as Apostolic Administrator of Kaišiadorys.

" 'The bishop is truly a priceless gift of God given to the Church, for the bishop takes the place of the apostles, and by the imposition of hands and the words of consecration obtains the grace of the Holy Spirit and the sacramental character. By its power, in a noble and wonderful manner he represents Christ Himself, the Teacher, Shepherd and Bishop, and acts by the power of His Person, to gather the People of God in truth and holiness, and to care for them by prayer, preaching and performing all the works of charity.

" 'Priests, who are participants in the universal priesthood of Christ in order to minister to the People of God, on account of this participation in the priesthood and mission, should acknowledge the bishop as their father and listen to him respectfully. Finally, let the entire Catholic community, whose faith has been tested by the trials

and tribulations of the truth, find in its shepherd protection for the soul, zeal and the strength to persevere in the Faith with the powerful support of hope and love, so that they might live worthily, practicing the Christian virtues, which complement the culture and knowledge of the nation.

'We commend the Catholic family of Lithuania to the Mother of God, the Mother of Mercy, with a heart full of love conferring the Apostolic blessing upon the bishops, priests, youth, those called to the Lord's inheritance, and also to all those devoted to the worship of God and to all the faithful.'

" 'Pope John Paul II' "

"The Holy Father's telegram beautifully expounds the Church's idea of what a bishop should be to his diocese: He represents Christ Himself, the Teacher, Shepherd and Bishop. From now on I am your bishop, and on my shoulders falls the responsibility for you. Everything which touches your life will touch my heart also. All the storms which touch your life will first touch my head; all troubles, hardships, even all your mistakes, will find an echo in my heart.

"I have a most difficult and responsible task. But I am comforted by St. Paul's words to the Corinthians, where he says: ' . . . It was to shame the wise that God chose what is foolish by human reckoning, and to shame what is strong that he chose what is weak by human reckoning . . .' (1 Cor 1, 27.) Why, God grows our daily bread, the Eucharistic Bread, not on the oak, but on a thin white stalk, which after producing the grain is forgotten and even trampled underfoot. To be able to give you Christ's truth and the bread of love, I expect from you not emotional love, but prayer.

"Today is the Feast of the Transfiguration. In the presence of the transfigured Christ, the Apostles said that it was good for them to be there. In the presence of God it must be good, just as in the presence of the sun it must be light. It is the will of God that always, for everyone, it would be good. For this reason Christ came on earth; for this reason he instituted the Catholic Church, so that it might be the bearer of Christ's goodness in the world. This is why there is an episcopal ministry in the Church, so that it might be possible to spread goodness. This is why the Holy Father says that the bishop is God's great and marvelous gift to the Church. Can one then fear the Church; can one fear the bishop? Can one remove a bishop from his ministry if he seeks only good? A wrong is done when a bishop is removed from his ministry, a

wrong against the diocese, the Church, and all outside the Church.

"It is good that some mistakes are being rectified, even though not completely; we trust that in time they will be rectified fully. We have patiently waited and we continue to wait for certain matters to be reviewed with regard to the Church also. Is it fitting to keep the Church, as a doer of good, with rights curtailed, isolated from those areas where she could do the most good? Is it not time to remove the Church from the confines of restricted rights to those less restricted, so that it might do more good? The Church, and by the same token the episcopal ministry, was not established to hurt anyone. For this reason the Church can do much good in any political system, and it does. It is necessary only to give it a chance. The Church was established neither to support political systems, nor to subvert them.

"While I was unable to carry out my duties others bore the burden, and for that I am most grateful. I am also grateful to you, my beloved priests of the Diocese of Kaišiadorys, who have always been good to me. Divine Providence has given our diocese such noble bishops as the remarkable martyr, Archbishop Teofilus Matulionis. When you experience difficult times, you would remember those saintly bishops and this used to protect you from erroneous actions.

"Our diocese had the good fortune, at the time of the establishment of the Ecclesiastical Province of Lithuania, to begin its life and to get such wonderful shepherds. In our diocese the most beautiful shoots of Christian living began to spring up.

"However, our diocese had its sorrowful mysteries also. Then we suffered, prayed and waited, trusting in Divine Providence. Will our diocese have its glorious mysteries? That depends on us. Will we know how to arise from our weaknesses and turn our gaze towards Jesus Christ? Will we sustain our child-like devotion to Mary? Will that devotion be the property not only of Šiluva, of the Gates of Dawn (*Aušros Vartai* in Vilnius — Trans. Note), or Žemaičių Kalvarija, but also of Pivašūnai? It depends on us whether our diocese, having experienced the joyful and the sorrowful mysteries, will experience the glorious mysteries as well."

After Holy Mass, the youth of Lithuania began congratulating the bishop. It is unfortunate that not all were able to do so, for lack of time, since in the churchyard and in church, children and youth were standing in line waiting for Confirmation. In the name

of the priests of the diocese, the bishop was greeted by Canon Stanislovas Kiškis.

Bishop Vincentas Sladkevičius thanked all who had sent him greetings and very emotionally, he thanked the Diocese of Panevėžys, which received him and protected him.

"The people of Panevėžys have shown me very great cordiality," said the bishop, "I hope to find even more cordiality among my own people, for this is the land of my father and my mother, here are my father's footprints in the sands of time, and my own as a child. That child-like attitude has remained in my heart," continued the bishop, "and in this spirit with this enthusiasm, with the help of the grace of God, I plan to join in the great work: To dedicate myself to God and the Church."

The Sacrament of Confirmation was administered by all four bishops. About six hundred children and youth were confirmed.

During dinner the once exiled bishop was greeted by his brother bishop-in-exile, Julijonas Steponavičius. Here we present his greeting almost in its entirety:

"A very fitting commentary on the beautiful and pleasant celebration today—namely, the solemn entrance of His Excellency into his own cathedral, his return to his true duties—is provided by the words of the Savior: 'You will mourn, but your mourning shall be turned into joy.' (Jn 16,20)

"The entire Church of Lithuania mourned, seeing that throughout most of the post-war era, the Diocese of Kaišiadorys was without its bishop, for its true shepherds were prevented from fulfilling their pastoral duties. The clergy and faithful of the Diocese of Kaišiadorys, who were orphans for thirty-five years, without their father and shepherd, also mourned. Mourning, too, was their true shepherd, who for twenty-five years was separated from his own, and had to live in remote loneliness. Today that sorrow has turned to joy. But this day of joy dawned for you, Your Excellency, after long suffering, pain and concern. Apparently, in the plan of Divine Providence, it is ordained that the shepherds of dioceses born in pain should tread the path of sorrow, should drink the cup of pain to the dregs.

"The beginnings of the Diocese of Kaišiadorys were painful. As Canon Kiškis mentioned, after World War I, after the establishment of independent Lithuania, in 1920, Vilnius was seized. The Diocese of Vilnius was divided into two parts. When in 1926 the Ecclesiastical Province of Lithuania was being established, from one part of the

Diocese of Vilnius was established the Diocese of Kaišiadorys. Its first shepherd, Canon Juozapas Kukta, was an exile; in 1922, with three Lithuanian activists, he was banished to independent Lithuania. The beginnings of the new bishop's administration were not easy. Not only was there no cathedral, but Kaišiadorys did not have at that time any suitable parish church. After World War I, in place of the planned parish church, a cathedral sprang up, and in 1926 it was consecrated.

"After the death of Bishop Juozapas Kukta, the Apostolic See appointed as Bishop of Kaišiadorys Teofilus Matulionis, a real martyr, who suffered sixteen years in the camps and died outside the borders of his diocese. And Divine Providence led you also, dear Excellency, to the See of the Diocese of Kaišiadorys by way of sacrifice and suffering. When Bishop Teofilus Matulionis, unable to perform his duties, was looking to his diocese's future, his eye fell on you. He found a way for the Holy Father to appoint you bishop and consecrate you. Unfortunately, you were never allowed to work among your own. Living in exile, you were considered a leper. Someone passed the word that it was dangerous to meet with you; and the clergy, succumbing to this fear, began to be afraid even to visit you.

One incident comes to mind: An honorary canon of the Diocese of Kaišiadorys, who is no longer among the living, once asked me, 'Is it possible to visit our bishop? I'm afraid that someone might inquire why I was there and what we talked about.'

"O course, hearing this, I asked, 'How come you're not afraid of talking with me? You must know that they consider us both alike.' The inquirer blushed; he never did visit His Excellency.

"What was the leprosy whose contagion frightened the priests so much? It was attributed to you, Your Excellency, and to me, who shared your fate. That leprosy consisted of faithfulness to Christ and His Church, love of God and of souls, concern for the diocese's present and future, concern for the seminary, and concern for the attitude and behavior of some priests.

"Nor do I think I shall be mistaken in saying that all those things for which you sacrificed yourself, suffered and worried about while in exile, today, now that you have come forth from exile, they will be even more precious to your soul and your heart. For God and for souls, for Christ and for the Church, for the well-being of the Church throughout our land, the good of your own diocese, you will offer all the powers of your body and the strength of

your soul, tirelessly working and sincerely praying, keeping in mind the words of St. Paul: 'Weep with those who weep; rejoice with those who rejoice.' (Rom. 12,15)

"Today I wish to rejoice with everyone, because the possibility has presented itself for you to return to your episcopal duties. I rejoice that you have returned to your own, and that I have not blocked your progress, nor, over your dead body, taken Kaišiadorys. I thank you because even though I am still considered a leper, you have deigned to invite me today to this beautiful celebration, and have not erected a stone wall between us.

"Therefore, on this beautiful and joyous day in your life, accept my sincere greetings and prayers as a former sharer in the same fate in life. I wish that, strengthened by the grace of the Almighty, you might lead your diocese in the spirit of unity and lead everyone along the path of the spirit of the Church.

"Someone has classified our priests into the reactionary and the progressive, extremists and sensible, and recently, a new term has cropped up: the opposition and the loyal. Such classification is foreign to the Church. For the Church, every priest is, in the words of St. Paul, a servant of Christ and a bestower of God's grace, taken from among humans and set before them. I would wish that in your diocese there be no so-called reactionary priests, nor progressive, neither extremists nor sensible, but that all priests be servants of Christ and faithful sons of the Church.

"And finally, I wish that having been tried by sacrifice and suffering, for your steadfast priests, you would shine with courage and loyalty, and would strengthen the weak and doubting. May the good Lord strengthen your bodily powers and the powers of your soul, so that together with all the bishops of Lithuania, and with the priests of your diocese, you might labor in a holy and salutary fashion for the good of the Church in our country and the good of your diocese, and may the Good God bless your prayers and works."

### **CONSECRATION AND INSTALLATION OF HIS EXCELLENCY BISHOP ANTANAS VAIČIUS**

On July 21, 1982, the Holy Father appointed Father Antanas Vaičius Apostolic Administrator of the Diocese of Telšiai and of the Prelature of Klaipėda, and at the same time,

bishop. The priests and faithful of Lithuania received this appointment favorably, since Fr. Antanas Vaičius has distinguished himself in pastoral work, approving and supporting the temperance movement, and confirming the priests' senate of the Diocese of Telšiai.

In his role as Administrator of the Diocese of Telšiai, he was able to make contact with the priests of the diocese. At one time, priests, especially beyond the boundaries of the Diocese of Telšiai, raised doubts about the fitness of the candidacy of Fr. Antanas Vaičius, but time has dissipated those doubts increasingly. Everyone regretted very much that last year Fr. Antanas Vaičius had been included in a trio of persons unacceptable to the Church in Lithuania, and therefore had to undergo sharp attack from the opposition.

The consecration ceremonies were very beautiful. Bishop Antanas Vaičius was consecrated by Bishops Liudvikas Povilonis, Vincentas Sladkevičius, Julijonas Steponavičius and Romualdas Krikščiūnas. In his talk during the Mass, Bishop Liudvikas Povilonis read a telegram of greetings from Pope John Paul II to the Church of Lithuania, announced the appointment of Bishop Vincentas Sladkevičius, after twenty-three years of exile—as Apostolic Administrator of the Diocese of Kaišiadorys, and spoke at length about the episcopal ministry, emphasizing that "the ministry of bishop is not one of honor, but a ministry of work and sacrifice".

At the end of his talk, Bishop Povilonis addressed the one being consecrated in the following words: "My dear brother in Christ, Antanas, on this your consecration day, resolve to strive for the episcopal ideal, with the resolve of the Servant of God, Archbishop Jurgis Matulevičius: 'God, grant that I be consumed like a candle on the altar from the heat of work and the fire of love, for You and for Your Church.' "

In the cathedral churchyard, the newly consecrated bishop and the other bishops, especially Bishops Julijonas Steponavičius and Vincentas Sladkevičius, were greeted by representatives of the youth of Lithuania.

On the way home, Bishop Vaičius was met and greeted by the faithful of Viduklė, Varniai and Viešvienai. The cathedral, the churchyard, and even the streets were jammed with people. The Samogitians did not conceal their enthusiasm for their new bishop, who had managed with his goodness to conquer the hearts of the faithful.



**Upon his arrival at Kretinga, Lithuanian Bishop Antanas Vaičius blesses the assemblage of believers. 1982**

During Mass, Canon Kazimieras Gaščiūnas delivered the sermon, during which he read the pope's telegram of greetings. After Mass the Bishop of Telšiai was greeted by the youth of Samogitia. Everyone was especially impressed by the sensitive greetings from the youth of Telšiai.

The bishop was also greeted in the name of the Catholic Committee for the Defense of Believers' Rights in Lithuania, by Father Alfonsas Svarinskas. Among other things he said, "The Catholic Committee followed with great interest the efforts of all of our shepherds to escape the atheists' oppression. It followed your efforts, too. We are grateful to you for arranging the memorial of the martyr-bishop Pranciškus Ramanauskas; we are grateful to you for reviving Žemaičių Kalvarija, for the rosary devotions, most popular in Samogitia; we are grateful to you for the temperance movement. Vatican Radio once stated: 'Only the Administrator of Telšiai, Father Vaičius has not undermined the temperance idea.' I think that was the best recognition given you."

Speaking on behalf of the priests of the Diocese of Telšiai was

Father Klemensas Arlauskas, who expressed the happiness of all the priests over this appointment by the Holy Father.

In response to the greetings, Bishop Vaičius spoke as follows:

"Brother priests, guests and my own dear people of Telšiai, very special and dear young people, little children and old folks:

"I am deeply moved and downright astounded, and cannot find words to thank you for this welcome. First I would like to thank Almighty God for the boundless love He has shown me, by allowing me to be born 'where the Šešupė runs, where the Nemunas flows', where the Šatrija, Rambynas, and the swift Vilija are, allowing me to be born and to grow up in the family of my believing parents, where there was much trouble and pain, where even black bread was often in short supply, but where there were prayer and hymns, and where songs rang out in the evening.

"I wish to thank Our Holy Father John Paul II for his special trust in confiding these responsible duties to me, a poor, weak ordinary priest — to be Apostolic Administrator of the Diocese of Telšiai and of the Prelature of Klaipėda . . .

"I want to express sincere thanks to the honorable members of the Chapter of Telšiai Cathedral, and to the Consultors of the Prelature of Klaipėda, who during the difficult, lean years of my time as vicar-capitular-administrator, supported and encouraged me in all sincerity.

"My thanks to all the priests of the Diocese of Telšiai and of the Prelature of Klaipėda, whose support I have always felt, but especially at the most difficult times in my life.

"A special thanks to the little children, the youth, fathers and mothers, grandparents — to all the faithful who have supported and sustained me by their prayers. Thanks to the bishops of Lithuania, who consecrated me today: Their love, and courtesy I have always felt. My special thanks to the Chapter of Panevėžys. I know I shall not be able to thank everyone . . .

"You look at me and ask: 'What are you going to be like? How are you going to fulfill your duties as bishop?'

"Truly, I am full of fear and concern. I know the step I have taken today and what kind of responsibility I have accepted.

"Many beautiful things have been said to me today, in which not only warnings were involved. This morning when I called on the President of the Lithuanian Bishops' Conference, Bishop Liudvikas Povilonis, I had to take an oath, together with the Apostolic Administrator of the Diocese of Kaišiadorys, Bishop Vincentas

Sladkevičius. At this time I would like to repeat that oath in my own words:

"I will devote all my efforts only to God and only to the Church of Christ. I will seek neither rest nor peace, and whatever I shall be able to, I will do, so that the Catholic Church might thrive in our beloved Samogitia.'

"Solemnly give you my word and assurance, that I will offer my whole self and all my powers to Christ and the Church. At the same time I ask your help. Today in Kaunas I said, 'I draw close to you, your Excellencies the bishops, as to my own spiritual Fathers, who today have fathered me as a bishop'. This evening I repeat to you: I draw close to you, brother priests, asking you to help me, just as you bade me to remain faithful and to do all that is possible for God and His Church; I draw close to you, the dear faithful, that you might remember me and sustain me in your prayers"

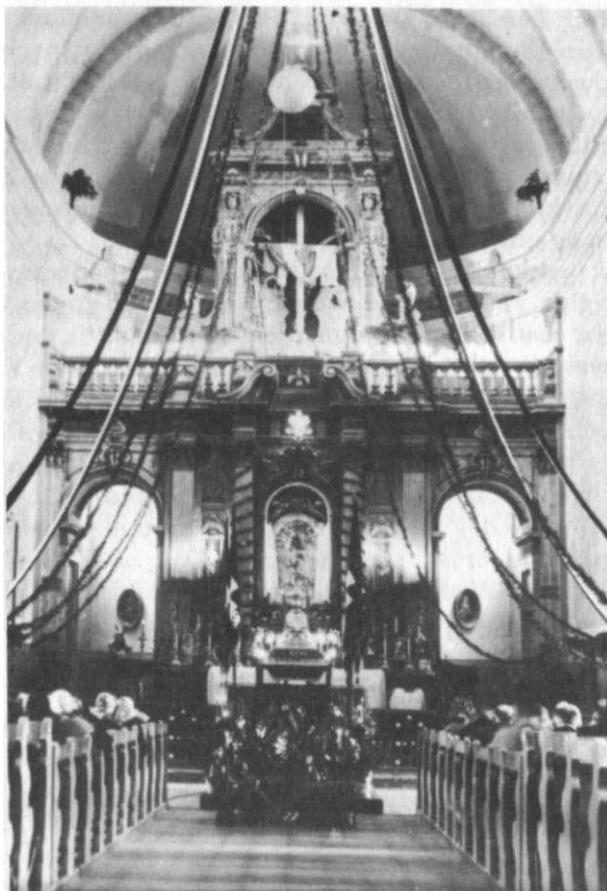
(The talk has been shortened — Editor)

### RELIGIOUS FESTIVAL AT ŽEMAIČIŲ KALVARIJA

July 2-9, 1982, the great religious festival at Žemaičių Kalvarija (Calvary of the Samogitians) took place, with units of the militia and army on alert. Militia trainees were housed in schools and dormitories in surrounding cities, water-cannon were brought in from Vilnius, and a fleet of closed trucks with listening apparatus was prepared. Cars of believers on their way to the devotions were checked at forty-one state auto inspection points, which all had direct radio contact with a communications center, set up at the Pasruojė Fish Nursery in the Village of Juodėnai II. Even the Republican Auto Inspection Chief Vaitasius and General Žemaitis came. At Pasruojė they set up a computer center, to which they would transmit the license numbers of all automobiles, in this way determining how many times an automobile traveled to Žemaičių Kalvarija. Even the clergy were not exempt.

The pastor of the neighboring parish of Tirkšliai, Fr. Vincencas Gaurnskis, went home each evening. Occasionally, he would bring to the devotions his neighbors, the priests of Mažeikiai, so the auto inspection people stopped him and removed the car's license plate, exclaiming, "You won't be commuting any more!"

On the evening of July 5, the Pastor of Seda, assisting at the festival, was summoned on a sick-call to Plinkšės. When his driver,



**The main altar in the church of Varduva. This locality came to be known as Žemaičių Kalvarija (The Calvary of Samogitia), but following the Soviet occupation of Lithuania, the name was changed to Varduva.**

Paulauskas, returned, the state auto inspectors confiscated his chauffeur's license.

On the evening of July 3, the auto inspectors detained Father Kauneckas not far from Seda, and would not allow him to drive along the asphalt any longer, but ordered him to go back and take the gravel road through Alsėdžiai.

Throughout the octave, groups of militia and auxiliaries walked

the streets of Žemaičių Kalvarija, and auto inspection cars drove around. Even though large groups of automobile inspectors and militia gawked along the roads, one was still forced to wait in line for inspection a whole half-hour at the inspection points. At all bus stations, militia stood by. Automobiles hired by the faithful were detained, travelers were told to get out and had to finish the trip on foot, while the drivers had their licenses confiscated. All this was done in an effort to intimidate the faithful.

District workers of neighboring *rayons* spread rumors in advance that this year no one would be allowed to go to Žemaičių Kalvarija: that it would be guarded by the militia and the army. Such talk was spread throughout Lithuania. Even from Vilnius and other distant places, acquaintances would phone laity and priests asking whether they would be allowed to come to the festival.

In spite of all kinds of provocations, this year the numbers of pilgrims were especially large. The faithful would come to the Way of the Cross every day in procession, bearing under the canopy the great relic of the cross. On the great Day of Calvary and the priests' traditional Wednesday, the relic was borne by the administrator of the diocese, Father Antanas Vaičius.

At the shrines, he delivered sermons and proclaimed the intentions for the Way of the Cross. Almost daily he made the Way of the Cross, in reparation for the desecration of the shrine on Maiden Hill.

On July 7 (Wednesday) Holy Mass for national temperance and purity was concelebrated by the administrator of the diocese and about eighty priests of the Diocese of Telšiai and guests from other dioceses.

During the religious festival days the militia guarded Maiden Hill specially. They closed all access roads to Pasruojė and Maiden Hill. In the forest, at Pasruojė, they put up signs forbidding parking for five kilometers (they did not remove them all during the months of July and August), abolished the bus stops at Pasruojė and Paplinkšė, so that local residents have to walk ten or more kilometers. Even participants in a funeral (in the Staškauskas Family) were allowed to pass only after a lengthy check, after they had proved their family ties. One distant relative was held for twenty-four hours with her mourning wreath, on suspicion that she wanted to get to Maiden Hill. Uršulė Motuzienė attempted to take her relatives to Maiden Hill early before dawn one morning. Jumping from the woods, militia and soldiers badly beat everyone, even a little boy.

The telephone operators in Telšiai were required to keep a

direct line from Pasruojė to Vilnius open.

In connection with the religious festival, many youths and children were interrogated. The security police demonstratively watched and photographed youths and children in processions and at the stations of the cross. Auxiliary police wearing red arm-bands would come right into the church-yard when the procession returned from the hills. Militiamen and auxiliaries would round-up children who had gone alone into the town, and force them to write explanations of how they had come to Žemaičių Kalvarija, who had brought them and who had organized them. Still others were arrested after they had gone home.



**Pilgrims going the Ways of the Cross in Žemaičių Kalvarija. Nineteen chapels were built along the banks of the Varduva river during the 17th century, each of them representing a particular stage of the Passion of Christ.**

For example, on July 7, thirteen-year-old Romualdas Grušas was arrested by militiamen late at night in Telšiai, near his home, and was taken to the militia station for interrogation. The next evening he was picked up again near his home, and taken to the militia station at Žemaičių Kalvarija, where he was interrogated

until three a.m. During the interrogation, they demanded that he write an explanation dictated by the militia.

When Romualdas refused to do so, the chekists twisted his ear and threw him down the basement, where there were more children. They were released only at 6 a.m. The boy went from the cellar directly to church, and that day once again took part in the Way of the Cross. Many 10-15 year olds were similarly interrogated. In dictating the explanations, among other things they were required to write the following: "The Rev. Jonas Kauneckas, of Telšiai, told us to gather in Alsėdžiai, and from there we had to march with our crosses and banners to Maiden Hill."

Moreover the children had to describe in writing how they had been dressed that day, who gave them the clothing, who had brought them to Žemaičių Kalvarija, and who had organized the processions. Afterwards, they were required to sign at the bottom of the sheet, after leaving plenty of space. The children were warned that they had committed a crime by taking part in processions, since minors are forbidden to do so by law.

The Way of the Cross on Priests' Wednesday (July 7) was called a political offense: in it, six girls dressed in yellow, green and red dresses, following the cross, "composed a flag of bourgeois Lithuania". Even though the children explained that they had seen no "flag", and that in processions in Telšiai there are always such dresses, but they are mustard, moss, and burgundy colored, they were accused of politics and threatened with a trial. This is how children from Tauragė, Telšiai and other places were interrogated: Romualdas Grušas, (Miss) Alma Andrijauskaitė (arrested at Žemaičių Kalvarija and interrogated till night-time), (Miss) Violeta Ričkutė (picked up in Telšiai with her mother), (Miss) Saulė Gaižauskaitė, (Miss) Rasa Kačinskytė (with her mother), (Miss) Jolanta Juodžytė, (Miss) Alma Dimbinskytė, (Miss) Reda Uksaitė (with her mother, she refused to write any explanation, and under interrogation said not a word), Romas Žalionis, (detained at Žemaičių Kalvarija) (Miss) Elena Dudaitė (taken from her home), (Miss) Aurelija Gaučytė and others.

After the religious solemnities, the Pastor of Žemaičių Kalvarija, Father Alfonsas Lukoševičius, was summoned to the Plungė *Rayon* Executive Committee and warned that in the future he would be punished if, during religious solemnities preachers spoke without permission of the government; such preachers had delivered as many as nine sermons this year.

Father Alfonsas Svarinskas in the District of Viduklė was read a warning by Vice-Chairwoman (Mrs.) O. Stonienė, of the *Rayon* of Raseiniai as follows:

"Paragraph 19 of the Regulations for Religious Associations says that the area of activity of the minister of cult, and of preachers is limited to the place of residence of members served by them and by the place where their appropriate house of worship is located.

"It has been determined that the Rev. Alfonsas Svarinskas, without the approval of the local authorities, has carried out religious services, and given sermons of an anti-social and libelous content between July 2 and 9 at Varduva.

"It must be noted that the Rev. Alfonsas Svarinskas has already been warned about infringement of said laws of cult. October 1, 1981.

"I once again demand that the Rev. Alfonsas Svarinskas abide by the laws regarding religious cults, and I serve notice that for their infringement you can be liable to administrative sanction. Dated July 12, 1982. Signed by Commissar for Religious Affairs Petras Anilionis."

#### **AFTER THE DESTRUCTION OF MAIDEN HILL**

On June 8, 1982, the diocesan deans were summoned to a meeting with Commissar for Religious Affairs Anilionis. Only the Dean of Mažeikiai, Jonas Gedvilą, did not attend. The deans refused to confer at the headquarters of the Telšiai *Rayon* Executive Committee, since the government of the Telšiai *Rayon* had desecrated Maiden Hill. The conference took place at the chancery of the Diocese of Telšiai. The commissar, as usual, spoke about the Regulations for Religious Associations. Concerning Maiden Hill, he responded as follows: "Religious extremism evoked atheistic extremism." After the conference, the deans submitted to the commissar the following statement:

"From time immemorial, priests and faithful according to Church regulations, pray annually on November 1st and 2nd for the dead. On November 1, 1981, in almost all parishes of the Diocese of Telšiai the faithful were forbidden to pray in cemeteries as a group for their dead. In some places (e.g. Telšiai) it was forbidden even to bless crosses that day in cemeteries. In other *rayons* (e.g. in Mažeikiai), it was not forbidden in so many words,

but in the cemeteries, sound systems were turned on so loud that it was in no way possible for the faithful to honor their dead or to pray for them in any communal fashion. We believers felt grossly offended. All the people insulted expressed their protest at not being able to honor their dead in the way required by their faith and by the Church.

"During the night of April 2-3, 1982, in the *Rayon* of Telšiai, District of Gadunava, Village of Pasruojė, our nations historical and religious monument, Alkskalnis — Panų kalnas (Maiden Hill) was terribly vandalized: the shrine which had stood there from of old was demolished; the wall timbers, ceilings and roof were taken off somewhere; two small shrines were torn down and also hauled off somewhere; the altar which had stood in the chapel was also demolished, the statue of Mary was broken up and thrown into the pond nearby; sacred pictures were destroyed; crosses were broken up and smashed: wooden ones were cut down, crucifixes and remnants of crosses were scattered about and trampled into the earth.

"This desecration of graves, of the shrine and of crosses constitutes the rudest kind of insult to the believing public . . . The destruction of this historical-religious monument and desecration of graves was not the routine rampaging of ordinary hooligans, but an organized job carried out in a cooperative effort complete with trucks. We have reason to state that this has been the coordinated crime of atheists of bad will, perpetrated not without the approval of certain officials of the government.

On this occasion we must remind you that this is the continuation of the history of the destruction of many crosses and monuments of religious folk art in our country.

The Soviet Constitution grants freedom to the Catholic Church as such, with its essential commandments: Canon Law, moral principles, dogmas and special worship. Therefore it cannot be looked upon as some kind of religious sect, where the internal system is entirely different and the rules of worship and administration are entirely different. In some sects, spiritual leaders are elected, in some there are none at all. Hence in those religious communities lay people are in charge. In the Catholic Church there is a hierarchical structure. Here ordained persons are in charge: bishops and priests. However, they too must obey canon law, dogma, moral principles and essential principles of worship.

In the Catholic Church all committees of laity have only an auxiliary and consultative power. If they assume the functions of

leading the Catholic Church or interfere with bishops and priests in their work of leadership, they as believers drop from the ranks of Catholic Church members (Canon 2345, Code of Canon Law) Hence any attempt to use church committees against the Church hierarchy is nothing other than an attempt to destroy the Catholic Church.

Of course, the Catholic Church cannot reconcile itself with this and it is forced to resist with all its might. This war has been forced upon the Catholic Church. It contributes nothing to the state, either, but only arouses unrest in the masses of believers and undermines confidence in the government.

In view of all these facts, we, the Deans of the Diocese of Telšiai and of the Prelature of Klaipėda, gathered here, as representatives of the laity and clergy and full-fledged citizens of our country demand the following:

The government must take all measures so that those destructive offenses against civility and against the most sacred feelings and convictions of believers (the desecration of cemeteries, shrines and crosses) should not be repeated, that believing citizens be protected from acts of terror, and that in the future they not be humiliated in such vile fashion or insulted.

Laws regarding cult must not be promulgated or interpreted contrary to the basic canon law of the Church or contrary to the constitution.

In the event of the continuation of the above-mentioned and similar actions and facts, normal dialogue between the Church and the state will be very difficult or impossible.

Signed by the following deans: Rev. Bernardas Talaišius, Rev. Stanislovas Ilinčius, Rev. Bronius Burneikis, Canon Kazimieras Gaščiūnas, Rev. Petras Palšis, Rev. Feliksas Valaitis, Canon Juozapas Grubliauskas, Rev. Dr. Petras Puzaras, Rev. Tadas Poška; and vice-deans: Rev. Petras Stukas, and Rev. Alfonsas Lukoševičius.

On August 6, 1982, the faithful received a reply from the Ministry of Culture to their petition regarding the demolition of Maiden Hill: "Unknown culprits destroyed the artistic monuments of Maiden Hill, which were of some local significance. The original images did not survive; therefore it would be pointless to restore the shrines."

Meantime certain details came to light: The destruction of Maiden Hill had been planned in advance by the government of the *Rayon* of Telšiai. The demolition order had been given by the

rayon Communist Party committee, and the demolition had been directed by Director of Fisheries and Communist Party Secretary Baltrukas, with soldiers participating. (A month later, Baltrukas was driving a car while under the influence of alcohol and ran under a military truck. In the hospital, his leg was amputated.) Truck-driver Zigmantas Burba was ordered to haul away the wreckage of the shrine, but he refused. A soldier was seated at the wheel of the car. The next day, Zigmantas Burba refused to work with the vehicle which had been used in the sacrilege. No driver was found. The powerful GAZ-66 vehicle stood idle a long time. On May 22, 1982, the Telšiai newspaper *Komunizmo Švyturys* (*Communist Beacon*) announced that the Pasruojė Fisheries needed drivers.

Other organizations to which the faithful turned did not send replies. Some women (Mrs.) Rozalija Dargužienė, (Mrs.) Gaudiešienė and others delivered to the Council of Ministers a petition signed by forty of the faithful, but received no reply.

Also participating in the delegation to the Council of Ministers was (Mrs.) Jadvyga Jucienė, Directress of the Gedrimai House of Culture (of the Pasruojė Fisheries), who is also responsible for the protection of monuments in the area of Gadunava. In July, she was warned by the Telšiai Communist Party Committee and at the Telšiai Security Police Department, not to make any fuss about Maiden Hill, and at the beginning of August, she was discharged.

On June 20, 1982, the Advocate General's Office of the USSR announced that the complaint of the faithful had been forwarded to the Baltic Military District of Riga for investigation. On June 28, the Advocate General of the Baltic Military District came to Telšiai. Those who had signed the petition were summoned to militia headquarters. (Miss) Rita Bumblauskaitė, (Miss) Jadvyga Drungėlaitytė and (Miss) Genovaitė Drungėlaitytė were warned that they would be brought to trial for libeling the Soviet Army, since they did not have proof positive that the army had been employed in the demolition of religious objects or in a war against religion. Of course, the faithful cannot prove obvious facts: Major Berukov blew up three crosses in Rainiai in June of 1981; on November 1, 1981, soldiers patrolled the cemetery in Telšiai while the faithful were praying; during the night of April 2-3, 1982, they participated in the demolition of crosses and shrines; On May 15, 1982, soldiers and other officials went around trying to catch people on their way to Maiden Hill. Moreover, those being interrogated told the attorney general that

the demolished shrine was stored in the military polygon of Gadūnava. However, this concrete evidence was gone the next morning — the shrine had disappeared from the polygon.

#### A LITHUANIAN CATHOLIC'S WAY OF THE CROSS IN THE SOVIET ARMY

In May, 1982, as has been the practice annually for almost forty years, many of Lithuania's young sons were drafted into the Soviet Army. On May 13, Robertas Grigas, of the *Rayon* of Lazdijai, City of Leipalingis, was also drafted. On May 25, 1982, in Yany-Kurghan (Kazakh SSR) in the presence of soldiers and officers, Robertas refused to take the oath, as contrary to the religious convictions of a Catholic, and to the patriotic convictions of a Lithuanian.

In one of his letters, Robertas Grigas writes:

"Up to the last moment I was praying, undecided how to act with regard to this vexing problem of the oath. On May 25, 1982, in Yany-Kurghan, it was our group's turn. I was second in line. I saw how the young man in front of me grasped the machine gun and reading the 'oath' from a book, signed it, —and I still did not know what I was going to do. I agonized as never before in my life, and repeated in my heart, 'Mary, Mary, let me do as God wants.' Then it was my turn. I took the machine gun, stood between the formation and the major administering the oath, and understand me, forgive me for my ignorance, which will bother you after reading these lines — I said in Russian, 'I, Robertas Grigas, citizen of Lithuania, declare that I refuse to take the oath, as contrary to my religious and patriotic convictions.'

After castigating him in the vilest words, and threatening him with physical punishment, officers of the local battalion sent the young man that very day to brigade headquarters in Chimkent. The following day, the relay of threats was taken over by the brigade leadership.

Colonels Chutiyev and Andriyevsky threatened to turn him over to the KGB, if he continued to reject his "sacred duty". In response, Grigas wrote a statement, the gist of which is:

"I, Robertas Grigas, son of Antanas, and a citizen of Lithuania, declare that I refuse to swear fealty to your party and to your government, since they have no jurisdiction over me. I am a Catholic and so I can swear loyalty only to God, the Eternal

Truth, who becomes incarnate in the teachings of Christ and the Catholic Faith. Only to God am I obliged to be faithful in all areas of human life.

"I will not carry out the orders of the party, government or army which contradict Truth and my Christian conscience, and I don't want to warp my soul, so I will not pledge, I will not promise something I cannot perform. In life I will strive for only one thing with all my might: to maintain a clear, peaceful conscience; it is just such a conscience I am defending now, by refusing to pledge allegiance to anyone but God. Because of these my convictions, and my own decision, and depending not on my own strength, but on that of Jesus and His Blessed Mother Mary, protectress of our Lithuanian homeland, I am prepared for any suffering."

Afterwards, Robertas was taken to the guardhouse of the military zone of Chimkent "for interfering with the schedule", as indicated in the official order.

The Commander of the guardhouse, Major Mielnik, carried out a body search of Robertas, tearing from his neck a rosary, which he never did return. After ordering the guard, who was armed with an automatic rifle, "Give this one some special discipline!" the Major locked Robertas up in a cell with military criminals awaiting trial. He himself, strangely, surpassing even these criminals, presided over the "re-education". Pooling their efforts, they ridiculed spiritual values, threatened to fill the cell with prostitutes and make him by force a "normal Soviet person".

At night the criminals tried to persuade him with their fists to swear allegiance to the Russian homeland — "his sacred duty". After he had been in jail for a day, they took him to Dzizach, where Robertas met some Lithuanians of his own persuasion, screened out back at the Badam point of dispersal. Among them was the Baptist Oskaras Gumanas (a German from the *Rayon* of Siauliai, Kužiai District, Village of Amaliai). From the very first, both were condemned to constant public and secret persecution and terror tactics.

The two began, as much as possible, to show each other more solidarity and Christian love, prayed fervently and offered up the sufferings experienced and the insults. They were repeatedly summoned one at a time by the captain of the local unit, who tried to forbid them from speaking with one another, threatened to "take care" of them physically, and to force them to take the oath. The harassed soldiers would say to him and each other that they are

strong not of themselves, but by the strength of Christ, and with Him they would be able to bear anything.

They were ridiculed every day. One sergeant, striking them, tried to force them to smoke and to curse. In front of the whole formation, he would place his ear against the chest of one or the other and tell everyone to quiet down, because he wanted to "hear Christ in there". In the mess hall at one point, when all were seated, the two were ordered to continue standing, with the jibe, "Let Christ feed them!"

Nevertheless, during this first period of trial, all difficulties faded before the happiness of understanding more deeply the words, "...He suffered under Pontius Pilate". When rehearsals began for the swearing in, Robertas and Oskaras refused to learn the text. After some unsuccessful attempts to coerce and intimidate them, the captain summoned Robertas and told him to prepare for a journey. Seeing the youth's happy face, the officer blurted out with bestial hatred: "Wipe that smile off! They'll kill you there!"

So Robertas found himself once more at brigade headquarters in Chimkent, where he met with a hailstorm of hatred, ridicule, and threats. Major Chutiyev shouted that a believer has no right to proclaim himself in public as a religious believer, or to try proving the truth of religion, but only to pray silently in his own cult's houses of worship; otherwise he automatically becomes an enemy of the Soviet Union and a fascist, to be liquidated.

Another colonel, gnashing his teeth, demanded that Robertas be turned over immediately for trial, shut up in a psychiatric hospital, and sent out to the uranium mines, where he would "croak in half-a-year".

The youth retorted that they were powerless to do anything to him which God did not allow, and everything which God allows in our lives is the greatest good. So he would go with a smile to meet the future, whether this meant prison or the uranium mines. Robertas looked at those elderly officers, who were trembling with hatred, and understood clearly as never before how empty and terrible their ideology was. They were a living replica of those fascists whom they show in their films. They were not even offended when this was remarked to them. "Yes", they would say, "the fascists destroyed their betrayers, and we are destroying our betrayers. That is how it must be!"

Once, when the talk turned to the religious spirit among youth, one of the colonels, unable to contain his anger, shouted, "When I

see young people with crosses hanging from their necks, I want to tear them off and to stuff them down their throats!"

That very day they drove Robertas to Badam, where for almost three months he worked in a brickyard with the Second Corps of the 1902 Special Construction Battalion.

Here the behavior of the officers was emphatically polite (at least it seemed so on the surface) and, even though one of them boasted that in a couple of months he would teach Robertas cursing, smoking, drinking and immorality, they did not engage in more specific harassment (at least openly).

Exchanges such as these used to take place with the officers: the soldiers would be standing in formation, ready to go to work. Stopping before Robertas, one would begin to shout, "I'll teach you to oppose the Soviet Government! Within a couple of months I'll teach you to curse, smoke, drink and to engage in immoral actions!"

"Surely all those things are not the Soviet government, Comrade Officer?" asked Robertas.

The officer was stunned. "Don't give me any of your demagogery! He shouted after a minute.

The oath seemed to be forgotten by all. Could it be that they had decided that the young man who believed in God had been punished sufficiently with prison-camp labor, and were satisfied with that? For peace of conscience, Robertas was resolved to bear even more, and even though the brickyard's quota was inhumanly high and working conditions were injurious to health, he rejoiced at the peace which had come over him and prayed to Christ for strength for the future.

But even this relative respite was brief. More and more often, without any reason, the soldiers would rain blows and kicks on him, with their sergeants and corporals intervening symbolically for appearances' sake. Increasingly these sessions were accompanied by "political education" sermons about the "sacredness" and "necessity" of the oath. On the average, Robertas would receive about forty blows. Soon the company medic, to whom he went with a sharp pain in the chest, decided that he had a broken or cracked rib. No one, however, was in a hurry to take him to the hospital, and he had to work under the same conditions as those who were well. The pain interfered not only with his work, but also with normal walking and breathing.

To the young man's complaints, Corporal Safarian replied that

such things were of no concern to anyone in the army: "Even if you have to die, make the quota!" This was in complete keeping with the Soviet view of human beings, which First Lieutenant Satarov constantly pounded into the soldier-slaves: "You might be an ideal person, but if you do not fulfill the plan, you are nothing!" Robertas did not complain to the officers, even when they asked, because he did not think it would improve matters.

Later, 1st Lt. Dzhuzupov made life easier for Robertas by transferring him to the 4th Company (till then he had served in the 1st Company, where he used to be the object of much undeserved abuse.). Now the soldier-slave of the Soviets regularly received only 5-10 blows a day. In the brick-works also, working conditions were more normal.

However, along with the chest pains, a general weakness showed up. Complaints were met with the answer that there was a shortage of manpower, there was no substitute, and the quota had to be fulfilled.

On July 31, 1982, the Chief of the 1092nd Technical Battalion for Construction, Lt. Col. Akmatalliev, arrived for an inspection tour. Summoning Robertas to the office, he expressed great surprise that in the U.S.S.R. there are still religious believers. The high-ranking officer, cursing the young soldier in the vilest language, happened to mention a staff-member of the special section, Capt. Sinyayev. The latter had earlier summoned him for a talk and had explained very politely that the colonels in Chimkent had no right to curse a soldier, nor to ridicule religion. He promised to show that people who do so are not representative of the party nor its essence, that the party in general was healthy, and that the public needs organization.

Robertas replied that up till then the party had shown him the same kind of face which the aforesaid colonels had shown him, and then and there he refused to collaborate. At this point, the party representative turned on him once again with his customary expression, distorted with hatred.

When the young man refused again to take the oath, he swore to shoot Robertas' parents, to court-martial the Military Commissar of Lazdijai for not uncovering the "bandits" in time, and to hand Robertas personally over to the KGB organs.

Besides the aforesaid sharp chest pains, the young victim of this terrorization was beset by some kind of intestinal illness, doubtlessly the result of unsanitary conditions prevailing there.

On August 1, 1982, he was taken in the battalion commander's

automobile, together with a whole entourage: driver, Assistant Battalion Commander for Political Affairs, Maj. Belokony, and tin-Secretary of the Battalion Communist Youth League, to battalion headquarters at Kzyl-Orda. During the entire 400 km. journey, the addle-headed sarcasms, threats and accusations did not let up, it was said that he dared to spoil Soviet bread, etc. At Kzyl-Orda, in the words of the Battalion Commander, "a secure Soviet room" awaited him.

There the young man, already seriously suffering from dysentery, was shut up in the guard-house where the only "furniture" consisted of newspapers on the concrete floor. No one paid attention to the patient's request for at least a simple bucket. The illness worsened; blood appeared. It looked like dysentery, but they would let him out into the yard only twice a day. Yet the young believer in God and martyr rejoiced that he could meditate in peace and pray, incorporating into his prayer the hardness of his pallet, all the inconveniences associated with imprisonment, and his debilitating illness.

His joy did not last long. He soon had two cell-mates, sentenced to a few days for being absent without leave. One of them had spent a year in jail before his army service, and the other had been on probation.

Their talk was all of women and whiskey; and once they had discovered what Robertas was in for, their talk about religion and clergy was no different from most Soviet officers or soldiers. There was the same degeneracy, the same ignorance, the same bad will and aversion to truth, lest the conscience be stirred.

The cell-mates, peaceful at first, became daily more aggressive. There was the customary combination: along with all the amorality and looseness of behavior went ardent Soviet patriotism. They began to threaten Robertas with physical force if he did not take the oath to his "homeland". After a few days like that in the guard-house, the battalion commander had Robertas brought out before the first and third companies in formation, acquainted the troops with the "bandit's" biography and, vilifying with all the sordidness of Russian profanity first his mother, then his father, for having reared "such" a son, and threatening to take vengeance on all his relatives and to drop a five-kiloton atomic bomb on the Baltic States, they demanded, "Will you take the oath?"

"No!"

"Then you can rot in there!"

Robertas "rotted" in the guard-house until the morning of August 5, when they finally let him out to wash his filthy clothing and go to the store-room. The next day a medical commission swooping in discovered an epidemic of typhus in the battalion. Soldiers poured into surrounding hospitals. At the guard-house an argument took place between the medics and Robertas' officers. The former finally managed to convince the killers that it was "not important whether he is a Catholic or whatever. . . what is important is that he is a sick man who needs help", and Robertas wound up in the Kzyl-Orda city hospital with a diagnosis of "acute dysentery".

The storm tossing the boat of the prisoner of war has temporarily subsided. The battalion leadership is still putting up with various commissions. Even Alma-Ata has become interested. However, it is not likely that any commission will see the guard-house cells, or learn in what "sanitary" conditions 20th century recruits are imprisoned. Or if they do find out, they will never report it. And who will count all the guard-houses throughout Soviet territory?

What will the fate of the martyr Robertas Grigas be? Will the occupation machine ruin his physical health, or destroy it altogether? Only the future can tell.

Asked how he reacted when they beat him, Robertas simply admitted that he used to repeat, "Lord, grant me the strength to bear all hardship as you did on the cross. Let me bear it as punishment deserved for my sins, and for despising your love . . ."

The Catholics of Lithuania, and especially the youth at the present time, are asking God to grant Robertas courage and perseverance.

On May 12, 1982, a group of Lithuanian youth, sending their friend Robertas off for two or more years of suffering in the Soviet army, as a sign of giving meaning to this suffering, and of union with the sufferings of Christ, erected on an embankment along an obscure little road an artistic five-meter cross with the inscription, "Lord, do what you will with me, but have mercy on my nation and on my loved ones."

Immediately the faithful of Leipalingis and neighboring villages began visiting the cross. Kind hands decorated it with flowers, cleaned up the area and cut steps from the road to the cross. It seemed as though this symbol of Christian faith, hope and love, standing out of the way in the woods could not and should not have bothered anyone.

However, it did bother some. The question of this cross was the subject of bitter discussion in the plenary session of the Lazdijai *Rayon* Party Committee. For the erection of the cross and other "sins", Robertas' father, Antanas Grigas, a teacher at the Leipalingis Middle School, was attacked both in the plenary session *in absentia*, and at school, with threats that he would be discharged from his position. At school the attack was led by Secretary (Mrs.) B. Zuzevičienė, of the teachers' party organization. The teacher's response to all accusations and threats was, "First of all, please do not pry into my conscience; second, why do you want to credit all the good works of all food people to me?"

After this "ideological-expository" introduction, the atheists did not waste time getting down to action. The night of June 8-9, 1982, certain persons came with several vehicles (as was apparent from the tracks), dug up the cross and bore it away. Neither the names nor the work-places of those who perpetrated this vile deed are known thus far. Some party and, government officials affirm that it was the work of hooligans, and that is doubtlessly the truth, with a small correction: it is completely irrelevant whether the cross was torn down by the hands of common street hooligans, or drunkards, or hooligans from this or that office. It is important only that this foul deed was directed, as always, by government atheists.

### OUR PRISONERS

On May 29, 1982, Vytautas Vaičiūnas imprisoned in the Cheliabinsk region, City of Bakal, had a visit from his brother and wife, and on August 11, during visiting hours he was able to converse with his wife through a glass partition for one and a half hours.

Vytautas Vaičiūnas' health has deteriorated badly. Not long ago, he was in the hospital from which he was discharged before he had fully recovered; an epidemic was raging in the camp and there were not enough beds in the hospital. His skin is ulcerated, he has a large abscess on his foot, he is subject to intense itching, and if he walks around for a while, his feet swell. At the present time, Vytautas Vaičiūnas weighs 73 kg (160 lbs.) (Before his imprisonment, he weighed 115 kg—253 lbs.)

After completing one third of his sentence, Vaičiūnas asked

to go out on a road gang. (This privilege is allowed all criminals in general regime camps.) The prison administration refused to allow him out, affirming that his health was too weak.

"Then give me supplementary rations," Vaičiūnas requested.  
"You're not entitled," was the reply.

The criminal camps, after half the sentence has been served, prisoners' cases are reviewed, and if a prisoner has not broken the rules, he is retried by the camp court and allowed to go free. Vaičiūnas' case was never reviewed.

Letters written to Vytautas Vaičiūnas almost never reach him: of twelve letters from his wife, he received only two. The camp administration says that it has given him all the letters addressed to him.

(Mrs.) Vaičiūnienė has written in complaint to the Attorney General of the USSR, saying that her husband does not receive Lithuanian literature which has been ordered for him; the matter was handed over to the City Solicitors's office of Satka for investigation. After the complaint, the Satka City's solicitor's office forbade Vaičiūnas to receive even *Komjaunimo Tiesa* (Truth of the Communist Youth), the only newspaper which he still used to receive occasionally.

The camp administration claims that they do not receive any Lithuanian printed matter. That means that neither letters nor Lithuanian printed matter reach Vaičiūnas because of somebody's special order.

Once a month, they are allowed to buy 7 rubles worth of food at the camp store. (Only, of course, if the prisoner has not offended the administration.) However, apart from the most ordinary kinds of candy, bread and rancid margarine, which often makes the prisoners sick, there is nothing in the store.

Less and less frequently are messages from Lithuanian prisoners reaching the Land of the Nemunas: About half of their letters disappear without a trace even though sent by registered mail, return receipt requested. However the journey of letters sent from Lithuania across Russia's expanse is even more difficult: more than half of them disappear, some of them from Vilnius travel half a year to the prisoners' cells in the Perm District. Delivery receipts for some letters are received by people in Vilnius but the prisoners never see the letters.

Antanas Terleckas, in his letter of August 15, 1982, writes:  
" . . . Camp life is much more difficult than it was twenty or thirty years ago."



**Antanas Terleckas**

Viktoras Petkus, in his 1982 letters, writes:

" . . . Oh . . . how naive we both were when we thought that after the Helsinki Accords new winds would blow across Europe! . . ."

"On February 7, I wrote you a letter, but the day before yesterday they returned the envelope with the return receipt. The letter has been confiscated for allegedly ideologically damaging content."  
March 21, 1982.



**Viktoras Petkus**

"... For some reason or other, written communications between the two of us have completely broken off: the one and only letter I received from you this year was January 15. (Of ten letters, only one has reached Viktoras Petkus. Ed. Note) On Ascension Thursday, Pentecost, Trinity Sunday and July 1, I sent out, by airmail, registered letters with return receipt requested, but I never did receive notices of delivery. Therefore, I am going to write only a few words.

"I have returned from the hospital. The sutures have not yet been removed. (They operated on a nasal growth. — Ed. Note) Hence, I do not know how the incision will look. The left side of my head is still throbbing". July 12, 1982.

"Vytautas Skuodis writes:

"... My routine is the same. From Saturday to Wednesday, inclusive, from early morning until late at night, working in the laundry and the bath, time passes very quickly. Sundays are spent outside drying what I lauded on Saturday evening and night. The remaining time, from Wednesday afternoon until Friday evening, also streaks by like lightening, while I read periodicals which have piled up considerably. . . . Work in the laundry requires approximately fifty-six hours a week. After such work, on Wednesdays, you feel like a worn-out overshoe."

(Vytautas Skuodis has announced that on June 15 every year, he intends to fast completely in protest against the occupation of Lithuania. This year, on the evening of June 15, at about 9 o'clock, he had a minor heart attack. — Ed. Note) "Only after I had lain on the cement barrier in the bathroom for half an hour, with my head resting on an overturned bucket, did the sickness pass. This year I managed to do without a drop of water. Apparently, that day I was very badly exhausted." July 9, 1982.

Vytautas Vaičiūnas writes in his letters:

"... It is the second year that I am wearing a prisoner's shackles, but no one can prevent the flight of a free spirit, so let us rejoice in the Lord and let us live in the hope of reunion, which shines for us who believe; even the shadows of death cannot obscure it. God has allowed me to walk the way of sacrifice, and therefore, I thank you for your support, cooperation, sacrifices and prayers.

"Please convey my sincere greetings to all my dear ones in Lithuania. Tell them that only half of the material side of me is left (his former weight — Ed. Note), but the spirit rises more freely to the blue heavens. I am prepared to suffer everything, to bear everything, and to keep the Faith. I thank you for your support, and live in the peace of the Lord." July, 1982.

From the letters of Julius Sasnauskas:

"... Vacation is ended. If it were not for mother, it would have been very unhappy. . . . (According to Soviet law, those in exile who have not broken the rules have the right after a year in exile to return for a few days of vacation to the homeland. Without reason, Julius Sasnauskas was denied permission to leave his exile in Pabel to visit his homeland, and moreover they did not even

allow him to go to the Tomsk *Rayon* Hospital for major surgery on his knee. — Ed. Note) As the evening darkness closes in, we must live by the hope of dawn . . . Providence will surely allow us to achieve at least part of that hope.

". . . On Monday, I plan to enter the hospital. (In Parabel — Ed. Note) It's probably good to wind up in the hospital from time to time in order to see how fragile our existence is and how many greater misfortunes there are around you . . . The will of God be done everywhere. My thoughts are of you all; your holy prayer sustains and will continue to sustain me.

". . . I thank God for all human hearts which radiate the spirit of love among us. May all receive their reward at the hands of the Good Shepherd." July, 1982.

Anastazas Janulis writes:

". . . Often, even though we do not want to, we succumb to that ugly custom, and in our hands which just held the rosary, we pick up a drink! This holy evening of All Saints I would wish, on my knees, to call out to my compatriots, to my nation: 'Where are you headed, my nation?' I would be willing to die here in prison if only there would be no drink in my brothers' hands." November 7, 1981.

". . . What can I tell you about my dull daily routine? That it is difficult to live far from my homeland? Oh yes! That it is not easy to get along without the sacraments, the altar, and yes, the organ? Of course! That it is unpleasant to feel constantly surrounded — as with a crown of thorns — by five different kinds of fences? Of course!

"But a human being is not a beast, he knows that manacled feet are better than a trammled soul. Not for nothing does St. Paul say that love makes a person free. Therefore, looking at the past, the present and the future I can say without lying:

*Rejoice, my soul, having fulfilled your Lent, your duty,*

*Whose life is Lent, his death is Easter!*

*Shout Hosannah! for bodily suffering, Alleluja for death*

*Kiss the shackles of bondage, they are the winning tricks of Providence*

". . . I have become an invalid of the second group, let no one think to ask favors for me! I must drain my chalice to the dregs." March 28, 1982.

## CONSTITUTIONAL "FREEDOMS" AND THE ACTUAL TRUTH

To: The Vice-Chairman of the Executive Committee of the Pasvalis *Rayon* Council of Peoples' Deputies

Copies to: The Peoples' Court of Pasvalis *Rayon*  
The Apostolic Administrator of the Diocese of Panevėžys  
Priests' Senate of the Diocese of Panevėžys  
The Dean of Pasvalis

A Petition from the Rev. Benediktas Urbonas, Pastor of the Joniškėlis Church

I appeal to you, as the immediate leader in the *rayon*, with regard to matters of cult.

On April 20, 1982, after having been reported by acting Chairwoman (Mrs.) J. Gasiūnienė of the Executive Committee of the Council of Peoples' Deputies for the city of Joniškėlis, I received Decision No. 59 of the Administrative Committee attached to the Executive Committee of the Pasvalis *Rayon* Council of Peoples' Deputies written April 16, 1982, by which I am blamed for the participation (serving) of schoolchildren at religious services and without investigation of the matter or any explanation. I was fined 50 rubles.

This accusation I consider unfounded and unlawful for the following reasons:

1. Par. 50 of the Constitution of the Lithuanian SSR recognizes the freedom of all citizens to carry out religious worship without restriction; therefore, even if some kind of directive restricting these rights for some citizens were to be promulgated, it would be void as contrary to the constitution. Jurists know that.

Nowhere have I found any law that religious freedom is granted only at the age of eighteen. After all, baptism is ordinarily conferred on infants, and not on adults.

2. The Church in our country is separated from the state and the school from the Church. Priests do not interfere in the school. But it is through baptism that we become full-fledged members of the Church, and children have the right to exercise religious worship. Show me the law by which the faithful (including schoolchildren) are forbidden to exercise religious worship (Confession, Holy Communion, etc.)

3. Interference by individual officials of the civil government

in the internal affairs of the Church restricting the right of a certain group of the faithful (i.e., children) to exercise religious worship: A. Is contrary to the constitution (See Constitution of the Lithuanian SSR, Par. 50: "Citizens of the Lithuanian SSR are guaranteed freedom of conscience; that is, the right to profess any religion . . . to participate in religious cult . . .") and, B. It is a transgression of Church Canon Law by which the Church herself determines the manner and forms of worshipping God in church. This is not determined by outsiders.

4. The practice of having youngsters serve in church is not something initiated by bishops or even popes, but rather commanded by the very Founder of the Church, Jesus Christ: "Let the little children come to Me, and do not stop them." (Lk 18, 16; c.f. Mk 10, 14) and therefore, I cannot forbid this in my church and being penalized for it is a gross interference in the internal affairs of the Church and its Canon Law, which our state claims to respect, and a paralyzing of this freedom and of the essential task of the Church: to proclaim the Gospel to all people, (c.f. Mk 16, 15).

Moreover, believing parents will not willingly renounce the right to take children to church and here they will be acting in accord with Church law.

5. Regarding the accusation that children "served": No contract for services or employment has been made with them; they took part in the ceremonies as believers, with complete freedom according to their own wishes, those of their parents, and according to Church law. It is not I who thought this up or originated it; this was being done before I ever came to Joniškėlis. You can ask the people.

6. What we do is allowed in other churches of the republic: (e.g., in Vilnius, Kaunas, Panevėžys, *rayon* centers, etc.), so it cannot be forbidden and considered a crime in Joniškėlis alone, because the latter is one of the average cities of the Lithuanian SSR, and does not have any special status.

I ask you, Mr. Chairman, in consideration of the arguments I have submitted to see to it that once the complaint of (Mrs.) Gasiūnienė has been investigated, the aforesaid decision of the Administrative Committee be set aside as unconstitutional and as compromising Soviet justice.

Joniškėlis, April 23, 1982

K. B. Urbonas  
Pastor of Joniškėlis Church

Civil Case No. 2-128/1982

D e c i s i o n

In the Name of the Lithuanian Soviet Socialist Republic

Pasvalis May 12, 1982

*Rayon,*

The Peoples' Court of the Pasvalis *Rayon*, consisting of the presiding Peoples' Judge L. Trakelis and Peoples' Councilors 1. (Mrs.) A. Gritėnienė, 2. (Mrs.) S. Nevulienė, with (Mrs.) D. Svistova as Secretary and Assistant Prosecutor V. Grigalavičius participating, considered in open court the civil case on the suit of Benediktas Urbonas to set aside the decision according to which a fine was assessed, and came to the following decision:

B. M. Urbonas did not attend the trial. A notice of the place and time for trying the case was presented to him but he refused to sign. In his complaint, Urbonas indicates that the Administrative Committee attached to the Pasvalis *Rayon* Council of Peoples' Deputies Executive Committee, in its decision of April 16, 1982, fined him 50 rubles without cause. He maintains that there was no basis for punishing him because Par. 50 of the Constitution of the Lithuanian SSR grants citizens the right to profess any religion at all. The law does not forbid children to serve in church. He asks that the judgement assessing a 50 ruble fine on him be set aside.

No representative of the administrative committee showed up at the trial.

The Assistant Prosecutor requests that Urbonas' complaint be rejected because he maintains that the fine was assessed with cause.

The complaint is rejected. In his complaint, Urbonas does not deny that on April 10-11, 1982, pupils of Joniškėlis Middle School assisted him during religious services. From the report of the offense it is obvious that on April 10-11, a group of pupils from the Joniškėlis Middle School served in church. Witnesses (Mrs.) Noreikienė and (Mrs.) Mikėnienė testified that their children served in church on April 10-11. They maintain only that for this, they are guilty, and not the priests. Therefore, it has been irrefutably established that children served in church during religious services. It is not the believers but Urbonas who transgressed against the May 12, 1966 instruction of the Presidium of the Supreme Court of the Lithuanian SSR,

"Concerning administrative liability for breaking the law regarding religious cults." The fine was assessed in keeping with the administrative requirements of Par. 36 of the bases for transgression of the law. The deadline for assessing the fine was not passed. In the aforesaid order, the size of the fine was set at 50 rubles. The fine was assessed by an organ which has the right to levy it (Code of Civil Procedure of the Lithuanian SSR, Par. 264.).

The decision of the administrative committee does not contravene Par. 50 of the Constitution of the Lithuanian SSR or the aforesaid order.

Therefore, on the basis of Par. 15, 58 and 222 of the Code of Civil Procedure of the Lithuanian SSR, the Peoples' Court has decided to reject the complaint of Benediktas Urbonas, son of Mykolas Domininkas. This decision of the court is final.

On May 16, 1982, the parents of schoolchildren in the parish of Joniškėlis wrote a petition to the republican Prosecutor of the Lithuanian SSR in which they protest an administrative fine levied against Father Benediktas Urbonas, April 16, 1982, for, "Having children serve in church". The parents raise a number of arguments showing the injustice of this fine: the Soviet government allows us to baptize our children, that is, to make them full-fledged Catholics. Therefore, they must have the right also to worship in the Catholic Faith. . . . Is there some sort of law which, contrary to the constitution, would ban this and would forbid the rights of religious worship? . . . Our children do not work in church, but take part in ceremonies freely without being hired and without compensation, but rather, in accord with their preferences and ours and with Canon Law.

On June 25, 1982, Senior Prosecutor (Mrs.) D. Kazakaitienė, in response to the May 16 protest by parents of schoolchildren in Joniškėlis offered the following "explanation" to the faithful. "In response to your petition and that of other individuals, I wish to inform you that the republican prosecutor's office has found no basis for appealing the Pasvalis *Rayon* People's Court's decision of May 12, 1982, rejecting B. Urbanas' appeal to have his administrative fine set aside."

To: Pasvalis *Rayon* Peoples' Court Chairman L. Trakelis  
Copies to: The Vice Chairman of the Executive Committee of the  
Pasvalis *Rayon* Council of Peoples' Deputies  
Dean of Pasvalis

From: Father Benediktas Urbonas, Pastor of Joniškėlis

#### A P e t i t i o n

On May 15, 1982, I received in the mail a copy of Decision No. 2-128/1982 in a civil case before the Peoples' Court of the Pasvalis *Rayon*. It states that the Pasvalis *Rayon* Peoples' Court, and I quote, "has considered in open court the civil case of Plaintiff Benediktas Urbonas requesting that the decision assessing a fine be set aside . . ."

I did not appeal to the Peoples' Court of Pasvalis *Rayon* nor did I write such a complaint. After receiving from the Administrative Commission attached to the Executive Committee of the Pasvalis *Rayon* Council of Peoples' Deputies Decision No. 59, written April 16, 1982, in which I am blamed for the participation of schoolchildren in services (so-called "serving") and fined 50 rubles, I wrote a complaint, not to the Peoples' Court concerning the administrative fine, but rather, I appealed in writing to the Vice Chairman of the Executive Committee of the Pasvalis *Rayon* Council of Peoples' Deputies (I quote), "As the actual director of cult affairs in the *rayon*".

That same day, i.e., April 23, 1982, I sent out some copies of the petition to: the Bishop of Panevėžys, the Dean of Pasvalis and the Pasvalis *Rayon* Peoples' Court.

A copy of a document is not a complaint or petition; it does not obligate anyone, but merely acquaints the recipient with measures that have been taken.

That is why I did not attend the session of the Peoples' Court, because I had not asked the court to take up my case, but am instead waiting for an answer in writing from the Vice Chairman of the Executive Committee of the *Rayon* Council of Peoples' Deputies.

I take this occasion to remind you that participants in my trial, May 12, 1982, in Pasvalis, said that in the course of it, the entire copy of the petition I sent to the Vice Chairman of the Executive Committee of the Pasvalis *Rayon* Council of Peoples' Deputies

was not even read, and no substantive reply was given during the trial to several extenuating arguments presented by me.

Respectfully,  
Rev. B. Urbonas  
Pastor of Joniškėlis

Joniškėlis, May 18, 1982

Commissar of the Council of Religious Affairs attached to the Council of Ministers of the USSR for the Soviet Socialist Republic of Lithuania, 6/1/82, No. 193

232600  
Vilnius  
Totorių 1  
Tel. 61-95-29

To: Father Benediktas Urbonas  
Joniškėlis  
M. Melnikaitės 24/2  
Pasvalis *Rayon*

In response to your petition of May 17, 1982, addressed to the Prosecutor of the Lithuanian SSR, be informed that it is not possible to equate the fact that every citizen is free to go to church with the teaching of religion to children or enticing them to assist ministers of cult performing religious ceremonies. These are two concepts, distinct and well-known to you.

Ordering children out of church on the one hand, and, on the other, not organizing them to participate actively in those ceremonies serving at the altar, participating in choirs, processions, ceremonies these are not one and the same.

You may abide by Church canons and regulations only insofar as these do not contravene state law; otherwise, state organs would be forced to take appropriate steps in your regard for breaking Soviet laws regarding cults.

In the opinion of the commissar, the Administrative Commission attached to the Executive Committee of the Pasvalis Rayon Council of Peoples' Deputies, in penalizing you, acted justly.

(Signed)  
Commissar P. Anilionis

To: The Prosecutor of the Lithuanian SSR  
Copies to: The Commissar of the Council for Religious Affairs  
attached to the USSR Council of Ministers  
Apostolic Administrator of the Diocese of Panevėžys  
The Chapter of the Diocese of Panevėžys  
The Dean of Pasvalis  
From: Father Benediktas Urbonas, Pastor of Joniškėlis

#### A P e t i t i o n

I find myself in the following predicament: Articles of the Constitution of the Lithuanian SSR and official pronouncements of the Lithuanian SSR Commissar of the Council for Religious Affairs attached to the Council of Ministers of the USSR conflict with administrative measures aimed at me.

I am well acquainted with the Constitution of the Lithuanian SSR: Par. 32 and Par. 50 guarantee all citizens freedom to exercise religious worship without restriction.

I am also well acquainted with my own duties as a priest, the Code of Canon Law of the Catholic Church stipulates: "Shepherds of souls are strictly obliged to teach all the faithful Christian doctrine, but especially the children. (Code of Canon Law, Canon 1329) The Panevėžys Diocesan Synod also strictly requires the same (See: *First Synod of the Diocese of Panevėžys*, pp. 45-47, Par. 188-197).

Here is what representatives of the state officially proclaim:

Petras Anilionis, Commissar for the Lithuanian, SSR of the Council for Religious Affairs, attached to the Council of Ministers for the USSR writes: "All citizens are granted complete freedom in questions of religion . . . each citizen may freely go to church . . . Soviet law protects believers from any assaults on freedom of religion" (*Valstiečių laikraštis, Farmers' Newspaper*, March 29, 1980, No. 39, "Freedom of Conscience").

Justas Rugienis, Commissar for the Lithuanian SSR of the Council for Religious Affairs, attached to the Council of Ministers for the USSR has written, "Neither the Soviet State nor its government organs interferes in the internal affairs of the Church, i.e., its canonical or dogmatic activities (*Tarybų darbas, Soviet Work*, September 9, 1972, "The Councils and the Regulations for Religious Cult").

Therefore, I wish to inquire why it is proclaimed that all people are free to go to church to carry out religious worship, but the priest is

penalized for doing so? Why is it proclaimed that the state does not interfere in the internal affairs of the Church and its canons and yet the priest is penalized for conforming to them? Am I to blame for not ejecting children who have come to church?

I respectfully request the Prosecutor of the Lithuanian SSR to explain competently to me the following things:

May a priest in the Lithuanian SSR carry out his duties as a priest according to the directives of Canon Law, or not? If he may, then I am not guilty. If he may not, then this is contrary to Par. 32 of the Constitution of the Lithuanian SSR and the declaration of Commissar J. Rugienis.

Do all citizens of the Lithuanian SSR have freedom of exercising religious worship, or only adults? If all have this freedom, then I am not guilty. If not all, then this is contrary to Par. 50 of the Constitution of the Lithuanian SSR and the aforesaid declaration of Commissar Petras Anilionis.

Is there some sort of law which separates citizens into those who have full rights with regard to religion and those for whom those rights are restricted or taken away; how does it sound, and by whom was it promulgated?

Until I was blamed, I carried out my duties as a priest without interference. It is therefore true that if no one accuses me, I **am** free to carry them out, but if anyone accuses me, then am I to be penalized?

Do Soviet agencies regulate the manner and form of Roman Catholic Church ceremonies in the Lithuanian SSR, and rules of conduct for the faithful, or, is this an internal matter of the Church? If it is an internal matter of the Church, I am not guilty. If not, this is contrary to the abovementioned declaration of Commissar J. Rugienis.

Respectfully,  
Father B. Urbonas  
Pastor of Joniškėlis

Joniškėlis, May 17, 1982

Response to the petition by Father Benediktas Urbonas, Pastor of the Parish of Joniškėlis, to the Prosecutor of the Lithuanian SSR, May 17, 1982:

"In response to your complaint, I wish to inform you that the Office of the Prosecutor of the Republic has found no grounds to

overturn by judicial review the May 12, 1982 decision of the Pasvalis *Rayon* Peoples' Court, by which your petition to set aside an administrative fine had been rejected.

In keeping with the June 12, 1966 instruction of the Presidium of the Supreme Council of the Lithuanian SSR, "Concerning Administrative Liability for Offenses against the Law Regarding Religious Cults", the administrative fine has been levied against you justly.

(signed) (Mrs.) D. Kazakaitienė  
Advisor to the Supreme Justice,  
Chief Prosecutor, Oversight Section  
of Civil Case Court Trials.

Priests of the Panevėžys Diocese working in the *Rayon* of Pasvalis sent a protest, June 30, 1982, to the Assistant Chairman of the Executive Committee of the Pasvalis *Rayon*, regarding a fine unjustly levied against Father Urbonas. Among other things, the priests wrote:

"All we priests residing in the *Rayon* of Pasvalis have followed events with interest. The communication received from the Commissar for Religious Affairs says nothing essentially, and it does not satisfy us. The question is not one of permission to go to church (even unbelievers do that), but concerning Par. 50 of the Constitution of the Lithuanian SSR which declares that citizens of the Lithuanian SSR are guaranteed freedom of conscience . . . After all, 'the exercise of religious worship' includes participation in religious ceremonies. It is one and the same thing. To proclaim that 'citizens of the Lithuanian SSR have freedom of conscience and the right to exercise religious worship' and to forbid them by law to participate in such, is a contradiction."

Signed:

Gaudentas Ikamas  
Juozas Dubnikas  
Antanas Liesis  
Aleksandras Masys  
Algirdas Miškinis  
Jonas Buliauskas  
Sigitas Uždavinys  
Alfonsas Jančys

Stasys Zubavičius  
Petras Tijušas  
Albinas Piparas  
Antanas Balaišis  
Jonas Rimša  
Antanas Valančiūnas  
Vytautas Jasiūnas

## GOVERNMENT EFFORTS TO SEPARATE PRIESTS FROM PEOPLE

On March 18, 1981, the Associate Pastor of the Parish in Prienai, Father Antanas Gražulis, was invited to visit the faithful of the Villages of Ašminta, Apušotas and Bagrėnas in the *Rayon* of Prienai to bless their homes.

On March 30, 1981, (Mrs.) Ona Vaitauskienė, a staff member of the Ašminta District Library, was summoned to see Vice Chairman K. Morkvėnas of the Prienai *Rayon* Executive Committee.

"A cultural worker is not allowed to go to church, taking her daughter with her, or to make up a list of people expecting the priest, and, after that, to invite the priest," Morkvėnas assailed her. The Vice Chairman emphasized that it was time for (Mrs.) Ona Vaitauskienė to draw the appropriate conclusions and to change her world view since otherwise, she would be embarrassing to the *rayon*. (Mrs.) Ona Vaitauskienė stated that she went to church and would continue to do so; had taken her daughter to church and would continue to take her; that no one was about to reform her, nor was she about to deny her faith. If, because of her conviction, she could not work in the library, she would take any other kind of work.

Vice Chairman Morkvėnas ordered Directress (Mrs.) G. Polekauskienė of the Prienai Central Library to discharge (Mrs.) Vaitauskienė.

On April 6, (Mrs.) Vaitauskienė was summoned to the Prienai *Rayon* Department of Culture where Chairman A. Veselis of the Ašminta District Executive Committee tried to demonstrate that because of her beliefs, (Mrs.) Vaitauskienė was not obeying work rules.

(Not true! (Mrs.) Vaitauskienė used to perform her duties carefully and conscientiously — Ed. Note) That day, (Mrs.) Vaitauskienė was forced to write a request that she be relieved of her duties as staff member of the Ašminta District Library, effective May 18, 1981.

On May 28, 1981, in the Village of Ašminta, *Rayon* of Prienai, one girl who was a religious believer was celebrating her birthday. Invited to the celebration was Father Antanas Gražulis. Soon after the birthday, an interrogation of the schoolchildren began. Ašminta District Chairman A. Veselis summoned students Rolandas Čeplinskas (7th Grade) and Loreta Lapinskaitė and rudely badgered them

about who participated in the birthday, etc. By his interrogation, Chairman Veselis drove Loreta Lapinskaitė to tears.

Directress (Mrs.) A. Šervenikienė of the Ašminta Middle School ordered class leaders to warn parents of the pupils. The latter warned them, saying everything would be entered in the school records and their children would never go on to higher education.

At Prienai I Middle School, students (Miss) V. Bandoraitytė, (Miss) D. Bendinskaitė, and (Miss) D. Čeplinskaitė (10th Graders) were being interrogated. The school administration, summoning the parents of the aforesaid girls, asked them who had invited the priest to the birthday party, and what he had talked about. Finally, they said that pupils were forbidden to go to gatherings in which a priest participated. He tried to move them emotionally by saying that they, the parents, were wrecking their children's future, that everything would be entered in the scholastic records, and that their daughters, upon finishing middle school would not be able to enter anywhere to study.

At the Birštonas School of Sports, student (Miss) Z. Padelskaitė was interrogated.

On April 11, 1981, Chairman A. Veselis of the Ašminta District summoned Librarian (Mrs.) Ona Vaitauskienė and accused her of organizing the birthday party and inviting the priest. "The school carries on atheistic work, and what do you do? There is no doubt that you will lose your job . . . The Security Police will question you. You may end up in prison . . . It would be better for the library to be shut down for ten years, rather than to have such personnel working there. Where have we been that we failed to notice earlier what you are?!" Chairman Veselis raved.

On September 6, 1981, at the birthday party of Giedrė Babravičiūtė (5th Grade) residing in the Village of Ašminta, besides her friends, Father Antanas Gražulis was a participant. At the end of October, the class leader at the Ašminta Middle School questioned pupils (Miss) Giedrė Babravičiūtė (5th Grade), (Miss) Odeta Dereškevičiūtė (5th Grade), (Miss) Rasa Vaitauskaitė (5th Grade) and (Miss) R. Daugelytė (5th Grade). The girls refused to answer any questions and the teachers tried to pry information from the girls by threats. The mother of pupil Giedrė Babravičiūtė told the class leader that she would invite whomever she wanted to her home, and demanded that they stop driving her daughter to tears.

On December 5, 1981, some residents of the Village of Pa-

garšvis gathered with their children in the yard of A. Šukevičius. Toward evening, a group of young people hurried over. Participating in the gathering was Father Antanas Gražulis. On December 7, teachers of Ašminta Middle School ordered Romas Juozaitis (3rd Grade) to bring his parents. During the interrogation, the teachers tried in various ways to frighten the boy, even to the point of tears. For the same reason, (Miss) Rasa Vaitauskaitė (5th Grade) was interrogated.

December 30, 1981, (Mrs.) Una Vaitauskienė was summoned in writing to the Ašminta District Council. Waiting for her there was Chairman P. Šeniauskas of the *Lenino kelio* Collective Farm, District Chairman A. Veselis, Secretary (Mrs.) Grigaravičienė of the Collective Farm Primary Organization and Principal (Mrs.) A. Šervenikienė of the Ašminta Middle School.

"There are ugly things going on in the district. Meetings with the priest are being organized. People are scandalized at your behavior. The children's parents are also unhappy . . . You are unaware of what you are doing to your family. Your daughter after finishing school, won't get in anywhere, and you will go to prison for your deeds... You are being widely discussed in the Party Committee, at the *Rayon* Executive, and among the Security Police. We know well how many such meetings there have been, and who was there. Confess that you organized the whole thing," District Chairman Veselis threatened (Mrs.) Ona Vaitauskienė.

School Principal (Mrs.) Šervenikienė claimed that believers are allowed to gather only in houses of prayer, and that such meetings in the village must not be; most of all, she was angry because parents take part in them with their children.

"For over seventeen years, no priest had visited people, and now you have decided to invite him," sneered Collective Farm Party Organization Secretary (Mrs.) Grigaravičienė.

(Mrs.) Vaitauskienė responded to the accusations, saying that they, the parents, are responsible for their own children, we invite for them whomever we wish. Please do not interrogate the children or drive them to tears; if you say you know everything, then why ask?"

Ending the discussion, the Ašminta District Council of the Priėnai *Rayon* said that they were warning (Mrs.) Ona Vaitauskienė for the last time.

## DESTRUCTION OF CROSSES

### Rainiai (Rayon of Telšiai)

On June 18, 1982, in spite of a posted guard, three metal crosses sprang up in the little forest dedicated to the memory of the Martyrs of Samogitia. They were destroyed June 20.

### Anulėnai (Rayon of Telšiai)

On June 21, 1982, the cross restored by the faithful at the intersection of the Šiauliai - Palanga Highway, and the Eigirdžiai - Anulėnai Road was demolished. A tractor also leveled the little fence which had always encircled the cross.

### Paukštakiai (Rayon of Plungė)

On June 25, 1982, the cross which had stood at the village crossroads was bulldozed.

### Šateikiai (Rayon of Plungė)

On May 3, 1982, an artistic little masonry shrine not far from Šateikiai was demolished.

### Kapčiamiestis (Rayon of Lazdijai)

On June 24, 1982, the faithful of Kapčiamiestis erected a wooden cross on the Kapčiamiestis - Kauknorės Road. The following day, Vice Chairman Vanagas of the Lazdijai *Rayon* Executive Committee came to Kapčiamiestis and ordered Forest Ranger A. Ignatavičius to demolish it, since the cross stood in his sector.

This was done July 2, between 1:00 and 3:00 PM. People say that the cross was cut down by Ignatavičius, his son Romas, and a son-in-law.

A couple of days later, two crosses sprang up on the spot.

On June 30, an artistic little shrine to Saint Anthony dedicated to those who had given their life for the nation's freedom, was erected at the edge of the forest along the Kapčiamiestis-Gardinas Highway.

In a couple of hours, the little shrine was vandalized.

On July 14, in Kapčiamiestis, an Executive Party meeting took place with a representative of the *rayon* Party participating. During the meeting, activists and auxiliaries were urged to be on guard against any crosses being erected in the district.

Nevertheless, the faithful of Kapčiamiestis, especially the youth and children resolved to protect every cross and to restore immediately those which are demolished.

## NEWS FROM THE DIOCESES

### Vilnius

On June 17, 1982, the bishops and administrators of Dioceses were summoned to the office of the Religious Affairs Commissar. Besides the commissar, Assistant Prosecutor Barauskas of the Lithuanian SSR spoke. He emphasized that strict measures will be taken to enforce the Regulations for Religious Associations.

### Veiviržėnai (Rayon of Klaipėda)

On July 25, 1982, the Sacrament of Confirmation was administered with throngs of the faithful in attendance. This annoyed the atheists no end. The night of July 27-28, they broke into the church. The cuprits, unable to break into the large safe-type tabernacle tore out its anchor points, wrecked the center portion of the high altar, demolished the throne of exposition, and carried off the entire tabernacle. The pastor, Father Juozapas Janauskas summoned experts from Klaipėda. They determined that the crime was committed by two adults and one minor. In the spirit of atonement, many of the faithful approached the wrecked high altar on their knees, weeping bitterly. Solemn services of reparation were scheduled for August 22.

### Laukžemė (Rayon of Kretinga)

During the night of August 3, 1982, culprits broke into the church and wrecked the alms boxes.

### Kėdainiai

On April 1, 1982, the Associate Pastor of the Parish at Kėdainiai, Father Kęstutis Daknevičius, sent a petition to Central Committee Secretary, P. Griškevičius, of the Communist Party of Lithuania, concerning the persecution of youth.

On April 15, a representative of the Central Committee arrived at Kėdainiai in connection with the matter. Father Daknevičius was summoned to the Executive Committee. Participating in the discussion were Kėdainiai *Rayon* Executive Committee Vice Chair-

man A. Juškevičius and an assistant prosecutor. The interrogation began: "You have direct ties with the Vatican? Why are you complaining that the 'situation is difficult'?" asked the arrivals. The priest explained that he has no direct ties with the Vatican, but that the situation is truly difficult because they are persecuting religiously believing students in the school. At the conclusion of the discussion, the representative from Vilnius reminded the priest that it was forbidden to teach children religion. The only thing allowed was to quiz the children in the confessional.

On May 3, Vice Chairman Juškevičius of the *Rayon* Executive Committee telephoned to say that there would be no answer in writing to the April 1 petition of Father Kęstutis Daknevičius.

On June 4, Father Daknevičius was once more summoned to the prosecutor's office. The priest would not sign the warning placed before him.

#### Girdžiai (Rayon of Jurbarkas)

On July 9, 1982, Secretary (Mrs.) B. Bileckienė of the Jurbarkas *Rayon* Girdžiai District Executive Committee sent Father Viktor Šauklys, Pastor of Girdžiai, the following communication:

To: Comrade Viktoras Šauklys

The Executive Committee of the Girdžiai District Council of Peoples' Deputies warns you not to entice children to the performance of religious ceremonies.

#### Rokiškis

In December, 1981, security agents carried out a search at the home of Vytautas Šablinskas, the Rokiškis Church sacristan, without any warrant. They seized all his audio tapes containing sermons of Fathers Alfonsas Svarinskas, Sigitas Tamkevičius and Juozas Kauneckas. The chekists warned Šablinskas not to try anymore to tape the sermons of these priests.

#### Šaukėnai (Rayon of Kelmė)

On July 27, 1982, in the Kelmė *Rayon* newspaper, *Komunistinis žodis* (*The Communist Word*) Jonas Stakutis tried to defend the contrived atheistic funeral services of Petras Liesis, in the course of which Teacher (Mrs.) Rakauskienė kept interrupting with rude remarks. Father Antanas Liesis' attempts to deliver a sermon at the cemetery. The newspaper lies when it says that, "No one ever saw the Liesis' darken the doors of a church". That

is not true! The people of Šaukėnai know that the Liesis' used to go to church and that the deceased was in church before his death, and received Holy Communion.

Pilviškiai (Rayon of Vilkaviškis)

On June 25, 1982, the invalid beggar (Miss) Kastancija Šeškevičiūtė died in Pilviškiai. Retired Teacher (Mrs.) Širvinskienė approached District Chairman Žibutis of Pilviškiai, requesting a casket and assistance to dig the grave. The Chairman asked, "How are you going to bury her, with Church or without?" When it was explained that the deceased was going to be interred with church services, Chairman Žibutis categorically refused to lend assistance for the funeral.

Kastancija Šeškevičiūtė was interred with church services. The casket, opening of the grave transport, etc., were taken care of by parishioners of Pilviškiai.

Aukštelkė (Rayon of Šiauliai)

(Mrs.) O. Stankienė, residing in Vilnius, R. Armijos 36-4, went to Commissar P. Anilionis of the Religious Affairs Committee, asking permission to bring a priest for her sister confined to the Aukštelkė Old Age Home for the second year. The Commissar for Religious Affairs replied that a priest could be brought in if the old people themselves requested it. On May 21, 1982 (Mrs.) Stankienė asked the Director of the Aukštelkė Old Age Home and he agreed to allow the priest into the morgue. Word of the priest's visit reached the old age home, and other elderly people, who begged with tears in their eyes that the priest be brought to see them, also. (Mrs.) Stankienė made a list of the elderly people desiring to see the priest, with their signatures and room numbers.

As (Mrs.) Stankienė, Šiauliai resident (Miss) Misiūnaitė and Vilnius resident (Mrs.) Norbičienė were preparing the morgue for the priest's visit, the director came and expelled them from the premises. When the women asked what had happened, the director began to threaten to call the militia, and he began to shout that he allowed them to bring a priest only for the patient (Miss) Markevičiūtė.

The women went to Vice Chairman Caparas of the Šiauliai Rayon Executive Committee. The Vice Chairman stated that in the old age home, the priest may administer the sacraments only to those who are dying or ill. Moreover, he promised that by the end of the week, everyone desiring to receive the sacraments would

be taken care of. However, three weeks have gone by, and no one is allowed to summon a priest for the elderly people who wish one.

#### Kaunas

On June 11, 1982, KGB agents carried out a search at the home of Kaunas resident (Miss) Terese Kurtinaityte, residing at TSRS 50-cio g. Nr. 16-92. Participating in the search were five chekists and two women. The warrent had the entry that the search was being carried out in connection with the reproduction of the *Chronicle of the Catholic Church in Lithuania*. During the search, the chekists were extremely disappointed to find nothing. They took only a typewriter and a religious book. They departed without leaving even a record of the search.

On July 28, 1982, during interrogation, Terese Kurtinaitytė was informed that her typewriter would be returned promptly, as soon as the case of the *Chronicle of the Catholic Church in Lithuania* is closed.

#### Vilnius

In May, the sad news spread throughout Vilnius that Father Ričardas Černiauskas, Associate Pastor at the Church of St. Michael, was being transferred. When this priest came to St. Michael's Church, so many of the faithful would gather to listen to his sermons, that many of them were forced to stand outside in the foul weather. Father Ričardas Černiauskas was especially loved by the youth of Vilnius so it is not surprising that he displeased the enemies of the Church. When news of the transfer of Father Černiauskas spread, delegations of people began to stream in to see the Administrator of the Archdiocese, Father Algirdas Gutauskas. Everyone was moved by the fate of this zealous priest. Whose idea had it been to transfer him as Assistant Pastor to Marcinkoniai Parish, located among forests, where barely a few elderly people gather for Sunday services? When it became clear that this appointment was inspired by the Council for Religious Affairs, Father Černiauskas refused to take it, and informed the faithful accordingly. A couple of thousand faithful of Vilnius went to the Apostolic Administrator of the Archdiocese of Vilnius, the exiled Bishop, Julijonas Steponavičius, requesting that he intervene so that Father Černiauskas would not be appointed to Marcinkonis, but left in Vilnius. In their petition, the people of Vilnius wrote, "The faithful know of only one 'fault' of his: he is a zealous priest. How should we understand the fact that

priests who have compromised themselves morally are working in large city parishes, and even at the chancery, while devout priests are isolated from the youth and from larger centers?"

#### IN THE SOVIET SCHOOL

Luokė (R a y o n of Telšiai)

On March 4, 1982, Luokė Middle School Vice Principal (Mrs.) Tendziagolskienė publicly threatened pupil Leščiauskas, before the whole class, that his conduct mark would be lowered for going to church. At the end of February, Principal Limantas summoned the grandmother who was raising the five Kikilus grandchildren and threatened her: "If your grandchildren continue to go to church and hang around the altar, they will be taken away from you and turned over to the state to rear."

On April 12, 1982, History Teacher (Mrs.) Mitkuvienė asked her pupils who of them had been to church, and demanded that they reveal what the priest had said. Teacher (Mrs.) Skriabienė ridicules churchgoing pupils before the whole class. She is especially fanatical in her hatred of them.

Viešvėnai (R a y o n of Telšiai)

On March 7, 1982, in the Viešvėnai Middle School, a parent-teacher meeting was being specially held at the very hour when a parish retreat was taking place in church. During the meeting, the principal, (Mrs.) Stancelienė said, "Faith encourages a person to be a hypocrite. See, not a single pupil who goes to church is willing to admit it to us! Well, pupils, which of you goes to church?"

Suddenly, pupil Pronskus stood up. The principal, losing control of herself, began to threaten the pupil, "Your conduct mark is being lowered!" The boy's homeroom teacher tried to defend him, "Principal, he is one of my best pupils!"

"No matter, lower his conduct mark!" The principal insisted. In this fashion, conduct marks have been lowered for pupils who study well: 7th Grader Antanas Pronskus; his brother Stasys, a 6th Grader; his sister Marytė, a 4th Grade pupil; 6th Grade pupil Daiva Končiūtė; and 3rd Grader Elena Lukauskaitė.

Tryškiai (R a y o n of Telšiai)

On April 13, 1982. Teacher (Mrs.) Stasė Žukauskienė of Tryš-

kiai Middle School began a campaign of persecution against religiously believing pupils in the 7th Grade. Especially suffering from her are those who serve at Mass, for example, pupils Algirdas Urnikis and Juozas Maneikis. The teacher calls them ignoramuses, bootlickers of the pastor, Father Sirtautas, half-wits, etc. Moreover, in class, she lines up those pupils who have been to church at Easter and ridicules their Faith, the Church and the priests. Teacher Žukauskienė is considered the best atheist in the *rayon*; she publishes many atheistic articles in the press in which she is constantly complaining that atheists never use force against believers, and that this must not be allowed.

Sixth Grade Homeroom Teacher, (Mrs.) Bronė Kasparavičienė also persecutes children who go to church. She summons them one at a time to the teachers' room and threatens that they will be expelled from school and never accepted anywhere; she ridicules them in front of the whole class, and makes fun of them in all kinds of ways. Her victims are the pupils: Antanas and Robertas Lybikas, Algirdas Terminas and others. Teacher (Mrs.) Kasparavičienė even dares to berate the parents for allowing the children to go to church, asserting that there will be no place in school for children who are believers.

#### Upyna (Rayon of Telšiai)

On January 31, 1982, after a religious festival, Secretary (Mrs.) Rita Baranauskienė of the Upyna Middle School Communist Youth League, and Teacher (Mrs.) Baltramiejūnienė, went about the homes of pupils who were religious believers and bitterly scolded the pupils and their parents. In their words, even grown-ups do not have the right to go to church, and for taking children to church, they could be brought to trial.

#### Nevarėnai (Rayon of Telšiai)

In May, 1982, in the Middle School of Nevarėnai, Second Grade Teacher (Mrs.) Bielskienė told those pupils who go to church to raise their hands, and afterwards, ordered all of them to make the sign of the cross. Religiously believing pupils had their conduct marks lowered.

Fifth-grade Homeroom Teacher, (Miss) Dapkevičiūtė has also lowered conduct marks of believing pupils. The pupils protesting such unjust behavior on the part of the teachers took off their Pioneer kerchiefs in school. Interrogations, a search for the organizers and threats against the parents began. Learning of this, the

pastor, Father Bronius Latakas, announced in church that teachers acting in this way break the law. The teachers bestirred themselves to try to convince the children that they should testify that there had been none of that in school, and that they would take the pastor to court for libel. About twenty parents wrote the pastor a complaint confirming the campaign of persecution being carried on against religiously believing pupils in school.

Prienai

On May 18, 1982, in Grade 10B of Prienai Middle School II, (Miss, Violeta Kacergiūtė was summoned to the principal's office. Here Security Agent Gudaitis was waiting for her. The chekist accused the girl of writing Christmas greetings to prisoners. In the course of the interrogation, Security Agent Gudaitis mentioned that all letters pass through his hands.

On May 25, the same security agent interrogating Violeta showed her a Christmas greeting written to prisoners by the youth of Prienai.

## THE CHURCH IN THE SOVIET REPUBLICS

Byelorussia

Several kilometers from Druskininkai is a beautiful cluster of lakes tucked in between Parieče and Aziorū. When Sunday arrived. I decided to look around, and to feast my eyes, especially since there was nothing for one who was free from legal actions to do in Druskininkai itself. Having convinced a friend to go along with me, and having found a car, I wound up in Byelorussia, where through the evergreens, the watershed was an impressive blue. On the way, we happened upon the little town of Naujoji Rūda, tucked in between two lakes. As beautiful as the scenery was, so were my other impressions depressing, not recalling the feeling of Sunday at all.

We saw people working: they were cutting wood and stacking straw. Every man we met in town had been drinking. A couple was strolling along, a soldier and his girl. It was not he who was leading her, but she who was dragging him along. We noticed the church, wooden, not too old, fairly imposing; it did not look bad from the outside. We wanted to see it from inside. Upon inquiring, we found a woman who unlocked it for us. Our eyes fell on a sad sight, as though a war had taken place. In the sacristy, the closet doors

had been broken open, the altar pictures had been torn down, the tabernacle broken open; only the crucifix over the main altar was undamaged. This, apparently, they had been unable to demolish.

The woman told us that on Sundays, people gather, pray and sing hymns. That very day, people had been there to pray. In place of the old pictures which had been torn out, on the side altars were hung some pictures in the primitive style, and the remains of burning candles could be seen.

It is many a year since the priest has been here. Now they allow a priest to come only once or twice a year from Goza, not far from Gardinas, and bless the graves in the cemetery. One day, a few years ago, some men, dressed as militia, came from the *rayon* and tearing out anything that was worthwhile in church they threw it into a truck and drove off.

On the face of the woman recounting this, we could see the pain, her eyes welled up . . .

Sunday bells do not ring any more and what is left for the people: the life of a work-horse and the bottle . . .

#### NEW PUBLICATIONS

*Lietuvos Ateitis (Lithuania's Future) No. 3.* The publication appeared at the end of July. It consists of twenty pages of typescript and deals with national and religious questions. The editors do not forget those who are suffering for God and country; they give their addresses in prison and excerpts from letters.

#### LITHUANIANS, DO NOT FORGET

Sergei Kovalev  
Balys Gajauskas  
Vytautas Skuodis  
Povilas Pečeliūnas  
Algirdas Statkevičius  
Julius Sasnauskas  
Anastazas Janulis

Vytautas Vaičiūnas  
Mečislovas Jurevičius  
Gintautas Iešmantas  
Antanas Terleckas  
Viktoras Petkus  
Petras Paulaitis

and others who wear the shackles of bondage so that you might be able to live and believe in freedom!

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