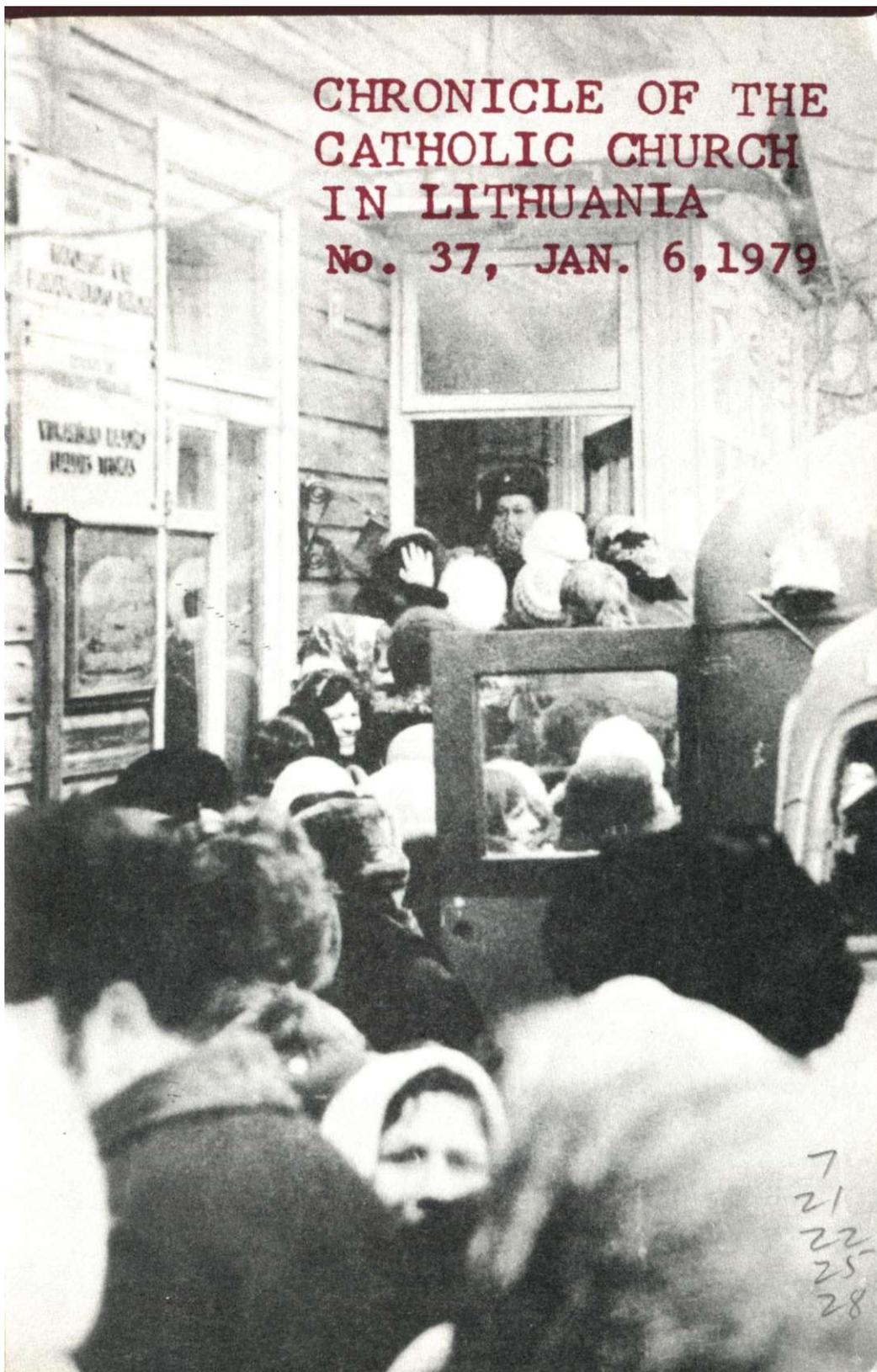


CHRONICLE OF THE  
CATHOLIC CHURCH  
IN LITHUANIA

No. 37, JAN. 6, 1979



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CHRONICLE OF THE CATHOLIC CHURCH  
IN LITHUANIA

No. 37

A Translation of the Complete Lithuanian Original,  
LIETUVOS KATALIKŲ BAŽNYČIOS KRONIKA No. 37  
Documenting the Struggle for Human Rights  
In Soviet-Occupied Lithuania Today

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## CHRONICLE OF THE CATHOLIC CHURCH IN LITHUANIA No. 37

### 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. Bishop 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, is also under severe government restrictions. In 1965, Monsignor Juozas Labukas-Matulaitis was consecrated in Rome to head the Archdiocese of Kaunas and the Diocese of Vilkaviškis.

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 it and pass it on!  
Issued since 1972.

CHRONICLE OF THE CATHOLIC CHURCH IN LITHUANIA  
No. 37

In this issue:

- We are Not Alone!.....3
- The Holy Father Acknowledges Congratulatory Messages .. 4
- Let Us Resurrect Lithuania!.....5
- The Fight Against the Statutes of the Supreme Soviet  
Presidium.....7
- Why Was a New Administrator Elected.....18
- The KGB's Fight Against the Underground Movement of  
the Catholic Church.....19
- Catholic Committee for the Defense of the Rights of  
Believers.....21
- Trial in Vilkaviškis.....22
- The KGB is Preparing to Indict the Rev. S. Tamkevičius 28
- The KGB Against the Rev. J. Indriūnas.....31
- The **CHRONICLE OF THE CATHOLIC CHURCH IN LITHUANIA**  
is Seven Years Old.....32
- Our Prisoners.....33
- News from the Dioceses.....36
- In the Soviet School.....42
- Catholics in the Soviet Union.....45
- From the Archives of the **CHRONICLE OF THE CATHOLIC  
CHURCH IN LITHUANIA** .....49
- New Underground Publications.....50

Lithuania.....March 4, 1979

WE ARE NOT ALONE!

"God is our refuge and our strength" (ps. 45:2)

Despite decades of persecution, we Catholics of Lithuania are still sufficiently strong and determined in our fight for God, the

existence of the Church and basic human rights. We are strong because we are not alone: God is our refuge and our strength! With us is the "Pope of the East" speaking for the Church of Silence and has assigned half his heart to the persecuted and fighting Church of Lithuania. Vatican Radio gives us strength with continually new information—our suffering and struggle are finding an ever broader response throughout the world. Bishop Thomas Kelly, Secretary General of the U.S. Conference of Bishops, heard the appeal of America's Knights of Lithuania (hats off to our emigrant youth!) and proclaimed February 11th a day of prayer for Lithuania.

And so, on behalf of the Church and our Fatherland, we Catholics of Lithuania sincerely thank the bishops, priests and faithful of the U.S. for their prayers and good wishes, as well as all people of good will about whose efforts we may not even know. We thank the people of the U.S. government and Vatican Radio for transmitting to the world in various languages the appeal of the Knights of Lithuania.

May God reward all who do good! And we, for our part, will continue our persevering fight with the goal of having Christ rule in our Fatherland.

Catholics of Lithuania

HIS HOLINESS JOHN PAUL II  
ACKNOWLEDGES CONGRATULATORY MESSAGES

Secretariat of State  
Vatican, December 18, 1978

Dear Father:

His Holiness John Paul II gratefully acknowledges the greetings which you and nine other Lithuanian priests sent by telegram upon his election to St. Peter's Throne.

The Holy Father lovingly thanks you for this expression of unity and love and, in praying God to bestow every blessing on His greatly beloved Lithuanian Church, grants you and the other priests

whose names are mentioned in the telegram his Apostolic Blessings, as a sigh of special favor.

I also take this opportunity to express my own respect and sincere wishes.

+ J. Caprio  
Subst.

N.B. The acknowledgment was sent in the name of the Rev. Mykolas Buožius.

#### LET US RESURRECT LITHUANIA!

Currently Lithuania is undergoing internal social processes which cause great concern and result from the spread of atheism and an ever deepening spiritual vacuum. In the absence of noble incentives, this vacuum is very quickly filled by the need to satisfy primitive instincts, which drag down man's entire spiritual life: morals decline, the will weakens, national ideals are traded in for cheap pleasures or a petty way of life.

After occurring in men's souls, these changes materialize in the nation's public life in such fatal vices as a rise in juvenile delinquency, loose morals, the spread of venereal diseases, abortions and a decline in the natural population growth, mass alcoholism and a catastrophic break-up of families. There arise simultaneously militant ideologies justifying and spreading these evils, whose representatives in the field of atheist education demoralize weak-willed individuals and the youth in particular not merely by bad example but even often by brutal force.

The family has always been the basic transmitter of religious and moral standards and the educator of the younger generation. Now, it is finding increasingly difficult in opposing the corrupting influence of an evil atmosphere. Who can count the believing parents who weep over their strayed children? Weak, separated, drunken or non-believing families are even less capable of providing their children with proper moral upbringing. We can thus expect increasingly more divorces and moral collapse in future generations. And no one can say whether or not our nation will fall into complete

destruction and perdition by "progressing" in this way.

True, there is comfort and hope in the nation's ever spreading spiritual renewal, especially among the youth. These individuals understand and prove by their lives that no sacrifice is too great for the good of the truth, the faith and the Fatherland.

But only a spiritual rebirth of the entire nation can save us from destruction. Of course, under present conditions, this would amount to a miracle; but for us, who believe in the omnipotence of Divine Providence, a miracle does not mean something impossible, but something that we can realistically attain. For we have been given special means to attain this—prayer and repentance — about whose power many of us can attest from our own personal experience. Thus, if we managed to send a manifesto with 17,000 signatures to the rulers of this world, hasn't the time come to send a "petition" to our Heavenly Father? For His ears are very sensitive to our pleas. We need only pray and if we rely on His mercy we will not be refused.

We are many and we are a great power. Let us unite and rise to the spiritual battle! Let there be no parish, no village, from which pleas to the Ruler of the Universe will not rise!

Lent provides the perfect opportunity to begin this fight!

We therefore urge, for the intention of our nation's spiritual rebirth, as well as that of all the world's nations, especially those whose spiritual situation is direst, for the intention of rebirth throughout this Lenten season in the spirit of repentance:

a) to refrain from using a single drop of alcohol on any occasion, for most sins are committed as a result of alcohol and it is most responsible for man's downfall;

b) to organize a daily Rosary campaign in every Lithuanian parish either in private or in church for the above named intention;

c) let all who can receive Holy Communion as frequently as possible for this intention.

We invite all people of good will of other faiths to join us in this sobriety campaign, in solidarity with our goals, as a protest against the spreading weakness and so we might feel the strength of our unity, as well as non-believers who value our nation's future.

THE FIGHT AGAINST THE STATUTES OF THE  
SUPREME SOVIET PRESIDIUM

From: The Catholic Committee for the Defense of the Rights of  
Believers

To: The Praesidium of the Supreme Soviet of the U.S.S.R.  
The Praesidium of the Supreme Soviet of the  
Lithuanian S.S.R  
The Bishops and Diocesan Administrators of Lithuania  
Petras Anilionis, the Commissioner for Religious Affairs

Thirty years ago, on December 10, 1948, the General Assembly of the U.N. passed the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, which the Soviet Union signed, obliging itself to implement it conscientiously. The Soviet press even affirms that the new constitution of the U.S.S.R guarantees significantly more rights and freedoms than those foreseen in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights.

The Catholics of Lithuania, having undergone various forms of discrimination during the post-war years, (Lithuania, whose 3.87 million people were 87% Roman Catholic, was recaptured by the U.S.S.R. from Germany in 1945 — Translators Note) hoped that on the solemn jubilee of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, the Soviet government would grant them at least a little more rights and freedoms, but things have gone just the opposite. On November 24, 1978, Commissioner Petras Anilionis, of the Commission for Religious Affairs summoned to Vilnius all the bishops and diocesan administrators of Lithuania and sternly emphasized that thenceforth they would have to adhere completely to the "Regulations for Religious Associations", ratified July 28, 1976 by the Praesidium of the Supreme Soviet of the Lithuanian S.S.R., and that those who did not would be severely punished.

The Praesidium of the Supreme Soviet of the Lithuanian S.S.R., in ratifying the "Regulations for Religious Associations" should first of all have averted to the fact that the Catholic Church not only boasts of a six hundred year history in Lithuania and a host of undeniable benefits to Lithuania, such as the University of Vilnius, founded four hundred years ago by the Jesuits; but also the fact that no less than 70% of the population of Lithuania even today belongs to the Catholic Church and only an insignificant portion consider themselves atheists.

The people's government, in ratifying the Regulations, should have considered the beliefs and wishes of the majority of citizens; however, it did just the opposite: The interests of a handful of atheists decided the discriminatory nature of the Regulations for Religious Associations.

With this document we wish to show the Soviet government what the priests and faithful of Lithuania think of these regulations which have been forced on them — contrary not just to the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, but also to the Constitution of the Lithuanian S.S.R. — and the essential purpose of which is to destroy the Catholic Church in Lithuania.

The Regulations for Religious Associations require that the religious association be registered (Par. 2); without this registration it may not begin its activities (Par. 4). A religious association wishing to register must apply to the executive committee of the rayon or city workers' soviet, which makes its decision and sends it, together with its conclusion, to the Council of Ministers of the Lithuanian S.S.R. (Par. 5). The latter considers the material received (Par. 7) and sends it to the Council for Religious Affairs of the Council of Ministers of the U.S.S.R., which registers the association or rejects its application (Par. 4).

The regulations requiring the religious association to register do not guarantee that it will be registered. In fact the registration of a religious association can be blocked by the executive committee of the rayon, by the Council of Ministers or the Council on Religious Affairs. The religious association can be harassed for years over its registration and not even know who the real culprit is. It does not have the right even to take the decision of local government officials to the people's court. On March 31, 1978, the faithful of Žalioji, (*Rayon* of Vilkaviškis), after many attempts to register their association, appealed to the Council on Religious Affairs in Moscow with the request that their religious association be registered.

The Council sent the request of the religious association of Žaliojis (the long-extant Parish of Žalioji-Trans. Note) to the Commissioner for Religious Affairs in Vilnius, and the later turned the entire matter over to the Executive Committee of the *Rayon* of Vilkaviškis for decision. The representative of the latter, J. Urbonas, stated that the religious association of Žalioji would never be registered. Similarly in 1976-77, the religious association (parish — Tr. Note) of Slabadai, *Rayon* of Vilkaviškis, tried in vain to register its committee and begin activities; however, it kept encounter-

ing the arbitrariness of government officials.

If, according to the Constitution of the Lithuanian S.S.R., "The Church in the Lithuanian S.S.R. is separated from the state", then the state has no right to demand the registration of the religious association, but be satisfied with the declaration that such and such a community exists. The requirement of registering the religious association means that it is forbidden, and only registration gives it the right to exist. This is a direct contradiction against the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, which proclaims, "Everyone has the right . . . to freedom of peaceful assembly and association." (Art. 20).

The regulations allow no one younger than eighteen to be a member of a religious association. (Par. 3).

The Catholic Church never has and never will agree to this, for it essentially contradicts its doctrine and law (the canons). The Church, on the basis of Christ's teaching that Baptism, Penance, and other sacraments are necessary for salvation, requires that children be baptized within a month after birth, and that children go to Confession and Holy Communion from approximately the age of seven. Therefore the Church considers persons as its members not from the age of eighteen, but from the day of Baptism; hence the state, unconditionally guaranteeing its citizens "Freedom of worship", cannot rescind these guarantees, or restrict them by law.

The regulations, considering individuals as members of religious associations only from the age of eighteen, open the door to the broadest discrimination against believers. No one guarantees that on the basis of Paragraph 3 of the regulations, government officials might not some day forbid the Baptism of infants, the admission of children to the sacraments, the attending of church by the youth, etc. The experience of the Russian SSR and other soviet republics indicates that this misgiving on the part of the believing people of Lithuania has some basis. For example, the regulations for religious associations of the Latvian S.S.R. actually forbid persons under the age of eighteen to take part in religious services.

"The religious association has the right to acquire things needed for church maintenance and religious cult, and means of transportation; to rent, build or purchase buildings. (Par. 3).

Elsewhere, the Regulations affirm that "Property necessary for the carrying out of services, whether transferred according to contract for the use of believers constituting the religious association,

or acquired by them or donated to them for purposes of worship, belong to the state" (Par. 22). The religious association, if abolished, is deprived of even its money, incense, candles, wine, wax, and fuel (Par. 34e).

Therefore the basic idea of Par. 3 is that the religious association has the right to obtain various necessities for church decoration and worship, means of transportation, buildings, etc. not ...self, but for the state. The state, taking things donated by the faithful, seriously contravenes the will of the faithful, who, when donating to the Church, have no intention of enriching state or museum collections: the state does not abide by the Universal Declaration, which proclaims "No one shall be arbitrarily deprived of his property. (Art. 17.2)."

Par. 10 of the Regulations states that a religious association can, by established procedures, "obtain" a single building exclusively for prayer. This means that believers may not obtain such a building if local atheists or government officials want it. Many churches in Lithuania have been arbitrarily closed: in Vilnius, Kaunas, Klaipėda, Ukmergė, Panevėžys, and elsewhere. Religious associations must have the unabridged right to acquire and to build themselves churches, if they have not had one. Since the churches in Lithuania have been built not by atheists, but by the believing public, the state, by allowing them their use, is not doing the faithful any favors. Nor may the state determine how many houses of worship a religious association might have. This would be a clear interference in the internal affairs of the religious association.

The regulations envision that in the religious association various functions can be performed only by "individual persons"; i.e., the religious association is accorded no rights as a legal person. Communal farms, cooperatives, hospitals, even art, athletic and other organizations can be legal persons; only the religious association does not have this right. It follows that the believers of Lithuania (The plight of all believers in the Soviet Union is similar.) are not equal before the law with atheists, and the state in fact considers them second-class citizens, even though the Constitution of the Lithuania S.S.R. states, "The citizens of the Lithuanian S.S.R. are equal before the law . . ." (Par. 32).

"General meetings of religious associations and of groups of believers (except for worship services) take place with . . . the permission of the civil executive committee." (Par. 12).

This means that without permission of the *rayon* even a group of three or four believers may not meet to discuss matters of religion. This paragraph contradicts the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, which proclaims that "Everyone has the right to freedom of peaceful assembly in an association." (Par. 20.1), and gives the impression that the state regards believers as criminals, whose every step must be watched. Regulations such as these artificially evoke dissatisfaction among believers, mistrust of and resistance to the state, and this is very harmful to the normal development of the public.

The religious association "shall elect its governing body from among its own members in a general meeting of believers by open ballot." (Par. 13).

If "The Church in the Lithuanian SSR is separated from the state" (Constitution of the Lithuanian SSR, Par. 50), should it then concern the state what kind of balloting takes place in the religious association—secret or open? The faithful understand the requirement, that voting in the religious association be by open ballot, as an effort by the government to prevent the election of suitable representatives of the religious association.

Since the Regulations do not forbid government officials to participate in the general meeting of the religious association, officials can exert moral pressure on members of the religious association to elect persons acceptable not to the association, but to the executive committee of the *rayon*.

If the "open balloting" fails to produce the desired results, and the believers elect knowledgeable and active representatives of the religious association, the executive committee of the *rayon* has the right arbitrarily to dismiss any person from the executive body of the religious association (Par. 14). So the atheist government wishes, through the executive committees, to run the Church, subjecting it to its own ends.

"Religious associations do not have the right to organize special meetings of children or of youth ..." (Par. 17). "The teaching of religion can be allowed only in spiritual schools." (Par. 18).

School-children who are religious believers are forced to enroll in various atheistic organizations, contrary to the Universal Declaration, which proclaims that "No one may be compelled to belong to an association" (Par. 20). Religious school-children are forced to participate in "special" — atheist — meetings of the Pioneers and the Communist Youth League, but they are forbidden to meet together

to deepen their faith or even to learn to sing a few religious hymns, because all of this is considered "a special meeting".

Par. 17 of the Regulations directly contradicts Art. 20 of the Universal Declaration, which guarantees everyone (child, student and youth) the right to freedom of participating in peaceful meetings.

Paragraph 18 of the regulations speaks of "spiritual schools", which are forbidden in Soviet Lithuania, while the sole surviving seminary, in Kaunas, is strictly limited and carefully watched by government officials. By its order of May 12, 1966, the Praesidium of the Supreme Soviet of the Lithuanian S.S.R. forbade the organizing of religious instruction of schoolchildren.

As a matter of fact, this rule of the Praesidium of the Supreme Soviet is invalid, because it directly contradicts the International Convention "On the War Against Discrimination in the Field of Education", which came into effect in the Soviet Union November 1, 1962. Paragraph 6 of this Convention directs that parents must have the possibility "of guaranteeing the religious or moral education of their children, in keeping with the beliefs of the parents themselves." Paragraphs 17 and 18 of the Regulations deprive believing parents of the ability to guarantee such an education. On the basis of the Regulation of the Praesidium of the Supreme Soviet dated May 12, 1966, a number of Lithuanian Priests: Juozas Zdebskis, Prosperas Bubnys, and Antanas Šeškevičius, were sentenced to prison just because, at the request of the parents, they taught children the truths of religion.

According to Par. 18, even a grandparent telling grandchildren about God would be criminally liable. The permission to teach religion only in spiritual schools, which are banned, is essentially deceptive, concealing within itself the purpose of destroying religion as soon as possible. Paragraph 18 leaves it possible in the future to forbid priests the preaching of sermons, since preaching in church is the teaching of religion outside spiritual schools. Finally, Paragraph 18 contradicts the Universal Declaration, which accords every person "the right... to seek, receive and impart information and ideas through any media and regardless of frontiers." (Par. 19). Why then do the Regulations build walls around the teaching of religion?

Clergy are allowed to perform rites of worship only within the territory and in the church pertaining to the religious community they serve. (Par. 19)

Christ told his disciples to go not just to the community

permitted by the government, but "into the whole world" (Mat. 28, 19) and to proclaim the Gospel to the whole world: pagans, believers and atheists. Paragraph 19 constantly forces priests to act against their own conscience, and it prevents believers from performing the duties imposed on them by their faith. For instance, government officials, by preventing priests from assisting one another during religious holidays or retreats keep believers from making their Easter Confession or from receiving indulgences, and nullify the "freedom of worship" guaranteed by the Constitution of the U.S.S.R. Paragraph 19 also contradicts the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, which gives every person the right freely to disseminate their ideas "regardless of frontiers" (Par. 19); all the more, of the territorial boundaries of a religious community.

"Religious centers and the administrations of dioceses are granted the right of producing things necessary for church furnishing and for religious worship" (Par. 20).

The right is granted, but the means are denied, and so during the entire postwar period in Lithuania, there has not been a single rosary made overtly, nor has a single catechism been published. With the permission of the Soviet government, only a very limited number of prayerbooks appeared, which did not satisfy the needs of even one percent of the faithful.

Paragraphs 22 and 34 of the Regulations, considering liturgical articles of worship are the property of the state, allow government offices to confiscate even the sacred Mass vessels: chalices, the monstrance, etc. The faithful are afraid that the state justifies this sacrilege by law. The believer is obliged in conscience to defend sacred articles from any plunderers, with all the means at his disposal; hence the promulgators of these regulations artificially set millions of believers against the government and provoke them to conflict. The aforesaid paragraphs offend the most sacred feelings of believers. Where then is "the separation of Church and state", if government officials' fingers reach even the most sacred of sacred places—the tabernacle on the altar?!

Confiscation of property from the religious community is contrary to the Universal Declaration, which proclaims that "Everyone has the right to own property alone as well as in association with others."

The faithful will be convinced that the state renounces discrimination against the Church, only when religious groups are

allowed to own property and to enjoy the rights of a juridical person.

The Regulations allow the religious group to use the house of prayer and articles of worship only after making a contract with the executive committee of the soviet of workers and accepting unilateral arbitrary conditions (Par. 23, 24, 25).

In 1948, during the era of the cult of Stalin, "agreements" were forced on the Catholic Church in Lithuania. At that time the faithful were threatened with the closing of their churches, and priests were suppressed. It is strange that in 1975 the Soviet government once again repeated the crime committed against the Church during the Stalin era: it once again forced the Church to enter into "contracts". As a matter of fact, the faithful cannot freely accept unilateral "contracts" which discriminate against the faithful, for such agreements help government officials to interfere administratively in the internal life of the Church.

The Regulations allow even the representatives of local executive committees to inspect the church and its property at any time (Par. 27. f). It occurs to us that under this pretext the government can without any legal warrant search the church building at any time day or night "to make an inventory of property", even the tabernacle, in which the Blessed Sacrament is preserved.

The Regulations envision that persons of appropriate faith and views being able later to join the representatives (the "twenty") of the religious group (Par. 27).

The Regulations leave a loophole here for interlopers to join the religious association. The government can deem as a person "of appropriate views" someone once baptized but now an atheist, who would be interested in defending only the interest of the government. Such persons, should they constitute a majority of the religious association, could even wreck the association.

In reality, a religious association can be made up only of believing persons generally known.

Insurance compensation for houses of prayer which have burned down is paid out to the executive committee of the Soviet of Workers, which has the right to designate the money received for any purpose, even for atheist activity (Par. 29). What a great injustice to the faithful! They build the churches, they pay government taxes for them, but in case of misfortune they receive no insurance compensation! Most often, the religious association does not even

receive permission to erect a new house of prayer. For example, in Sangruda, (*Rayon* of Kapsukas), after the church burned down, the insurance compensation was claimed by the executive committee of the *Rayon* of Kapsukas, and the religious association was not even allowed to erect a new church. The faithful had to be satisfied with an ordinary dwelling in which a humble house of prayer was set up.

It happened similarly in Batkiai, Gaurė and elsewhere. Paragraph 29 is a great encouragement for militant atheists to destroy churches purposely, and the faithful of Lithuania suspect that the majority of churches burned down during the post-war years were purposely burned down by persons of bad will.

The Council of Ministers of the Lithuanian SSR has the full right, regardless of the wishes of the faithful, to close the church at any time, to use it for profane purposes, or even to demolish it, confiscating all its property (Par. 30-34).

During the post-war years in Lithuania, great injustice was perpetrated against the faithful by closing many of their churches against their will and later converting them into warehouses, factories, and in the case of St. Casimir's Church in Vilnius, even converting it into a museum of atheism! Since the religious association does not have the rights of a juridical person, it cannot defend itself in court. Thus the faithful must always be subject to fear and submit to the arbitrariness of local officials, since they are always threatened with the closing of their houses of prayer for disobeying.

In order for the Council of Ministers of the LSSR to decide to close a church or to abolish a religious association, it is sufficient to have a complaint from the local atheist council, that the religious association is breaking the laws concerning cults (Par. 35, 36). Thus the religious association must tremble not only before officials, but also before local atheists. Paragraph 35 of the regulations is a sword of Damocles, constantly hanging over the heads of the faithful.

A normal situation would be one in which the activities of a religious association would be discontinued only by a court decision for a serious offense committed, and not for failing to comply with anti-constitutional Regulations.

Paragraphs 37-44 state that even for the most minute church repairs the permission of the rayon executive committee is required; that during repairs, which could last up to a year, church services could be forbidden, and that executive committees, basing them-

selves on the commissions which they send, can decide to demolish the church. All this gives the atheist government a wide range of possibilities under the guise of repairs or the building's age, to confiscate churches from the faithful, and in an administrative manner to campaign against religion. However, the Regulations say nothing about *rayon* executive committees helping believers, at least by allotment of necessary materials. These days, both organizations and individuals are afraid to get involved in church repairs, since this is unofficially considered almost as anti-Soviet activity.

The religious association is allowed to take up offerings only within the house of prayer (Par. 45).

This paragraph is aimed directly against small religious associations. Since communal farm workers are often forced to work on Sundays, and other believers, on account of old age, long distance, or other reasons cannot come to church, they cannot all contribute to the collections taken up for the support of the church. Thus, the religious association is prevented from having enough money for repairs, salaries, and most importantly—to pay the huge taxes on churches.

The religious association does not have the right of establishing mutual aid funds (Par. 45.d).

This rule contradicts the command of Christ to do good to people and so it prevents the faithful from living according to the requirements of Christian love. The religious association is even forbidden from giving its own members material assistance (Par. 45). The state does not admit those directly doing church work (clergy, organists, sacristans) into professional organizations and in old age it gives them no pension. Paragraphs 32 and 41 of the Constitution of the LSSR do not apply to them. For example, the priests of Lithuania pay increasing taxes every year, but they have no claim to security in old age.

The rule forbidding the religious association from giving material aid to its members is inhuman and tantamount to a rule that religious ministers in their old age have the right only to poverty and hunger. The faithful see this paragraph of the Regulations as an effort by the atheist government to frighten believers away from church ministry.

Priests are forbidden from *kalėdojimas*—the traditional annual pastoral visitation of parishioners' homes (Par. 45).

Church law imposes on priests the duty of visiting every one of their parishioners annually. The Regulations, forbidding the

priest to visit his parishioners, want to isolate him from the people. Hence the priest, forbidden to work not only in other parishes, but even in his own, is unable to carry out his direct duties.

Every article donated to the church; e.g., carpeting, chalice, etc., must be included in the inventory list (Par. 46), and becomes the property of the state. The faithful, donating something to the church, have no intention at all of giving that article to the state. This paragraph is clearly discriminatory and serves to inhibit believers from supporting and furnishing churches with their donations.

The priest is allowed to visit a seriously ill patient in the hospital (Par. 49), but this permission is constantly restricted, because by order of *rayon* executive committees, physicians very often do not allow the priest to visit a patient, arguing that the patient is not dying yet, or that there is no separate facility where the priest could carry out religious ministrations. Paragraph 49 unduly restricts "freedom to worship" guaranteed by the LSSR.

Religious processions and outdoor ceremonies require special permission of the *rayon* executive committee (Par. 50).

If the atheists have the right to organize parades, festivals and various civil holidays in public places, then the faithful ought to have exactly the same right. However, during the entire post-war era, not one religious association in Lithuania has ever been granted permission for a religious procession beyond the churchyard (the only exceptions are priests' funeral processions).

Paragraph 50 forbids priests from performing religious rites in the homes of the faithful e.g. baptizing a sick infant, blessing the home, etc. Believers consider this rule an unconstitutional interference in the private citizen's apartment and in affairs of conscience. This paragraph forbids even three or four believers without permission of the executive committee to pray together outside, in the woods, or even in the private quarters of the faithful. Religious services may be carried out only at the request of a seriously ill or dying patient.

Hence the executive committee is left the right of deciding when a patient is truly dying or seriously ill. For example, in the territory of the Moldavian SSR it is required that the physician attest in writing that the patient is truly seriously ill; only then can a priest expect to obtain permission of the executive committee to visit the patient.

If the Soviet government forces priests and faithful to keep these inhuman, unconstitutional Regulations, which are contrary to

the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and to other international agreements signed by the USSR, there will be unrest in the nation, and millions of believers will feel cheated and demeaned. Therefore, for the reasons explained above, we request the Præsidia of the U.S.S.R. and of the L.S.S.R. to repeal these Regulations as soon as possible.

The Members of the Catholic Committee for the  
Defense of the Rights of Believers

Rev. Jonas Kauneckas  
Rev. Alfonsas Svarinskas  
Rev. Sigitas Tamkevičius  
Rev. Vincas Velavičius  
Rev. Juozas Zdebskis

Priests from all six dioceses of Lithuania are writing petitions to the Soviet government, protesting against the Regulations for Religious Associations, and expressing their determination not to carry them out.

Anilionis, the Commissioner for Religious Affairs, having learned of the collecting of signatures in solidarity with Document No. 5 of the Catholic Committee for the Defense of the Rights of Believers, warned bishops and diocesan administrators to forbid priests to sign petitions of this sort. Bishop Romualdas Krikščiūnas, of the Diocese of Panevėžys, passed the order of Anilionis on to his deans. Priests are signing the protest in great numbers. These petitions will be reported in the next issue of the *Chronicle of the Catholic Church in Lithuania*.

WHY WAS A NEW ADMINISTRATOR ELECTED?

Msgr. Česlovas Krivaitis, the administrator of the Vilnius archdiocese, submitted his written resignation from his post at the beginning of 1979, and the advisors of the Vilnius archdiocese, the Revs. A. Gutauskas, K. Gajauskas and J. Morkūnas, hastily "elected" as new administrator the pastor of St. Teresa's parish, the Rev. Algis Gutauskas.

On the surface, everything seems normal: One priest resigned because he wanted to do pastoral work in a parish, and another

was elected to replace him.

But in fact, the "resignation" and "election" took place at the direction of the KGB's "magic wand." So there naturally arises the question, why the security police needed a new administrator for the Vilnius archdiocese? The former Vilnius archdiocesan administrator had lost all authority and had no chance of ever being appointed bishop by the Holy See. And the Soviet government would very much like to have a new bishop at the head of the Vilnius archdiocese, but not exiled Bishop Julijonas Steponavičius. After the election of John Paul II to the papacy, the KGB understood that the Vilnius archdiocese needs a new administrator with the best chance of becoming bishop in the future, and perhaps even cardinal. This candidate was the Rev. Algis Gutauskas, who counts many Polish priests as friends who could recommend him for bishop. Moreover, Father Gutauskas has not compromised himself morally and is sufficiently timid and obedient to the Soviet government. The people of Vilnius could not believe how zealously he removed children from processions because it is forbidden by Soviet law; he just as zealously defended the KGB collaborator seminarian Jakutis (the *Chronicle* has written extensively on this subject).

Because the priests of the Archdiocese of Vilnius are certain that the new administrator, Father Gutauskas, has long ago fallen into the KGB trap, they fervently trust that Pope John Paul II will never elevate him to the hierarchy of the Catholic Church.

#### THE KGB FIGHT AGAINST THE UNDERGROUND MOVEMENT OF THE CATHOLIC CHURCH

On November 1, 1978, the Rev. Virgilijus Jaugelis publicly celebrated Holy Mass at the church of Kybartai. For many years he tried to enroll at the Kaunas Theological Seminary, but every year the KGB removed his name from the list of candidates. In 1974, Father Virgilijus Jaugelis was put on trial for duplicating the *Chronicle of the Catholic Church in Lithuania* and the following year was released half-dead from labor camp, his sentence not yet completed. Let him die at home. However, he did not die, but determinedly studied for the priesthood.

Father Jaugelis' public appearance at the altar undoubtedly caused the KGB great concern. It means that the time is passed when

a youth who did not want to become a KGB collaborator, but only a good priest, could be terrorized in various ways; it means that even good seminarians can no longer be intimidated to any great extent: it is obviously possible to become a priest even without the KGB's favor!

"What can be done?" asked all those who wish to bury the Catholic Church of Lithuania as rapidly as possible. Someone conceived a plan: Let us compromise the underground activity of the Catholic Church in Lithuania and those bishops who consecrate new priests without the KGB's permission.

At the end of 1978, unexpected news travelled across Lithuania: Seminarian Ričardas Jakutis who had been expelled from the Kaunas Theological Seminary in 1977 for immoral behavior was working as a deacon at the church of Nemenčinė! Which bishop could have ordained such a seminarian? Priests who collaborate with the Soviet government began to spread rumors that this was done by one of the exiled bishops—either Bishop Julijonas Steponavičius or Bishop Vincentas Sladkevičius—or perhaps a clandestine Ukrainian Catholic bishop.

On February 7, 1979, ten priests from the Vilnius archdiocese visited the newly-elected administrator Father Algis Gutauskas to learn who had ordained seminarian Jakutis deacon. Administrator Gutauskas said that Bishop J. Labukas had ordained Jakutis at the villa of Monsignor Česlovas Krivaitis. Msgr. Krivaitis has been giving seminarian Jakutis material assistance and recommended him to Bishop Labukas.

The ordination of Seminarian Jakutis is the first attempt by the KGB to compromise the catacomb activity of the Church: Look who is ordained priest in the underground movement! Everyone who participated in Jakutis' ordination as deacon—Msgr. Krivaitis, Nemenčinė pastor Kazimieras Pukėnas, Bishop Labukas and others—consciously or unconsciously contributed to the KGB plot against the catacomb activity of the church and served the KGB in rending the ardently sought unity of Lithuania's priests. This affair is also an obvious attempt to deceive the holy See into forbidding the Catholic Church in Lithuania to continue its catacomb activity and thus having everything done in public under the KGB's strict control.

The *Chronicle of the Catholic Church in Lithuania* asks Lithuanian priests living in the West to inform the Holy See of this incident and to ask that even more favorable conditions be granted

the underground movement of the Catholic Church in Lithuania, for without catacomb activity, the Catholic Church in Lithuania will meet the fate of the Orthodox Church in the Soviet Union.

#### CATHOLIC COMMITTEE FOR THE DEFENSE OF THE RIGHTS OF BELIEVERS

On January 25, 1979, the Catholic Committee for the Defense of the Rights of Believers sent a statement (Document No. 6) to the Secretary General of the Soviet Union Communist Party, Leonid Brezhnev, detailing how religious-artistic values are being barbarically annihilated in Lithuania.

In a January 25, 1979 statement (Document No. 7) to the Lithuanian SSR Prosecutor, the Catholic Committee protests the discrimination against priest and believers as related to the trials of the Revs. Alfonsas Svarinskas and Sigitas Tamkevičius.

In a January 26, 1979 statement (Document No. 8) to Leonid Brezhnev, Secretary General of the Soviet Union Communist Party, the Catholic Committee tells of the brutal discrimination against the faithful of Moldavia and asks him to intervene personally to stop the persecution. The statement was written in response to an appeal sent to the Catholic Committee by the Catholics of Moldavia.

In a January 31, 1979 statement to the Lithuanian Prosecutor, the Catholic Committee asks that the religious book *Krikščionis pasaulyje (A Christian in the World)* which was confiscated by the Raseiniai militia be returned to Father Virgilijus Jaugelis.

In Document No. 10 dated February 7, 1979, the Catholic Committee relates that the militia confiscated from Julius Sasnauskas a document addressed to the Lithuanian Supreme Soviet Presidium in support of Helsinki Group member Viktoras Petkus. "By what right do militia authorities confiscate documents addressed to Lithuanian SSR authorities?" asks the statement.

A February 10, 1979 statement to the Lithuanian SSR Prosecutor supports student Mindaugas Judeikis who is continually

being persecuted by Algis Gylys, an employee of the Lazdijai *Rayon* security police.

N.B. Soviet government agencies ignored every single document of the Catholic Committee for the Defense of the Rights of Believers.

### TRIAL IN VILKAVIŠKIS

The Rev. Sigitas Tamkevičius, pastor of Kybartai, appealed to the Vilkaviškis *Rayon* Court the 50-ruble fine imposed on him for conducting an All Souls Day procession to the cemetery.

The first trial session was held on December 1, 1978. The courtroom and the hallways were packed with believers. Judge Stankaitis kept postponing Father Tamkevičius' trial in the hope that the people would disperse. But something unexpected happened: the crowd which had gathered outside the court building began to say the Rosary aloud. Under the pretense that certain documents were missing, the frightened Judge Stankaitis postponed the case. The faithful in the courtroom began to sing "Marija, Marija" ("Mary, Mary"). The judge attempted to silence them but was unsuccessful. It is difficult to describe the mood prevailing in the courtroom. From the portrait hanging on the wall stared the malevolent eyes of Lenin, while the faithful sang with tears in their eyes: "Mary, Mary . . . lighten our slavery . . . save us from the terrible foe." Swept by enthusiasm, the faithful standing outside joined in the singing, and this beautiful hymn so indicative of the spirit of the downtrodden Lithuanian rang far through the streets of Vilkaviškis.

Because a huge crowd of the faithful—some 500 people—had gathered for the trial, someone ordered that the second trial session be held at a moment's notice, without anyone being notified. Father Tamkevičius was brought the summons during the night of December 20th and the trial was set to begin at 10:00 A.M. the following morning. Unfortunately, the pastor had left after the evening services, the summons was not served and the trial was again postponed.

The third time, the trial session was held on January 10, 1979. The summonses were again served only the night before, so that as few believers as possible would attend the trial. Unfortunately, this



**At the time of the trial of Rev. Sigitas Tamkevičius. Forbidden to enter the courtroom, the faithful gather outside.**

time again people gathered from very early morning at the Vilkaviškis court building. In order to justify the large number of militiamen present, several criminal prisoners were brought to the trial to hear the court's ruling.

Before the start of the court session, the militia and Judge Šlenfuktas exerted much noise, hatred and threats to brutally chase all the people from the court hallway into the street. The believers present in the courtroom were left to wait for the trial which never took place! Judge Šlenfuktas took Father Tamkevičius to a small room on the second floor and still panting from chasing people out, hastily began the trial proceedings. Not a single believer was admitted into the trial room, only five priests managed to push their way in nearly by force.

The judge did not permit Father Tamkevičius to read his prepared statement. In protest against the court's arbitrary decision, the priest left the trial room. The court continued its inquiry into the case.

In the meantime, the faithful who had been chased into the street said the Rosary. Militiaman Dziegoraitis rushed in a rage to disperse

the people. But he did not succeed in intimidating the faithful: It seemed that he was the one frightened and confused, for when one group stopped saying the Rosary, another group immediately took it up. In this confusion, everyone had but one desire: to keep the prayer going. No one noticed it kept track of when the mysteries started or ended, the whole crowd simply repeated in unison: "Hail Mary . . . Hail Mary . . . Hail Mary . . ." During a brief pause, the hymn "Maria, Maria" suddenly rang out.



**At the time of the trial of Rev. Sigitas Tamkevičius 1979.1.10. Militiaman prevents the faithful from entering the courtroom.**

Some of the young people tried at least to gain entrance into the court corridor, but three militiamen bodily barred the doors from inside to prevent anyone entering. The mood of government officials was accurately voiced in the words of an unknown citizen—perhaps a security agent—about the faithful, which he lashed out in a blind rage through clenched teeth: "What we need is a machine gun . . ."

The court ruled that Father Sigitas Tamkevicius did violate Soviet laws and was fined justly.

When the "criminal" Father Tamkevicius emerged, the crowd applauded him: some congratulated him, others presented him with flowers, others stuffed money into his pockets to pay the fine, and still others began to lift the pastor aloft and shout: "Hurrah!" The militiamen just shrugged their shoulders: "Perhaps the pastor won if the people are congratulating him so?"

This was a moral victory: The faithful had conquered a fear which had oppressed them for decades. They were now boldly proclaiming their solidarity with which their discriminated leaders and also a protest against their oppressors.

Statement by the Rev. Sigitas Tamkevicius, Pastor of Kybartai,  
before the Vilkaviškis People's Court

On October 19, 1978 the Vilkaviškis *Rayon* newspaper *Pergalė* (*Victory*) announced that the civil ceremony honoring the dead at the Vilkaviškis *Rayon* cemetery would be held on November 1st at 7:00 P.M. Notices listing the same hour and date of honoring the dead were posted in the town of Kybartai. I then announced from the pulpit in church that we faithful would pray for the dead at the cemetery on November 1st at 6:00 P.M. and would return to the church before 7:00 P.M. We would thus not interfere with the atheists' ceremony for the dead.

On November 1st, events in Kybartai took the following course:

I know not at whose direction, the time 7:00 P.M. was pasted over with 6:00 P.M. on the town notices and at the bottom of the notices the organizing "Kybartai Executive Committee" was replaced with the "Council on People's Traditions." This was deliberately done late to prevent me from changing the time of the religious procession to the cemetery.

At 6:00 P.M. on November 1st, I as pastor of the Kybartai parish and a crowd of some thousand believers proceeded in procession

to the cemetery. In order to keep from disrupting vehicular traffic, we proceeded along the sidewalk of the main Kapsuko street and turned into Jakovlevo, the side street which leads to the cemetery. At the cemetery we were confronted by loudspeakers erected by the atheists of Kybartai blaring poems. Entering the cemetery, we found a covered vehicle standing just inside on the main path holding four loudspeakers aimed in our direction. Because we could not pass the vehicle, we prayed for the dead right there at the cemetery gate, while poems were loudly broadcast during our entire prayers. I leave it to the court to decide who committed the offense which art. 145 of the LSSR Criminal Code describes as: "disturbance of religious services ... is punishable by deprivation of freedom of up to one year, or by rehabilitative work for the same period, or by a fine of up to 100 rubles." The atheists of Kybartai offended the faithful by their inhuman behavior. I do not ask the court to punish the offenders, but in the future I want us believers to be considered equal Soviet Union citizens and not stepsons who can be ridiculed.

After November 1st, the Kybartai City Executive Committee sent a complaint to the Vilkaviškis *Rayon* government, that I had organized a procession at 6:00 P.M. on November 1st and, proceeding along the main Kapsuko and Jakovlevo streets, had disrupted vehicular traffic. The Vilkaviškis *Rayon* Administrative Commission imposed a 50-ruble fine against me on the basis of this false complain. From the actions of the Administrative Commission I gained the distinct impression that it was acting at someone's direction. For instance, Administrative Commission Chairman Urbonas even dared testify that he had personally been present in Kybartai on November 1st and saw the faithful walk in the main street, and not along the sidewalk. One commission member even suggested that I be fined 100 rubles, double what the law allows. I was threatened with punishment for every single future "offense."

Why did I go to the cemetery on November 1st with a crowd of believers? Catholic liturgy requires prayers for the dead during All Souls Day and Soviet laws do not forbid praying for the dead in the cemetery. Special permits are not required to do this (see *Commentary on the LSSR Criminal Code*, 1974, p. 226). I am accused of organizing a religious procession to the cemetery without permission from the government. It is true I did not request permission because, over the entire postwar period, LSSR Executive Committees have not once granted such permission to any priest,

although art. 48 of the LSSR Constitution proclaims that Lithuanian SSR citizens are guaranteed the freedoms of speech, press, assembly, mass meetings, street processions and demonstrations. The Constitution is the main body of law and no other laws, decrees or government instructions can contradict it.

Art. 50 of the LSSR Constitution states that "The Church in the Lithuanian SSR is separate from the state . . .", i.e. the state does not interfere in Church affairs and does not indicate how to pray, who can pray and the like.

I was punished by the Administrative Commission on the basis of the outdated and unconstitutional decrees of the Lithuanian SSR Supreme Soviet Presidium: *On the Application of art. 143 of the LSSR Criminal Code* (May 12, 1966) and *On the Confirmation of the Statutes on Religious Congregations* (July 28, 1976). According to these two Supreme Soviet Presidium decrees, we believers are completely devoid of rights. For instance, the *Rayon* government can, whenever it so wishes, close a church, confiscate the holy Mass vessels and put them to profane use. A priest does not have the right to go to a believer's apartment and baptize his baby or bless his house. According to the decrees of the Supreme Soviet Praesidium, a priest cannot teach children the truths of the faith though this is his basic duty as imposed by Christ himself. A believer cannot give aid to another believer when the latter is in need. Without permission from the *Rayon* government a priest cannot go to another church and perform liturgical services. A visiting priest cannot say Holy Mass in church without permission from the *Rayon* government. Every item the faithful donate to the church, for example, rugs, chalices, chandeliers or vestments, automatically become the property of the executive committee.

These few examples clearly illustrate the servile position in which we faithful find ourselves. If we are required to observe outdated, unconstitutional Supreme Soviet Praesidium decrees, then the Lithuanian SSR Constitution should be rewritten to declare that the Lithuanian SSR Catholic Church is subject to the state and must carry out the government's orders in all instances. The faithful are forbidden to hold street processions and demonstrations unless they receive special permission from the government.

In concluding, I would like to add that I do not expect anything from the *Rayon* People's Court because its decision is known beforehand. My only request is that the *Rayon* People's Court relay my thoughts to the authorities of the Lithuanian SSR which must seriously

concern itself with seeing that our rights as believers are not violated, for we, no less than the atheists, earn our bread and the structure of the government rests on our shoulders.

December 1, 1978

Rev. Sigitas Tamkevičius,  
Member of the Catholic Committee  
for the Defense of the Rights  
of Believers and Pastor of Kybartai.

N.B. When Judge Šlenfuktas would not allow the entire speech to be read, Father Tamkevičius handed it to the court and left the courtroom as a sign of protest.

THE KGB IS PREPARING TO INDICT  
THE REV. S. TAMKEVIČIUS

To: The Chairman of the LSSR State Security Committee  
Copies to: The Catholic Committee for the Defense of the  
Rights of Believers;  
The Bishops of the Kaunas Archdiocese and the  
Vilkaviškis Diocese

A Statement from: The Rev. Sigitas Tamkevičius, pastor of  
Kybartai, residing in Kybartai, Darvino g. 12.

On my way to Vilnius on June 1, 1978, I was involved in an accident near Pirčiupis. My car struck a pick-up truck driven by Aleksandras Razvinaičius. The Motor Vehicle Department found Razvinaičius responsible for the accident. (I enclose a copy of the ruling by the Varėna Motor Vehicle Department.)

Two months later employees of the State Security Committee learned of this incident. Razvinaičius himself told me about the actions of officials of this Committee, prior to becoming your collaborator. I visited him on August 23rd, 1978. The very day he had been summoned to Šalčininkai where he met with a security police employee from Vilnius. The visiting security agent questioned him closely about the accident and asked whether I could have given the motor vehicle inspectors a bribe. The agent urged Razvinaičius to contest the motor vehicle department's

findings and go to court to prove me responsible for the accident. He promised to help him win the case. From what the security agent said, Razviničius understood that the security police wanted to help him and detested me. The official stated that I was very dangerous to them but they have nothing against me, yet I must be taken care of, at least compromised. The security official explained that he knows the Supreme Court judges, therefore Razviničius will certainly win this case. He also promised to "handle everything" at the Varėna motor vehicle department to Razviničius' advantage. Because the security agent let it slip that several pages were already missing from my accident file at the Varėna motor vehicle Department, it is quite obvious that security officials "are handling the documents." The agent even offered to write statements to the court, Razviničius would merely have to sign them. For this favor to the security police, the official promised to obtain for Razviničius an allotment for a new pick-up-truck from the social provisions department, which, as a disabled person, Razviničius could purchase for only 20 percent of the cost, i.e. 200 rubles.

Rzviničius liked this "assistance" from the security police but it also worried him, so he did not give a concrete reply and decided to think it over.

The following day, August 24th, security agents again visited Razviničius at home, inspected the damaged vehicle, photographed it and again tempted him to go to court. Razviničius showed me the telephone number the chief of the Salčinskai security police had left so he could call if he wished.

Because Razviničius had strong backing, he asked me to help him repair the vehicle and pay the insurance bureau the sum it demanded—some 800 rubles (this is what the insurance had paid me for my insured car). Seeing the poverty of Razviničius' family and a young man being trapped into trickery which would cause him a guilty conscience his entire life, I gave Razviničius 1,400 rubles. He was very pleased and handed me the ruling of the Varėna motor vehicle department and a copy of the traffic regulations in which the security agent had underlined in red pencil the points which, in his words, could be used in accusing me.

About a month later, I received a letter from Razviničius complaining that his refusal to go to court had cost him dearly: he angered the security agents, lost, due to being considered untrustworthy, his job in some kind of mysterious industry and lost his

turn on the waiting list to a government apartment. He demanded that I send him 1,000 rubles as quickly as possible. After speaking with Razviničius personally, I saw that he continued to maintain contact with security employees and was attempting to blackmail me with their help. I therefore refused to give him any further aid.

Currently, Razviničius again "has the trust of the security police," works as before at the aforesaid mysterious industry and is preparing to take me to court about the accident.

In view of all these actions by officials of the Committee which you head, I protest that the State Security Committee is being used to eliminate a priest (art. 246, par. I of the LSSR Criminal Code provides a sentence of three years for the person responsible in an accident).

It is clear to everyone that behind Razviničius are officials of the omnipotent Security Police before whom bend laws, courts, prosecutors, lawyers, expert witnesses and everything that can be used to punish or destroy their real or imagined enemies.

January 31, 1979

Rev. Sigitas Tamkevičius,  
Member of the Catholic Committee for the  
Defense of the Rights of Believers.

#### Excerpt from the Ruling of the Varėna Motor Vehicle Department

"Due to the fact that A.S. Razviničius himself crudely violated highway traffic regulations, sections VI, art. 70, p. 2, I have decided that, in the auto accident during which Razviničius suffered damages, no charges are to be brought against driver Tamkevičius, S.J. as his actions did not contribute to the accident."

Militia Lieutenant T. Graževičius,  
Chief Inspector of the Motor Vehicle  
Department.

I concur :  
Militia Lieut. Col. L. Mališauskas,  
Head of the Varėna *Rayon* VRS.

The Varėna Prosecutor's Office began to process the case at the

beginning of February. The following were called for interrogation: Razvinaičius, Father Tamkevičius and witnesses.

A new kangaroo trial is expected, in which the unseen but main lynchings will be the KGB. Could this be the start of a security police campaign against the members of the Catholic Committee for the Defense of the Rights of Believers?

#### THE KGB AGAINST THE REV. JUOZAS INDRIŪNAS

In his sermon on January 14, 1979, the Rev. Juozas Indriūnas, Assistant Pastor of the Church of the Resurrection in Kaunas, brought to light a series of facts about certain immoral instructors at schools of higher learning who forcibly corrupt women students and thereby damage the youth of Lithuania. A female student who wishes to receive credit for a course is forced to become the victim of her depraved instructor.

At present, the only means of fighting against the degree-holding grave-diggers of our youth's morals who are armed with Party cards and backed by the government is to speak out in public. Father Indriūnas therefore mentioned the names of Professor T. Šiurkus, Instructor Ž. Dągis and others in the hope of stopping this crippling of young people.

After the sermon, the administration of the Kaunas Medical Institute and the KGB began to buzz like hornets. They demanded through the Kaunas Archdiocesan Chancery that Father Indriūnas withdraw the "slander", or face court charges. The priest was not intimidated and did not recant his words. The KGB is currently drawing up an indictment against the Rev. Juozas Indriūnas.

Disturbed over the fate of their beloved priest, the faithful of Kaunas have sent a series of statements to various government agencies. We reprint one of them, signed by 300 of the faithful:

To: The Chairman of the Kaunas City Executive Committee.

We were extremely incensed when we heard that the administration of the Kaunas Medical Institute, through the Kaunas Chancery wants to force Father Indriūnas to recant the so-called "lie" about the circumstances surrounding the death of Professor T. Šiurkus. The people of Kaunas are well aware of the circumstances surrounding the death of Professor Šiurkus. Your attempt to conceal this generally known fact casts a long shadow over you and causes the people to lose confidence in your agencies.

Our schools of higher education abound with such deplorably notorious facts, but servile fear prevents our student population from confirming them. Wishing to graduate at any cost, young women hide from society the insolent and immoral behavior of instructors during exams or only tell their closest family members, pleading with them not to tell anyone.

We can no longer remain silent! We, who are concerned about our Nation's future, protest this attempt to deny the facts that were brought to light. You will not save the school's reputation with such tactics, you will merely further encourage evil. The instructors' immoral behavior must be condemned by society and it is essential that all possible measures be taken to investigate such offenses.

We suggest that a commission be formed from the appropriate agencies and representatives of society and thoroughly investigate similar incidents and put a final stop to this evil.

People of Kaunas (300 signatures)

#### THE CHRONICLE OF THE CATHOLIC CHURCH IN LITHUANIA IS SEVEN YEARS OLD

March 19th of this year marks seven years since the *Chronicle of the Catholic Church in Lithuania* knocked on the doors of a handful of readers in 1972. Small circulation, dearth of information and readers' fear were obstacles which the *Chronicle* overcame with great difficulty. After several months, the *Chronicle* found its way into the hands of the security police and indictment No. 345 was lodged against this "Dangerous state criminal." After the November 1973 campaign of charges, the security police was jubilant — The *Chronicle* has been liquidated! But it did not die. Years passed and over the years information increased, people's hearts became bolder, the circle of readers grew wider—the *Chronicle* crossed the Fatherland's borders and opened the eyes of many.

Today the *Chronicle* is the nation's conscience, the voice of the militant Church and a cry for help to the entire world.

There would be no *Chronicle* without the Plumpa's, Nijolės, Lapienas', without the sacrifice of the noblest Lithuanians. The *Chronicle* is therefore most indebted to those who suffer for the word of truth behind barbed wires.

The *Chronicle* would be a weak infant were it not for hundreds of Lithuanians who risk their freedom but nonetheless painstakingly gather information, disseminate and read those simple pages which are seeped in suffering and heroism.

The *Chronicle* is extremely grateful to the brothers and sisters in the West, for without their diligent labor the word of truth would bounce off the Iron Curtain and merely echo back, without reaching the wide world.

Many ask why the *Chronicle* survives? Why haven't the security agents managed to strangle it over these seven years? The *Chronicle* lives, because living hands are are folded in prayer!

Editors of the *Chronicle of the  
Catholic Church in Lithuania*

#### OUR PRISONERS

##### Christopol

Viktoras Petkus, a member of the Lithuanian Helsinki Group, has been transferred from the Vladimir Prison to the Chistopol prison. In preparation for the 1980 Olympics, Vladimir Prison has been abolished and transferred to remote Chistopol.

The current address of Viktoras Petkus:

422950 Tatarskaya ASSR  
Chistopol, Ue 148 st. 4.

##### Ulyanovsk

On January 20, 1979 Ona Pranskūnaitė completed serving the sentence imposed on her for making copies and circulating the *Chronicle of the Catholic Church in Lithuania* and was released. The evening of that same day she returned by airplane to Kaunas. The people of Kaunas greeted (Miss) Pranskūnaitė at the airport with flowers; festive welcome-home gatherings were held in several places. Ona Pranskūnaitė returned tired but in a very good mood.

##### Potma

The martyr P.(etras) Paulaitis writes:

I keep going forward. I've already completed 32 years, and only

some three more are left. I calmly look to the future which will be kind, if not to me, to my Fatherland, to my countrymen certainly. But always and everywhere: "Thy will be done!"

I need only thank all my fellow countrymen and even more ardently express my love for you and offer myself up for the common and just cause of the freedom of all. Each heartfelt word from my kind brothers and sisters reaching me behind the barbed wires is a balm: It causes all wants to fade, it eases the pain caused by all the thorns which are so abundant here and, it seems that the yoke of occupation which one must drag year after year throughout life becomes less brutal when one is accompanied by loving hearts. But how can I thank those loving hearts who remember me, who write to me at least occasionally? For I can do no more than a bird with clipped wings . . .

My health: It would seem that no one lacks for indispositions. I cannot keep from wishing for health, especially during the winter. There are all kinds of flu, arthritises, rheumatisms and similar disorders. But so far they are inconsequential things which should not be paid much attention: They come, they go and everything remains the same. And there are many more important things to think and worry about. I cannot refrain from rejoicing in the words of Maironis:

"Now, I no longer ask for death, but for life,  
I want to live, to fight!  
The Almighty granted me breath, I know,  
Not to bathe my face with tears . . ."

For everything'; *Deo gratias!* And in everything: Thy will be done!"

Petras Paulaitis is one of the noblest Lithuanians. At the Sakharov Hearings in Copenhagen the Russians asserted that Paulaitis is an example of moral integrity.

The *Chronicle* asks our emigrant brethren to continually bring up the name of Petras Paulaitis, our Nation's long-time martyr. Let us demand his quick release into freedom!

The address of Petras Paulaitis:

Mordovskaya ASSR  
stancija Potma,  
p/o Lesnoj 385/19-3

Potma

On October 20, 1978 Elena Lapienienė visited her husband Vla-

das Lapienis who is still imprisoned at the 19th Mordovian labor camp (together with Petras Paulaitis). (Mrs) Lapienien was thoroughly searched before and after the visit. Security agent Masha stripped her naked, undid her braids, had her turn around, bend over, even examined the soles of her feet, lest one "anti-Soviet scrap of paper" be taped there. It is difficult to imagine the state so fearing the word of truth written on a scrap of paper. (Mrs) Lapienienė was not allowed to give her husband a package, though the prisoner is entitled to receive a package since he has served half of his allotted sentence.

Vladas Lapienis writes from labor camp:

"In the time it takes me to return from the mess hall to my living quarters after lunch, I sometimes consume an entire slice of bread . . ."

Forced labor, hunger, continual degradation and punishment: these are everyday facts of life in Soviet labor camps.

During the trial of Vladas Lapienis, the KGB wanted to use his wife Elena as a witness against her husband, but she testified bluntly that security agents had behaved brutally during the search and had confiscated much religious literature. Despite this, the court used (Mrs) Lapienienė's statement that no one prevents her from going to church as proof that freedom of belief does exist in Lithuania.

It is true that no one keeps Elena Lapienienė, a simple cook, from attending church, but she has waited for over ten years for a more decent communal apartment and has not been given one, though she had been at the head of the list for years and the annual commission confirms that her apartment is completely uninhabitable.

When (Mrs) Lapienienė retired, her place of employment did not forget either that she is a believer. She was not given the least little gift (others receive them!) though she performed her work very diligently.

Once, (Mrs) Lapienienė asked the professional union chairwoman, F. Sterskaya, for a voucher to purchase a rug, but the chairwoman was aware that the cook is a believer and retorted: "You will never get one!"

## NEWS FROM THE DIOCESES

### Vilnius

After Petras Anilionis assumed the post of Commissioner for Religious Affairs, his "concern" for Church matters was immediately felt. For the third month running, the priests of Lithuania do not have liturgical calendars. Apparently, even permission to print such calendars can come only from the Kremlin!

### Adutiškis

At the beginning of 1979, Father Bronius Laurinavičius, pastor of Adutiškis, joined the Lithuanian Helsinki Group, whose aim is to monitor how the Helsinki agreements are implemented in daily life in Soviet Lithuania. Father Laurinavičius is one of the most zealous and courageous priests of the Vilnius Archdiocese. His statements have appeared many times in the pages of the *Chronicle of the Catholic Church in Lithuania*.

### Kaunas

At the start of December 1978, a proposal was drawn up to transfer priests within the Kaunas Archdiocese and submitted to Religious Affairs Commissioner Anilionis for his approval.

For nearly two months Anilionis' agency pondered with the KGB how to reject these appointments which were unacceptable to the security police. The proposal called for relieving the Rev. Izidorius Butkus of his post as Chancellor of the Kaunas Archdiocese and appointing in his stead the Rev. Pranas Juozapavičius, rector of the Kaunas Cathedral. Anilionis rejected the bishop's proposal on February 1st on the pretext that "Rev. Juozapavičius should not be slighted." The commissioner did not dare say that "our man, Rev. Izidorius Butkus, should not be slighted."

### Kaunas

The Rev. Alfonsas Lapė, pastor of the church of Šančiai, forbade school children to say the Rosary aloud in church, and somewhat later forbade them to make the Way of the Cross in unison. The people of Kaunas cannot believe the pastor's faithfulness in following Soviet instructions.

### Viduklė

The Rev. Alfonsas Svarinskas, pastor of Viduklė, was fined 50

rubles on November 16, 1978 for organizing a religious All Souls Day procession to the cemetery on November 1st. The pastor had asked the government to issue a permit, but it was denied. Disputing the fine, Father Svarinskas appealed to the Raseiniai *Rayon* Court. Fearing a demonstration by believers at the court building, the *Rayon* government decided to hear Father Svarinskas' case that same day when Advent exercises were to be held at the Viduklė church. The pastor asked the presiding judge E. Jaras to postpone the court hearing because as pastor he could not leave a church full of people and come to the trial. The presiding judge consented but after receiving pressure "from above" he deceived the pastor and heard the case without him. The court found that the pastor had violated Soviet laws and had been justly fined by the Administrative Commission.

Because Rev. Alfonsas Svarinskas did not pay the fine, the Raseiniai court-appointed executor arrived at the Viduklė rectory on January 31, 1979 and, in the absence of the pastor, confiscated an imported coffee service worth some 150 rubles and sold it at the commissary store for 52 rubles. For some strange reason, the court executor did not take the Soviet-made set which cost 70 rubles and would have more than covered the unpaid fine.

#### Telšiai

On January 19, 1979, the Religious Affairs Commissioner took all day to lecture the priests of Telšiai and the diocesan administrator, Rev. Antanas Vaičius. Vice-Chairman Jankus of the Telšiai City Executive Committee also attended the session. The commissioner was very displeased that church ceremonies attended by many priests, seminarians and young people are held at the Telšiai cathedral without the knowledge of the government. He also feels that too many boys serve at Masses at the cathedral. All this is forbidden by the "Statutes on Religious Congregations." The Rev. Juozas Pačinskas, pastor of the cathedral, even pledged in writing to stop violating Soviet laws in the future. The Rev. Jonas Kauneckas, assistant pastor of the cathedral, was threatened with prosecution for his sermons. Father Jonas Kauneckas is already guilty merely by being a member of the Catholic Committee for the Defense of the Rights of Believers. During the postwar period, people were given 10-year sentences for just one signature, while Father Kauneckas has already contributed more than one signature to the Committee's work.

On January 22, 1979, Dr. Janulionis, Chief-of-Staff at the Telšiai Hospital, accused Nurse (Mrs) Mockevičienė of baptizing infants. For this, he sent her several times to the Telšiai security police for questioning. She had to wait for the security agents for several hours, though as the sole provider in her family she has ample work to do.

#### Prienai

During the night of November 16, 1978, the faithful erected a five-meter (16.5-foot) cross on the so-called Hill of Brides and inscribed on it: "Lord, protect our youth from godlessness!" It was only for a short time that passersby removed their hats to the Crucified: The KGB annihilated the cross during the night of November 20th.

#### Vilkaviškis

At the end of 1978, Vice-Chairman Juozas Urbonas of the Vilkaviškis *Rayon* Executive Committee again demanded *Rayon* parishes to renew their so-called "agreements." Unfortunately all of Urbonas' efforts were futile. The faithful of Didvyžiai and Gižai were harassed the most extensively on the "agreements." Adomas Gudynas, chairman of the Klausučiai district, stated that the "agreements" would have to be renewed on a yearly basis.

#### Kėdainiai

On October 17, 1978, Vice-Chairman A. Juškevičius of the Kėdainiai *Rayon* Executive Committee summoned the priests of the *rayon* to the Executive Committee building and lectured them on religious cults. During the lecture, he explained that minor children may not serve at Mass or participate in processions, priests may not conduct services in other parishes without the *rayon* permission, etc. Vice-Chairman Juškevičius noted that similar "discussions" will be held every year.

On December 18, 1978, Vice-Chairman Juškevičius of the Kėdainiai *Rayon* Executive Committee scolded the Rev. Jonas Survila, pastor of Pagiriai, because children serve at Mass and sing during services at the Pagiriai church.

"You have just recently moved into our *Rayon* and you're already begun to agitate children," the Vice-Chairman scolded. "You know the law!"

"Yes, I know the law. It is written in the Gospels: "Suffer

the little children to come unto me!"

The pastor refused to keep children away from the altar.

#### Salos

Vice-Chairman Firas of the Rokiškis *Rayon* Executive Committee came to Salos on January 3, 1979 accompanied by Deputy Commissioner for Religious Affairs Raslanas (a KGB agent). In the officials' opinion, the chairman of the Salos parish committee, (Mrs.) Leonora Bartkienė, is not right for the position. The former chairman who was recently relieved of his duties suited the government better.

The atheists of Salos are exerting considerable effort to have Father Petras Nykštus, the pastor of Salos, transferred to another parish. The visiting officials inquired how long Father Nykštus had worked at the Salos parish and said they would speak about him to Bishop Krikščiūnas. Pressure will probably be placed on the bishop to punish the priest whom the government finds displeasing, i.e. transfer him to another parish.

#### Višakio Rūda — Nemirai

We reprint excerpts from a statement written by the Rev. Gvidonas Dovydaitis to the Executive Committee of the *Rayon* of Šakiai:

"After holding services at the Nemirai church on November 26, 1978,<sup>1</sup> I decided to visit several families. I asked the driver to take me to the Chepajev state farm. Two men met me at the door when I left one house: State Farm Engineer Mindaugas Kaniauskas and Pranas Sutkus. They introduced themselves as auxiliary policemen and stated that I must not visit the people. I have heard that Negroes are forbidden to enter white districts in certain countries, but that was probably long ago. The color of my skin, it would seem, is no different from that of the workers who live on the Chepajev state farm. These guardians of the peace offered to escort me to my car. When I declined their services, they threatened that I would not be able to find the car which had brought me and would have to walk home. I thought this was a mere joke by pranksters, but it seems I was mistaken. The aforesaid men were not ordinary hoodlums: They were acting in the name of the law. When the time came for me to go home, there was no driver or car by the road; in vain did I search in the dark night, wading down the muddy road.

As I later learned, a whole group of auxiliary policemen

approached my driver and ordered him to leave. The group included Mindaugas Karnauskas, Pranas Sutkus, Liudas Žamba (deputy chairman of the state farm), (Mrs) Žambienė, Cigana and Albinas Grikiėtis (state farm bookkeeper). The guardians of the peace wanted to let the air out of the car's tires and when it finally started off they accompanied it with the threat: "If you stop to wait, we'll slash your tires!"

Article 39 of the current Lithuanian SSR Constitution discriminates against state farm workers, because their rest time is regulated by state farm officials and they regulate it in such a manner that state farm workers do not even have Sundays off. Even serfs used to have days off. During the so-called era of exploiters, my father worked as a herder for the father of Antanas Sniečkus, former First Secretary of the Lithuanian SSR Communist Party, but even he allowed the shepherd to go to church on Sundays and Holydays. In this regard, the workers of the Čepajev state farm live under more difficult circumstances. State farm workers complain that those who want to attend church during recollections or the more important feasts are called church-mice by state farm officials and not allowed to go . . ."

Nemirai, December 2, 1978

Rev. Gvidonas Dovydaitis  
Pastor of the Parish of Nemirai

Slabadai

The Rev. Antanas Lukošaitis was visiting believing families in Slabadai (*Rayon* of Vilkaviškis) on January 18, 1979. A. Pečiulis, Chairman of the District of Juodupėnai, detained the priest and told him he would have to go to the *Rayon* to justify his actions, but Father Lukošaitis ignored the official's warning and continued to visit the parish.

Vištytis

The church of Vištytis was renovated during the summer of 1978. According to old tradition, someone goes among the parishioners whenever major work is done at the church, urging them to make a contribution for the repair work; if a donation is received at that time, it is placed in the church treasury. This is what Augustinas Snabaitis did. Vilkaviškis *Rayon* officials learned of Snabaitis' "criminal activity" . . . And, they began to harass him.

At the beginning of September, militiamen visited Snabaitis' home and place of employment and summoned him to the *Rayon* where he was interrogated and threatened with imprisonment for the "crime" he had committed; from the militia he was taken to see Vice Chairman Urbonas of the *Rayon* Executive Committee who again interrogated and threatened him with prosecution.

In October, several believers from Vištytis were summoned to the militia where they were interrogated on how Snabaitis had collected the donations. The faithful explained that they had given to the church freely and moreover they have the right to use their money as they please.

The Rev. Kazimieras Montvila, pastor of the parish, saw his parishioners being terrorized and went to see Urbonas at the *Rayon* to defend them. The official assured the pastor that a serious crime had been committed here and laws broken.

"We know your laws: They do not give or allow us anything, and we are not afraid if you punish us," Father Kazimieras Montvila retorted.

At the end of October, a *Rayon* Commission came to Vištytis to examine the parish's finances, but without success. Later, Urbonas personally came to "educate" the pastor, as did *Rayon* Judge Stankaitis. The latter shouted in a rage that the true masters of the church are the district and the *Rayon*. But when they attempted to enter and examine the church without the pastor's permission, the pastor stood in the doorway and protested:

"When you begin to attend services at the church you will then be its masters and will be permitted to enter the church."

Ever since then, no financial books are kept at the Vištytis parish. Since the "Church is separate from the state", it is not people like Urbonas who have the right to control parish finances, but the real owners of the parish.

#### Onuškis (R a y o n of Trakai)

The Rev. Jonas Voveris, who conducted his pastoral ministry in various parishes of the diocese of Kaišiadorys for some 40 years, died in Vievis on January 16, 1979. Before dying the decedent had requested that he be interred in the parish of his birth: the churchyard of Onuškis Parish. The Diocesan administrator Juozas Andrikonis forwarded this request to Religious Affairs Commissioner Anilionis. The latter told him to consult with the *Rayon* government, and it in turn sent him back to Anilionis. Finally,

for want of a way to avoid a decision, the Commissioner stated "he had no special forms for such documents." On the day of the funeral, Commissioner Anilionis telephoned the diocesan administrator and told him to ignore the decedent's request and obey the *rayon* government. And so, Father Voveris was buried in the cemetery of the Onuškis parish.

The priests and faithful of Lithuania are increasingly raising the questions: Is it at all worth the trouble to request such permissions? Certain priests still live in a world of illusion and do not understand the deceit of the atheists.

### IN THE SOVIET SCHOOL

Lithuanian Catholic students are very grateful to Vatican Radio for publicizing the resistance of school children to a loss of religious faith under duress.

It would be good if Vatican Radio were to prepare a 10-minute program devoted to school-children for its Saturday broadcasts. Our children need much help to grow into decent individuals. At present, they hear only lies about the faith and the Fatherland.

One teacher from Samogitia writes: "Our school has some truly amazing children. One eighth-grade girl ended her composition with the words: "Let us therefore choose courage, let us discipline our will and, when the need arises, we will stand to defend our Lithuania!"

#### Telšiai

A fifth-grade student named Fabijonavičiutė has been terrorized for her faith over the past several years at the Fifth Middle School in Telšiai. Here are some instances:

In October 1977, the school's assistant principal warned the student not to attend church. That same year, the assistant principal again intimidated the girl on several occasions, demanding when she would mend her ways and stop going to church.

On January 18, 1979 homeroom teacher (Mrs.) Butkevičienė stated during a class meeting that only Pioneers can set a good example, but believers will never be a good example to others.

During a mathematics class, teacher Gudienė ridiculed Fabio-

navičiutė in front of the entire class: "There are no more convents and there will never be any, so where will you, a believer, find shelter?"

Finally, at the end of January 1979 the parents of Fabionavičiutė were warned at work. They were threatened that the security police would take care of them if they did not set their daughter straight.

The strength of Lithuanian children is truly amazing: they withstand attacks by an entire army of teachers and even interrogations by the security police.

#### Šiauliai

In October 1978, Principal A. Gužaitytė of the Twelfth Middle School in Šiauliai and homeroom teacher I. Savickienė bombarded 10th-grader Zigmus Lemkis with questions on why he attends church and serves at Holy Mass.

"What do you plan to do in the future? You know that students cannot attend church! A dark future is in store for you," the principal said in an outburst.

Lemkis held his ground:

'I've been going to church and will continue going.'

The principal then summoned the student's mother Birutė Lemkienė and lectured her on the fact that Zigmus' soul has been damaged, he is in danger of being expelled from school and faces other various unpleasantness. The mother left the principal's office in tears.

As if that were not enough, Šiauliai KGB officials pay visits to the principal's office at the Twelfth Middle School and summon Zigmus Lemkis for "re-education."

All throughout Lithuania, the KGB is making considerable effort to recruit as spies school children who serve at Holy Mass.

In this way, the security police hopes to introduce more of its agents into the Theological Seminary.

#### Pagiriai (Rayon of Kėdainiai)

On December 5, 1978, the progress of students during the first trimester was under discussion at the Pagiriai Middle School and several reprimands were given to 6th-grader Romas Šapnagis and 7th-grader Julius Širkas, while Vidmantas Zupkas even had a reprimand recorded on his report card because ... he serves at Mass. The students justified their actions under freedom of

religion. Seventh-grade homeroom teacher (Mrs) Laima Duliauskienė assured them that freedom of religion exists only in other countries, but there is no such freedom in the Soviet Union.

#### Siesikai (R a y o n of Ukmergė)

On November 28, 1978, Principal Latvys of the Siesikai Middle School terrorized several students who serve at Mass: Raimondas Tiškus, Antanas Maželis ir Egidijus Tamauskas. The children were interrogated, scolded and intimidated in the teachers room. They were forbidden to serve at Holy Mass in the future.

#### Kapsukas

At the beginning of November 1978, (Mrs) Razvanavičienė, the leader of the Pioneers at the Kapsukas Sixth Middle School, tried to force Vilija Žitkutė and Jūratė Petruškevičiūtė to join the Pioneers. The girls refused. Then the Pioneer leader asked if they believe in God. The girls admitted that they do.

"And do you go to church?"

"We do."

"Do you have prayerbooks?" the leader interrogated further.

"We do," the schoolgirls replied boldly.

Then (Mrs) Razvanavičienė stood the girls in front of the class and began to educate the students: "If not for Lenin," the teacher exuded, "they would not have attended school, but would have herded geese; and now they are afraid to wear the pin! These are the nation's future enemies!" The teacher flung words of utter contempt at the believing girls.

Homeroom Teacher (Mrs.) Razvanavičienė is an example of how catering to the occupant grows into brutal fanaticism. The nation's enemy is not one who refuses to wear the occupant's pin, but one who wants to impose it by force.

#### Aukštadvaris (R a y o n of Trakai)

Recollections were conducted at the Aukštadvaris church on October 15, 1978. Besides adults, the following students also attended the services: 8th-grader Juozas Kaliukevičius, 8th-grader Lilijana Špiliauskaitė, 7th-grader Talvydas Špiliauskas and others. The next day, the school's Communist Party secretary and assistant principal Antanas Verseckas scolded Kaliukevičius in class, threatening to give him a lower department grade if he continued to attend church. These school children have already been given

lower department grades during the past academic year for attending church. Teacher Brunzienenė summoned Lilijana Špiliauskaitė's mother and threatened to give her daughter poor department grades because of her faith. She also severely warned the mother to keep Lilijana from ever again going to the Aukštadvaris church.

The teachers forcibly enrolled Lilijana Špiliauskaitė into the atheist club without her parents' consent. Only after the parents protested strenuously was the student allowed to withdraw from the club. The members of the atheist club are assigned the task of going to church and spying on the students attending and taking notes on the priest's sermons.

Teacher Astrauskienė stated during an atheist program that all priests and believers are behind the times and stupid. The teacher ridiculed prayer. She also ordered believing students to do the same.

(Mrs) Dandienė, the custodian of the Aukštadvaris school, once told the school's assistant principal, Teacher Verseckas, that the Constitution forbids such persecution of students. Teacher Verseckas jeered: "If we were to give the students freedom, they would all go to church!"

## CATHOLICS IN THE SOVIET UNION

### The Ukraine

After the 1978 Christmas holidays, certain Western press correspondents rushed to report that this year's Christmas holidays in the Soviet Union had passed in a peaceful and orderly fashion, as never before since the war. There were no Communist Youths at the churches to disrupt services, there were no teachers to chase children from churches, etc. This was supposedly true of Moscow, Kiev, Vilnius. In this same vain, others went even further by reporting that the relationship between the government and religion and the Church is supposedly normalizing in the Soviet Union. These correspondents did not know what was happening in the more remote places they have never visited and with whose inhabitants they have had no contact whatsoever.

In the district of the Western Ukraine, where the majority of the population consists of Catholic Ukrainians, the situation is quite different. It must be pointed out that Soviet organs follow in the footsteps of Czarist administrators in never calling a Ukrainian

Catholic, but just Uniate in order to debase him as a schismatic of the Russian Orthodox Church who has sided with the Catholic Church. The people of the Ukraine, especially the Western portion, have been Catholic since ancient times, but of the Eastern rite: this was and still is equally intolerable to both Czarist and present-day Russia. If a Ukrainian calls himself Catholic, he is assailed: "You are not Catholic, but Uniate in other words, you have broken away from Mother Russia and now spread discord between the people of Russia and the Ukraine. Just before Christmas, a commission from Kiev and Moscow arrived in Western Ukraine and began to summon the remaining old and ailing Ukrainian Catholic Priests. Those who could not come in person were visited at home and were subjected to exhausting talks. The purpose of these talks was to terrorize the priests so they will not have the courage to conduct services when they go visiting or receive the faithful in their homes to attend services. These priests, most of whom were prosecuted several times simply for refusing to be Russian Orthodox, have already been robbed of everything. Already in 1946, during the "first blow" as the security police has dubbed it, when all Ukrainian Catholic bishops and priests were herded together and sent to concentration camps, their church articles and religious literature were stolen. Then, during the "second blow" in 1957, those priests who returned home after the 1953 amnesty were denuded of everything, even ordinary dishes and boxes were taken on the suspicion that they might be used for Holy Mass. After the "second blow" (it was to be the last) few Ukrainian Catholic priests were left. And these were elderly, ailing and broken by torture in labor camps. Now they once again have no peace. The Chekists mock them: "You will have no peace even in death; we will watch who attended your funeral, what is written on your tombstone, etc. A Catholic priest will die somewhere, his friends will bury him and then they will be interrogated, threatened and harrassed in various ways . . ." People who attend services at the home of a Catholic priest are often detained by Government representatives, are dismissed from work, etc. It should be known that every Ukrainian Catholic priest is followed by a whole band of security police collaborators. He can be taken off a bus or train at any time and searched without any reason. The visiting commission warned: "Your Uniate Church is not legal—go pray in the Orthodox churches." To the question of why they don't register the Ukrainian Catholics, as they do other Catholics, they

replied: "You are not Catholics; you are Uniates". The priests of the Ukraine complain: "Vatican representatives visited Moscow but did they ever submit the demand of Ukrainian Catholics to Moscow authorities? Five million Ukrainian Catholics still know nothing of this."

The commission did not overlook even old women who had once been nuns. It was especially interested in learning whether they have among them young girls who wish to become nuns.

The brutal battle against Ukrainian Catholics is waged not only by the security police but also by other government agencies: various organizations, schools, even state farms. State farm authorities keep a close watch over those who do not attend the Russian Orthodox Church, do not give their children Orthodox baptisms, do not bury their dead with an Orthodox priest. Such people are insulted by state farm officials, are given smaller plots of land and are hurt in every possible way.

Such is the "true" freedom of religion and conscience here, guaranteed by Constitutions, Helsinki documents and declarations on human rights. Did the faithful of the Ukraine ask that their Catholic communities be registered? Yes, more than once. Every time believers left for Moscow to ask that the Ukrainian Catholic community be registered and even before they returned home, the KGB was already mounting an attack against the persons who had signed the statement, punishing them, dismissing them from work and arresting priests. Such was the response to complaints and requests.

This is the true picture of the "freedom of conscience" in the Soviet Ukraine. Genocides are taking place somewhere in Chile, South Africa—but not here!

#### Belorussia

The Belorussian SSR is in competition with the Lithuanian SSR. Newspapers report various scores in this competition. But Belorussia holds an undisputed lead in one area, that of destroying and desecrating churches. The Gothic-style church of Gardinas built at the time of Vytautas the Great has been demolished, the beautiful Vidžiai shrine has been destroyed, the small church of Varanavas which people tried to save—women laid down in the path of oncoming tractors—has been razed from the face of the earth. After this incident, soldiers were called out and the church was turned in one night into a pile of firewood. Well, physical strength and force seem to be the most

reliable weapons in ideological battle. Now a cultural center stands on the site of the church. It is easy to imagine what kind of "culture" this building is spreading after looking into the dancehall and seeing drunk youths staggering about and promiscuous young girls.

The atheists of Belorussia are firmly convinced that the best method of fighting against religion is to destroy the church building. This is accomplished in various ways. For instance, the church of Beniakoniai is being destroyed gradually. First, the church is closed down, the sculptures and altar are smashed inside, pictures are destroyed. The churchyard is turned into an open refuse pile. Anyone can do as he pleases there, secure in the knowledge that any acts of vandalism will be tolerated.

Even the tombstone of Adomas Mickevičius' wife was shamelessly knocked down because a cross had been cut into the stone. It was returned to its proper place only by Lithuanian national heritage scholars. But for how long? Any day, the same fate that befell many other religious and cultural monuments throughout Belorussia can befall it again. Atheist fanaticism encouraged by the government is extending its hand everywhere.

Let us look at Naugardukas—the birthplace of Adomas Mickevičius. This is where Adomas Mickevičius was born, baptized and went to school. Let us look at the former Dominican church where the future poet used to pray . . . No, it is impossible to describe. One must see this church, actually this hideously desecrated shrine, to understand to what inhuman acts a person inspired by atheistic fanaticism can stoop!

This church met its sad fate relatively recently. Several years ago the organ still pealed here, hymns echoed. But the priest died. In other words, the time came to annihilate this shrine of architectural importance. The current practice in Belorussia is as follows: if the priest cannot be eliminated, they wait for him to die and after his death permission is not given for a new priest to be appointed and the church is closed down. And this is how the above-named church was first converted into a warehouse. The organ was destroyed, the altar demolished, as were the sculptures of the saints. Finally, the roof began to leak. Someone suggested that it be repaired but encountered strict opposition: a leaking roof is the best way to destroy the building. Two years later the church building was no longer fit even for a warehouse.

Today, the former church can be entered only through large

holes in the foundation. And here one sees what cannot be described . . . Not the fact that everything has been destroyed, desecrated and vandalized, no . . . Such sights can be seen throughout Belorussia. Much more is revealed here: the most hideous loss of humanity which shakes every decent man to the depths of his soul. The place where people once knelt and prayed (and these were relatives, parents and perhaps even friends) has been turned into a cesspool, and the walls where the pictures of saints once hung are covered with such Russian graffiti that even persons accustomed to all kinds of obscenity would blush . . .

Unfortunately, all this has no impact on the government officials of Naugardukas and the local atheists. Everything is a trifle to them, everything is permitted here: any crime imaginable is no crime just as long as no trace is left of the former church. They are not even embarrassed before tourists who visit the historical sites associated with the poet Mickevičius.

After seeing the barbarically desecrated Dominican church of Naugardukas, one cannot forget either the second Naugardukas church located near the castle ruins. This church is still functioning. But its pastor is an elderly man who survived a Soviet labor camp. The faithful of Naugardukas are very worried that a similar fate might befall this church also, once their pastor dies. Will the government's hand be stayed by the plaque fastened on the outside proclaiming the church's noble historical past, or the plaque on the inside which states that the poet Mickevičius was baptized in this holy place?

FROM THE ARCHIVES OF  
THE CHRONICLE OF THE CATHOLIC  
CHURCH IN LITHUANIA

Biržai

Monsignor Adolfas Sabaliauskas, a well-known writer (pen-name Žalia Rūta), and great collector of folklore, folk art and musical instruments, erected a beautiful Lithuanian-style chapel near his birthplace in the tiny cemetery of Mielaišiai in the *Rayon* of Biržai and asked his relatives to bury him there.

People from the surrounding area used the chapel: They held wakes for their dead through the night and the following day buried the decedent in the cemetery after the priest conducted services.

But later under the Soviet government, the chairman of the Geidžiūnai District confiscated the keys to the chapel and forbade people to pray there. According to local residents, the chairman intends to convert the chapel into a grain warehouse.

After Msgr. Sabaliauskas died in 1950, his friends took his remains to the chapel in accordance with his wishes, but when they could not find the key they cut a hole in the outside wall under the altar, inserted the casket and closed it up again.

In 1966 the director of the Biržai National Heritage Museum supposedly planned to have a commemorative plaque made and fastened to the chapel and even have a sign erected by the road. But seven years later nothing has yet been done.

On August 19, 1972, at the initiative of the decedent's friends, a marble plaque was made and fastened to the spot where the decedent is buried. But unfortunately barely a year had passed before the commemorative plaque was broken and crushed with no trace remaining at the initiative of some barbarians.

This is how the people of Biržai "paid tribute" to their famous cultural researcher on the 100th anniversary of his birth.

#### NEW UNDERGROUND PUBLICATIONS

Aušra (The Dawn) No. 14 (54). The issue is dated December 1978. It contains a statement by Lithuanian Helsinki Group member Rev. Karolis Garuckas, an article entitled "Trading in Nations", etc. The news section contains items on the Catholic Committee for the defense of the Rights of Believers, stepped-up russification in Lithuania, etc.

Dievas ir Tėvynė (God and Country) No. 10. Half of this issue is devoted to the poem "Night Visitor" signed with the pen name Bičiulis (Friend), the remaining portion contains three articles: "Aren't You Ashamed!", "All Lithuanians for the Nation's Purity" and "The Summit of Humanity." The issue appeared in February 1979.

Tiesos kelias (Way of Truth) No. 11. This issue writes about Pope John Paul II, the International Year of the Child, the defense of children's rights; much information is presented on the life of the Catholic Church.

Fellow Lithuanians, Don't Forget!

P.(etras) Plumpa, N.(ijolė) Sadūnaitė, S.(ergei) Kovalev, V.(ladas) Lapienis, B.(alys) Gajauskas, V.(iktoras) Petkus and others who bear the shackles of prison to that you might freely live and believe!

Correction

In issue No. 36 of the *Chronicle of the Catholic Church in Lithuania*, the article "Life of Catholics in Lithuania and the Soviet Union" contains the sentence: Vieno iš Pabaltijui paskirto vyskupo charakteris tik ką prieš jo paskyrimą . . . (The Character of one of the bishops named for the Baltic States just prior to his appointment. . .). The words "charakteris tik ką" should read "characteristika" (references).

## INDEX OF PERSONS

- Anilionis Petras, 7, 18, 36, 41-2  
Andrikonis, Juozas 41  
Bartkienė, Leonora 39  
Brezhnev, Leonid 21  
Bubnys, Rev., Prosperas 12  
Buožius, Rev., Mykolas 5  
Butkus, Rev., Izidorius 36  
Caprio 5  
Cigana 40  
Dagis, Ž. 31  
Dandienė 45  
Dovydaitis, Rev., Gvidonas 39-40  
Duliauskienė 44  
Dziegorairis 23  
Fabijonavičiūtė 42-43  
Firas 39  
Gajauskas, Balys 51  
Gajauskas, Rev., K. 18  
Garuckas, Rev., Karolis 50  
Graževičius, T. 30  
Grikietis, Albinas 40  
Cudynas, Adomas 38  
Gutauskas, Rev., Algis 18-19, 20  
Cužaitytė, A. 43  
Gyls, Algis 22  
Indriūnas, Rev., Juozas 31  
Jakutis, Ričardas 19, 20  
Jankus 37  
Janulionis 38  
Jaras, E. 37  
Jaugelis, Rev., Virgilijus 19, 21  
Judeikis, Mindaugas 21, 36  
Juškevičius, A. 38  
Kainauskas, Mindaugas 39-40  
Kaliukevičius, Juozas 44  
Kauneckas, Rev., Jonas 18, 37  
Kelly, Bishop, Thomas 4  
Kovalev, Sergei 51  
Krikščiūnas, Bishop 18, 39  
Krivaitis, Msgr., Česlovas 20  
Labukas, Bishop, J. 20  
Lapė, Rev., Alfonsas 36  
Lapienienė, Elena 34-35  
Lapienis, Vladas 32, 34-35, 51  
Latvys 44  
Laurinavičius, Rev., Bronius 36  
Lemkis, Zigmās 43  
Lemkienė, Birutė 43  
Lukošaitis, Rev., Antanas 40  
Mališauskas, L. 30  
Maželis, Antanas 44  
Mickevičius, Adomas 48-49  
Mockienė 38  
Montvila, Rev., Kazimieras 41  
Mockūnas, Rev., J. 18  
Nykštus, Rev., Petras 39  
Pačinskas, Rev., J. 37  
Paul II, Pope, John 4, 19  
Paulaitis, Petras 33-34, 35  
Petkus, Viktoras 21, 33, 51  
Petruškevičiūtė, Jūratė 44  
Plumpa, Petras 32, 51  
Pranskūnaitė, Ona 32  
Pūkėnas, Rev., Kazimieras 20  
Raslanas 39  
Razvinavičius, Aleksandras 28-31  
Razvanavičienė 44  
Sadūnaitė, Nijolė 32  
Sapnagis, Romas 43  
Sasnauskas, Julijus 21  
Savickienė, J. 43  
Šeškevičius, Rev., Antanas 12  
Šiuškus, T. 31  
Sladkevičius, Bishop, Vincentas 20  
Slenfuktas 23, 28  
Snabaitis, Augustinas 40-41

## INDEX OF PERSONS

**Sniečkus, Antanas 40**  
**Spiliauskaitė, Lilijana 44-45**  
**Špiliauskas, Talvydas 44**  
**Stankaitis 22, 41**  
**Steponavičius, Bishop, Julijonas 19**  
**Sterskaya, F. 35**  
**Sutkus, Pranas 39-40**  
**Survila, Rev., Jonas 38**  
**Svarinskas, Rev. Alfonsas 18, 21,**  
**22-31, 36, 37**  
**Tamkevičius, Rev., Sigitas 18-21**  
**Tainauskas, Egidijus 44**  
**Tiškus, Sigitas 44**  
**Urbonas, Juozas 8, 26, 38, 41**  
**Vaičius, Rev., Antanas 37**  
**Velavičius, Rev., Vincas 18**  
**Voveris, Rev., Jonas 41-42**  
**Verseckas, Antanas 44-45**  
**Zamba, Liudas 40**  
**Zambienė, 40**  
**Zdebskis, Rev., Juozas 12, 18**  
**Zitkutė, Vilija 44**  
**Zupkus, Vidmantas 43**

## INDEX OF PLACES

**Adučiškis, 36**  
**Aukštadvaris, 44-45**  
**Biržai, 49-50**  
**Kapsukas, 44**  
**Kaunas, 31, 36**  
**Kėdainiai, 38-39**  
**Kybartai, 22, 28**  
**Nemenčinė, 20**  
**Onuškis, 41-42**  
**Pagiriai, 43-44**  
**Prienai, 38**  
**Sangrūda, 15**  
**Šiauliai, 43**  
**Siesikai, 44**  
**Slabadai, 40**  
**Telšiai, 37-38, 42-43**  
**Varėna, 30**  
**Viduklė, 36-37**  
**Vilkaviškis, 8, 22, 37**  
**Vilnius, 15, 36**  
**Vištytis, 40-41**  
**Višakio Rūda 39-40**  
**Žalioji, 8**

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



Places mentioned in the CHRONICLE OF THE CATHOLIC CHURCH IN LITHUANIA NO. 37