

**CHRONICLE OF THE
CATHOLIC CHURCH
IN LITHUANIA**

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**CHRONICLE OF THE CATHOLIC CHURCH IN
LITHUANIA No. 72**

A Translation of the Complete Lithuanian Original
LIETUVOS KATALIKŲ BAŽNYČIOS KRONIKA Nr. 72
Documenting the Struggle for Human Rights
In Soviet-Occupied Lithuania Today

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COVER: Father Jonas-Kaštytis Matulionis, showing the effects of his imprisonment. Sentenced to a three year term in 1985 for being an unregistered priest ("disrupting the public order"), Father Matulionis was released in November, 1987. He is in poor health, and was hospitalized for unknown reasons before his release from prison, (see p. 34)

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Introduction

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Vincentas Borisevičius, Bishop of Telšiai, was arrested on February 3, 1946, and condemned to death after a secret trial. Before year's end, his auxiliary, Bishop Pranas Ramanauskas, was also arrested and deported to Siberia. Bishop Teofilius Matulionis of Kaišiadorys and Archbishop Mečislovas Reinys of Vilnius were deported to a Siberian labor camp. Archbishop Reinys

perished in prison at Vladimir, November 8, 1953. By 1947, Lithuania was left with a single bishop, Kazimieras Paltarokas, of Panevėžys. He died in 1958.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Rev. Casimir Pugevičius
Translator

Appearing since 1972!
Read this and pass it on!
If you can, reproduce it!

**THE CHRONICLE OF THE CATHOLIC CHURCH
IN LITHUANIA. NO. 72**

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LithuaniaDecember 8, 1986

THANK YOU!

Holy Father,

The Catholic Lithuanian nation sincerely thanks Your Holiness for the blessing bestowed on those participating in the Festival of the Blessed Virgin Mary in Šiluva, for publicizing it to the world, for your telegram on the occasion of the Festival of the Mother of Mercy at the Gates of Dawn in Vilnius and for your ceaseless concern for the Church in our country!

United in prayer at the feet of the Blessed Virgin Mary, we beseech the Lord for health and abundant divine blessing for Your Holiness on your apostolic journeys, disseminating the Spirit and the Light of Christ to all nations.

Regardless of all difficulties and actual circumstances, we desire and we hope to see a visit by Your Holiness to our homeland, celebrating the 600-year jubilee of our baptism.

All of believing Lithuania, which is determined to remain faithful to Christ and to His successor, the Pope of Rome, look forward to this grace.

To the U.S. Bishops' Conference

We heard with surprise and gratitude by overseas radio that the painful problems of the Catholic Church in Lithuania had been raised in the U.S. Bishops' Conference.

The faithful of Lithuania sincerely thank the U.S. Bishops' Conference for the attention paid to our little nation, for your Christian sensitivity toward its troubles, and the moral support to the persecuted and struggling Catholic Church in Lithuania. May Almighty God reward you!

Greetings!

To: His Excellency, Bishop Julijonas Steponavičius
From: The Priests of the Diocese of Vilkaviškis

Your Excellency,

*"God's gift was not a spirit of timidity,
but the Spirit of power, and love, and
self-control" (1 Tim. 1, 7)*

We sincerely greet you on the occasion of your honorable golden jubilee of priesthood and diamond jubilee of birth, and it is our wish that you remain its strong and unyielding "...herald, its apostle and its teacher." (2Tim. 1,11)

Signed by 83 priests

COMMEMORATING THE CENTENNIAL OF THE DEFENSE OF THE KĖSTAICIAI CHURCH

Czarist Russia understood well that as long as the Catholic Faith in Lithuania was not destroyed, and the national consciousness was not weakened among the people, uprisings and opposition to the Czarist occupation would constantly occur. To that end, it began suppressing religious orders and churches which had fostered the deep faith of the Lithuanian people and their love for their country. In the Diocese of the Lowlands (Žemaitija), forty-six monasteries and twenty-three chapels and churches were suppressed.

What to do in such circumstances was clearly indicated by Bishop Motiejus Valančius in pamphlets published in Tilže (Til-sit): "When Muscovites take away our churches, Catholics must not only ask the government not to do so, but also the people of the entire parish, male and female, must gather together quickly, bringing provisions. They must fill and surround the church and not allow the Muscovites near the House of God. In the church itself, they must keep watch by night and singing hymns from the soul, they must pray the Lord to help His holy church...

'If the Muscovites beat, hack or flog anyone, he must nevertheless put up with it. This is what the parishioners of Tytuvėnai did, and this is what the Catholics of the Province of Minsk did when their churches were being seized. For several days and nights, they slept in the church and churchyard; this is why I say that nightwatch is necessary.

"Your souls are worth suffering a little bit for their salvation. So, my children, spare neither your homes, nor your possessions nor your lives... Keep the faith, my children, keep the faith, even though they kill you all! If the Muscovites take anyone, if they beat, torment or kill you, nevertheless, let the Catholic bear it! The Lord our God will supply strength and perseverance for the one suffering for the Faith..."

The persecuted Lithuanians took Bishop Valančius' in-

structions to heart and in time of danger, they knew how to act.

Here we present the history of the defense of the Kęstaičiai church as narrated in Petras Veblaitis' book, *Government Over the Church of Kęstaičiai (Kova su caro valdžia už Kęstaičių bažnyčią)*.

The Russian government began preparations back in the spring of 1886 for closing down the church and the nursing home for priests in Kęstaičiai. Meantime, at high government levels, they were preparing the order for abolishing the mission of Kęstaičiai, attached to the parish of Alsėdžiai. The Russian Czar, Alexander III (1881-1894), signed the order for its suppression with no qualms. This method of russifying Lithuania and making it Orthodox by suppressing churches and monasteries he inherited from his father, Alexander II (1855-1881), and his Grandfather, Michael I (1825-1855).

It was clear to Alexander III as it had been clear to his predecessors that Lithuanian "troublemakers" must be "strung up".

During the summer of 1886, Ivan Kochanov, Governor General of Vilnius and Kaunas, received an announcement from Prince Gagarin, Vice Minister of Internal Affairs, that on July 10 of that year, "The Lord's Emperor has deigned to command from on high that the nursing home of Kęstaičiai be evacuated and that... the church, attached to that home, should be closed."

The position of the bishop of the Lowlanders was difficult. The Czar's order to close the church was a command from the highest authorities. The order was backed by the physical might of Russia, which the bishop lacked the weapons to resist. In such cases, the bishop had to defer to the physical force of the government. A struggle was possible only by the Church's moral authority and appropriate methods of passive resistance.

In accord with such a strategy, the bishop, having received the order to close down the church of Kęstaičiai, forwarded it for implementation to the diocesan consistory, which acted according to his directions. The consistory, after procrastinating for more than two weeks, instructed the Dean of Alsėdžiai, the pastor of Seda, Father Pranciškus Mažeika, in September to carry out the governor's order. It is possible that the consistory was in no hurry to send out the letters so that those living in the area of Kęstaičiai, upon learning that their church was to be closed down, should have time to agree on how to defend it.

The days, unsettling for those living in the area, slipped by. The people, understanding well the situation which had

developed, decided to send a delegation of five men to the Czar in Petersburg with a request not to close the church of Kęstaičiai. A petition was signed by 300 lowlanders.

September 24 was the date appointed for closing the church. Well before that day, the police had stationed armed men along all the roads to see that Father Juknevičius, director of the nursing home in Kęstaičiai, would not take the nursing home's valuables anywhere. Residents of the area, effected by news of the church's closing, came to the Kęstaičiai church in groups. Fearing lest government representatives arriving after they had left the church would not lock them up, the faithful, by turns, kept an uninterrupted vigil in the church, sang hymns and prayed.

By September 23, crowds of people had already arrived at the church in Kęstaičiai, and a full church waited through the night for the arrival of the commission. The commission arrived September 24, and found the church full of people. In order that the commission should not be able to close down the church, the women removed the church doors and hid them. Coming to the church, representatives of the government and the clergy found it wide open, without doors. The people who had gathered allowed the commission to come only as far as the church doors, and would allow them to come no further, shouting, "We won't allow you! We won't give it to you!"

In order to close the church, the Blessed Sacrament had first of all to be removed. To remove it, the Sheriff of Telšiai had ordered the pastor of Seda, Father Pranciškus Mažeika, to remove it. The pastor, carrying the order, approached the altar. The women surrounded him, asking him not to remove the Blessed Sacrament. When the priest tried to take a few steps nearer to the altar, the women clung to him and, kissing his hands, again begged him not to approach the altar and not to take the Blessed Sacrament away. Father Mažeika, affected by the women's entreaties, or perhaps simply prevented from reaching the altar, turned around and left the church.

Sheriff Popov was unable to set foot in church. As soon as he tried to enter, the people, embracing his feet, begged him in tears to use his influence with the government not to close their church. They promised to leave the church and disperse if the sheriff, after sealing the church, would not remove its effects, but leave everything just the way it was till the Czar's favor could be obtained to leave them their church. Should they not obtain this favor, they intended to commend themselves to the Will of the Most High

and to leave church without resisting. When the commission failed to close the church, Father Juknevičius was summoned and told to calm down and to convince the tumultuous crowd, otherwise he would be responsible.

The police were already accusing Father Juknevičius of inciting the people to disobey the authorities. Father Juknevičius tried to address the people, but they would not listen. Seeing with what zeal the people were prepared to defend their church, Father Juknevičius departed, shaken. The Dean of Alsėdžiai, Father Tamašauskas, tried to convince the people to give in to the government directives, explaining the responsibility which would fall on them if they continued to resist. The crowd began to shout, "Why do the police not do anything against us, but only watch when we pray?"

The people responded correctly, 'The government authorities themselves took no measures and demanded that the clergy carry out their instructions. They acted so in the desire to create the impression that the church was being closed down not so much by the government, but by the priests themselves.'

Unable to close down the church, the sheriff took over the nursing home for priests with all its assets, including the building, which had been constructed at the personal expense of Father Juknevičius, building material assembled for the construction of the farm, firewood and threshed and unthreshed grain.

After September 24, the people did not leave the church, guarding it day and night. Lowlanders flocked to Keštaičiai from every direction. In a few weeks, the numbers of those visiting the church grew so that they could no longer fit, not just in church but even in the churchyard. There were as many of them as at the Calvary of the Lowlanders during religious festivals. Some of them would remain on guard in church, others provided them with food and a third group, after visiting the church and praying, would return home. In the surrounding parishes, there was not a single farmer who did not provide something to help those guarding the church.

All the residents of the area were fired up to defend the house of God and to fight for their religion. About the Tightness of their cause, they had not the least doubt, convinced that the government, intent on destroying their church, was performing an atheistic and godless sacrilegious act and those who fought for it would merit eternal salvation. In the defense of the church, therefore, all the lowlanders were bound by complete agreement and unity, especially since it was from the Orthodox government that they suffered

persecution of the Lithuanian press and every other form of oppression.

The leader of those guarding the church was a resident of the Village of Žvirblaičiai, Domininkas Daračius, a tall man like Saul in the bible, taller and heavier-set than anyone else, about forty years of age. He knew all the people of the area well, and was well-known to them as a good, one might say a professional, matchmaker, who knew his way around, eloquent, ingenious, experienced and popular. As the leader of those guarding the church, he used to lead the prayers and hymn-singing even during the night. Everyone listened to Daračius and followed his instructions. When he ran out of time himself, he would send his assistants.

At the suggestion of Daračius, barricades were set up in church so that through the walk-through sacristy government agents and the clergy could not approach the main altar where the Blessed Sacrament was reserved. In order that the priests might not be able to remove it from church, they barricaded the sacristy with stones and across the church they placed benches on which they sat the whole time, preventing anyone from approaching the altar.

At first, food for the guardians of the church was prepared in the monastery kitchen. However the stoves, kept lit day and night, became so hot that the police, claiming to take measures against the outbreak of fire, forced them to extinguish the flames.

The cooks, however, were not daunted. They moved to the edge of the woods and there in a depression next to the yard of villager Antanas Počius and in a similar depression of neighbor Vierkietis, they set up field kitchens, hung kettles donated by the Forest Ranger Razmas, and, the fires blazing day and night, prepared stew and other dishes.

The food prepared was brought in trenchers to Počius' house, and piled on tables where the guards would come and eat free-of-charge. It was a beautiful fall so the diners, unable to fit into Počius' house, ate outside at newly constructed tables.

The Lowlanders were accustomed to bringing offerings, mostly sheep, to the priests and religious of Kęstaičiai. So now, while the church was being guarded, such donations poured in from the whole surrounding area. Everyone who wished could eat his fill. During the two months of vigil, the cooks slaughtered more than 200 sheep, not including other meat and other kinds of food.

The police became even more incensed over the field kitchens at the edge of the woods, and more than once they tried to

dump the kettles and extinguish the fire. But the women in the kitchen, brandishing firebrands, would disperse them. In this way, the police, without accomplishing anything, would be forced to retreat.

At one point a priest was riding through Kęstaičiai, and stopping in the village, went into church desiring to pray. In church, some people were reciting the rosary, some were making the Way of the Cross, still others sang hymns. The priest, wishing to adore the Blessed Sacrament, approached the altar rail. The people, seeing the priest, were confused and engulfed him. The women surrounded the priest and kissing his hands, begged him not to go near the main altar and not to remove the Blessed Sacrament: 'Spiritual father, don't go near the main altar, or they might remove the Blessed Sacrament on us. Please celebrate Mass at the side altar, where we will come to hear the Holy Sacrifice.'

The Lowlanders, under Daračius' leadership, would not allow a single stranger to enter the church. They would allow them to observe what was happening in church only from the vestibule while they sang "God is our protector and our strength." (Psalm 45)

Emissaries from Kęstaičiai to Petersburg were not allowed to see the Czar, because 300 signatures were not enough. A meeting of the people in Kęstaičiai, learning from the emissaries on their return that there were too few signatures, immediately dispatched messengers to the villages of neighboring districts to summon men to Kęstaičiai in order to sign the petition. A crowd of men assembled from the surrounding districts and several thousand of the faithful signed the petition.

Bearing the documents, the five emissaries departed once more for Petersburg, now expecting surely to get to the Czar himself. That was October 25.

On October 26, the sheriff came to Kęstaičiai again. Finding the church full of people and therefore unable to do anything, he ordered the dean to "take immediate steps to turn over all the church appurtenances from Kęstaičiai to the pastor of Alsėdžiai". The dean, carrying out the order came to Kęstaičiai November 4, and found the church as usual full of people. They refused to disperse from church until the emissaries' return from Petersburg and announced the "king's" favor of leaving them their church, for they firmly believed that the church would not be closed.

On November 11, Bishop Paliulionis received from the Governor General a letter of firm exhortation.

The bishop, seeing the necessity of defending the priests

blamed for the people's disobedience and for not removing the Blessed Sacrament, sent the Governor General a letter in which he explained that the pastor and priests had done what they could: That the closing and sealing of a church, since it was an act incompatible with the vocation of a priest, could not be imposed as a duty.

Meanwhile, the faithful of Alsėdžiai and the surrounding parishes: Telšiai, Lieplaukė, Gadunava, Seda, Plungė, etc., did everything they could to prevent the church from being closed. Besides the emissaries who were not given an audience with the Czar, they also sent two requests in writing by mail, and one other request to one General Richter, but not receiving any reply, they sent one telegram to Baron Kantekuzen and Prince Speransky. Moreover, the delegation in Petersburg visited on November 6, Prince Mikhail Oginski of Plungė, who had some influence at the Czar's court, but he could not help the delegation in anyway either. To all these great and, at the time, for our peasant people very bold, efforts, the Russian government did not deign to respond.

Finally, the government, disregarding the people's opposition, decided to have done with the church in Kęstaičiai.

First of all, the governor of Kaunas wanted to find out about the morale of the people of Kęstaičiai, and whether it would be necessary to make use of military force. So not contenting himself with local police reports, he sent in addition, Grigori Shchirovsky, Administrator for Special Affairs, to sound out the situation, at the same time authorizing him to close the church if the people could be reasoned with. That same day, Shchirovsky, the sheriff, several policemen and the dean went to Kęstaičiai to try closing the church. They found it full of people who knelt singing hymns. The government representatives demanded that the dean stop the people's hymn singing. Standing in the doorway, he tried several times to silence the worshippers, but they would not listen, and sang on. Then the sheriff and the Director of Special Affairs decided to address the people themselves. The people continued to sing. The government officials began to shout louder, but the singers, paying them no heed, drowned everything out with their hymn-singing.

When the government officials understood that all of their efforts to silence the singers and convince the people to leave church were in vain, they withdrew from the church. Shchirovsky, seeing for the first time in his life with what zeal the people guarded their church, said to the sheriff in an accusing tone without concealing his surprise, "You must consider it a great sin in your heart to

kill so many innocent people."

The sheriff responded glumly, 'It's not I who am to blame, but the priests!'

He apparently meant that the priests were to blame for the people's resistance, and the people whom they had incited would have to answer.

When the government officials returned to Telšiai, Shchirovsky sent a telegram to the governor, reporting on the situation in Kęstaičiai. The governor replied that he would soon be in Telšiai himself, and he ordered the sheriff to inform the Cossacks that three squadrons of cavalry (300 men) should prepare to leave the next day for Kęstaičiai, they should send their police and that the ecclesiastical Dean of Alsėdžiai, one priest from Telšiai and Father Juknevičius, the former moderator of the Priests' Home, should be present that day.

On November 19, squadrons of Cossacks rode out from Telšiai to Kęstaičiai; rattling along behind them were several wagons filled with axes, saws, shovels, ladders, ropes, crowbars for tearing down walls and other tools and, bringing up the rear were a crew of firefighters. The Cossacks rode quickly and the wagons trundled along behind them with a great clatter. On the way, they met a Jew driving to Telšiai with a load of milk cans. The Cossacks dumped him, together with the wagon, into a ditch. Other travellers met along the way ended up in ditches also. The Cossacks, arriving at the Village of Kęstaičiai, drew their swords and as fast as their horses could carry them, charged with great hue and cry toward the main church doors where a crowd of people were standing.

The Cossacks reached the mass of people, sheathed their swords and, seizing leather whips, rode their horses into the crowd and began thrashing the people on their backs. Under the attack, the crowd scattered far and wide, giving the Cossacks a wide passage to the church doors. Then the Cossacks dismounted, formed into two lines up to the main doors of the church, clicked their heels and stood frozen like fence pickets.

It would be wrong to say that the crowd was ready to capitulate to the Cossacks. Far from it! If the Cossacks had tried to force their way into church, the Lowlanders would have met them with rocks, but the Cossacks stood in formation, quietly. The people calmed down and continued singing hymns. Gathered in the churchyard and even beyond, on their knees, they kept singing. The Lowlanders, infuriated, were prepared to act in a not altogether

Christian manner. But at the request of the priests not to do anything to the Cossacks, they refrained.

Finally, to the accompaniment of trumpets, the governor himself arrived in a carriage drawn by four horses, accompanied by a dozen Cossacks seated on greys. The governor inspected the exterior of the church and saw the crowd of people inside. All the altars were lighted with candles, and the people were singing. The governor ordered the dean to silence the people, but the latter, paying no heed, went on singing.

The governor and the police, thinking that it would be easier to effect the crowd from the organ loft, climbed up and demanded that the dean try to silence the singers. After the dean, the Administrator for Special Affairs shouted, and the sheriff and finally, the governor himself, tried to out-shout the people. But the determined Lowlanders would not listen to any of them, drowning them out with their singing.

Going outside, the governor ordered the police and Cossacks to enter the church and to push the people out. Seeing the attempt to push them out of church, the faithful, without pausing in their singing, knelt linking arms and held on firmly to each other. The police, realizing that they would thus accomplish nothing, took different measures. A few forest wardens would seize one person at a time: brace themselves and tear him away from the others. Carrying him out, they would turn him over to the Cossacks standing by.

In church, an uproar and screaming arose. Muffled blows could be heard. The unarmed men, not wishing to surrender, struggled with forest wardens and the police. The police, in an attempt to subdue the resistance, took to whips, and immediately there were injuries. There were many who, being led from church resisted with all their might, and once escorted out, not wishing to fall into the clutches of the Cossacks, would slip from the grasp of the police and tumble back into church. All such individuals the Cossacks, working in groups, would seize; wishing to isolate them from the crowd, they would take them to the monastery building, threatening that they would not be leaving there in a hurry.

When at last they ejected the bravest from church, the Cossacks would take them under "protection", beating them with whips wherever they could: over the head, the face, the back, the shoulders. Whenever they drew the whip over the head or face, the individual would be bloodied all over. When they struck the back or shoulders, sheepskin coats were torn.

After inflicting the punishment, the Cossacks tied them

up; hauled them off with kicks to the "chimney" and locked them up under arrest. Altogether, there were 43 such individuals bound, among them some badly bloodied and wounded. The police would have bound up more, but the governor kept restraining them, shouting, 'Tie up as few as possible!'

The high altar was barricaded along the altar rail and guarded by women. Having ejected the men from church, the police and Cossacks fell upon the women, pulling them by the hair, striking them with whips and shoving them about. The women began to cry out as loudly as possible, screaming and weeping. All those left in church raised the greatest clamor, for the high altar was the greatest and most important defense position. If the Blessed Sacrament were to be removed, the struggle for the church would be lost.

The women, of course, were quickly overcome and ejected from church, the barricade overturned and the approach to the high altar was cleared.

Klara Drobaitė, a serving girl at the monastery, terribly disturbed by the struggle, ran right up to the governor and grasped his red beard. The Cossacks, seeing the governor's tragic plight, quickly ran up and cursing in Russian, tore her away from the governor and shoved her into the "chimney" with those arrested. When they tore the girl away from the governor, there were tufts of his beard in her hands.

In church, only one defender was left, the leader himself, Domininkas Daračius. Leaning over the front of the altar with all his great height, he held in his enormous grasp the tabernacle in which was the Blessed Sacrament, and shouted at the Cossacks assailing him: "I won't give it to you! I won't give it to you!"

Then one Cossack, seizing a thick candlestick from the altar, struck Daračius smartly across the hands and he released the tabernacle...

The Cossacks arrested him on the spot and kicking and pummeling him, hauled him off to the "chimney".

How strenuously the people struggled with the police and Cossacks is indicated by the fact that during the fight, the church was terribly spattered with blood. Here is what one eyewitness writes:

'It would be difficult to believe it all and to describe to everyone if I had not seen with my own eyes... how the vestibule, walls and floor of that church were so badly spattered with the people's blood that only a heavy autumn rain and winter snow, melting in the spring, could cleanse it.'

When the people were finally dispersed from the church and the Blessed Sacrament had been removed, the Cossacks extinguished all the lights and candles which had been burning for a month without interruption, and upon orders from the governor, began demolishing the church.

The Cossacks destroyed everything. They dismantled the altars, chopped up the crucifixes, demolished the organ, broke up statues and kicked them about. Very quickly, there was left in church only piles of rubble. Having destroyed the interior of the church, they tore away the roof, knocked down the walls; only the belfry was left which the cossacks were somehow unable to topple. They also destroyed the convalescent home.

Father Juknevičius was punished very severely: for inciting the people he was exiled for five years to the Province of Vologna, City of Jerensk.

All those arrested were confined in the prison of Telšiai. Rumors spread that they were to be shot. However, after a considerable time, they were released. Released together with them was Klara Drobaitė. It was said that Prince Oginski and Baron Chapski interceded for the prisoners.

How much suffering the Lowlanders experienced during that battle, they testified themselves, writing to the bishop:

"Most illustrious Bishop, we humbly thank you, first of all, for the great and holy favor you did us poor insects and common people by talking to us and being gracious to us. For two months, we did not know the difference between day and night. Most illustrious Bishop, you could take comfort in your sheep who have chosen to suffer patiently to the end. It was a sad day when the governor fell on us with his army but we did not run away. Your Excellency, the saints of old never underwent greater suffering than we..."

Today, the site of the church in Kėstaičiai is marked by a pile of stones.

THE SLAVE'S CHILD BELONGS TO THE MASTER

It was not so long ago that our nation was being physically destroyed. Tens of thousands of people were packed into cattle-cars, hauled off to the farthest corners of the Russian Empire and starved and frozen to death in the steppes of Khazakstan, the Siberian tiaga and on the shores of an icy sea. Others were suffo-

cated in prisons and countless camps of the Gulag, and finally, how many of our fellow countrymen lie murdered in their native land. Just let us recall the shooting of people and destruction of entire villages on the banks of the Nemunas, north of Merkinė, during the winter of 1944.

The occupants' rampaging in Lithuania is quite similar to the German conquerors' conduct in defeated Poland, 1939-1944. The only difference is that the deeds of the latter are held up to public view and condemned while an effort is being made to sink the crimes of the Russian executioner quietly into oblivion.

But the worst of it is that the genocide continues, only now by other means, in other ways. The evil intentions or goals have not changed, only the methods. The nation goes on being killed, this time not by deportations but with induced moral rot and the suppression of self-identity. Communist "morality" imported and foisted on the nation is insinuating itself more and more into interpersonal relations. Self-perception is more and more being poisoned by distrust, suspicion, grovelling and venality, while moral decay, careerism and corruption continue to spread. And how much distrust, irresponsibility, theft, graft and bureaucracy there is: more and more, man is preying on man.

Such is the reality of Communist ethics which only perblind fanatics can fail to see or acknowledge!

As though that were not enough, today there are designs on the future of the entire nation. They would like to take away the children, the coming generation, those who were spared abortion, those whom the parents are rearing. It appears that, *"Children are not the parents' property. They are future citizens of a socialist society."* (cit. ref. *Soviet Teachei—Tarybinės mokytojas*, August or September 20, 1986, No. 66, in the article "The Lessons of Hypocrisy".) In other words, you produce a child, rear him and worry about him, but you do not have many rights to him. He is the property of the socialist society, "nationalized", "socialized", confiscated, taken over.

According to Communist ethics, this is logical. It was not the Communists who gave the peasants their land, they had it for ages. The Communists only took away land. It was not the Communists who erected and adorned churches, they only seized them. It was not the Communists who established various organizations and societies, published newspapers, books and journals in Lithuania, they only destroyed, forbade and confiscated everything. What is left? To take away children from parents. They are mem-

bers of the socialist society, they are the property of the Communist state! Just as of old, in the days of slavery, the child of a slave family was the property not of the parents but of the slave owner.

Today, the owner of the Soviet citizen is the state, the Communist Party, more accurately, its ruling summit. So the children of the Soviet citizen are also their property, and the parents must do with their children whatever this owner directs. And this is what he directs: 'In the Lithuanian SSR Public Education Law, besides the basic principles of public education, there is written in also the secularity of education, without the influence of religion: Under this law, parents and those who represent them, are among other things, the spirit of high Communist ethics.'

The children are "morally" confiscated. They must be formed in accordance with these "ethics". They must become its exponents. They must become its proclaimers, practitioners and defenders. As such, they must be reared from infancy. This is similar to the way in which the Turks treated the children of conquered Christian nations when they would take them from the parents and rear them as fanatical Muslims, destined to war against their fellow countrymen. Now an attempt is being made to do something like that with our children, with the future of our nation, with our younger generation.

So where are all those Constitutional "guarantees", all that chatter about freedom of conscience? Where are all the declarations of human rights and the international agreements which Soviet rulers have signed so solemnly? And how to reconcile the statement "Under this law, parents and those who represent them, are among other things, obliged to rear children in the spirit of high Communist "ethics", with the words of Mrs. D. Gančierienė, Chairwoman of the Control Commission for Conformance to the Laws for Religious Cults of the Molėtai *Rayon*, attached to the Soviet Executive Committee of Lithuania, in the same article, 'In accord with the freedom of conscience guaranteed by the Constitution of the USSR, only the parents have the right at home to teach their own children prayers and catechism, and to prepare them for confession and First Communion'? Which statement in this article can one believe? They contradict one another! What the atheists call "religious freedom" is some terrible nonsense.

We reproduce here the article by Commissioner for Religious Affairs, Petras Anilionis:

When the School is Separated from the Church

The Commissions connected with city and *rayon* Executive Committees to monitor conformity with the laws of cults discover every year cases in which some Catholic priests or nunny women, by organizing religious education activities for minors, grossly violate Soviet law. For example, this year, the pastor of the religious association of Udrija, in the *Rayon* of Alytus, Vytautas Insoda, taught children religion in church behind closed doors. When members of the Commission demanded that he let them into the house of prayer, the pastor acted rudely, pushing his visitors out the door and insulting them.

In the parish church of Molėtai, behind locked doors, the associate pastor of that religious association, Father Juozas Kaminskas, and his assistant, Miss Stasė Rokaitė, taught more than seventy children collected even from neighboring *rayons*. The activities took place with the pastor of that church—and moreover Dean, Ignas Melašius—participating. Such is the example the pastor sets for a young priest!

Under the influence of the dissatisfaction expressed by these clergymen, the mothers of some of the children in church using unseemly language, began insulting Commission members. There were similar incidents in some other churches in the republic.

In their anger, these ministers of cult apparently forgot that, for insulting officials in the course of carrying out their duties, the Criminal Code of the Lithuanian SSR provides a penalty. Moreover, the organizers of systematic religious education activities, except for parents, are liable to punishment also under paragraph 143 of the LSSR Criminal Code.

Also they violated the requirements of Par. 50 of our basic law, the Constitution of the Lithuanian SSR, where it is stated, "The Church in the Lithuanian SSR is separated from the state, and the school from the Church."

In other words, the separation of the school from the Church must be understood as an injunction against the Church's interference in various ways in the education of children and youth, and the teaching of religious matters to children. Clergy, or ministers of cult, are not allowed to assume any kind of responsibilities in educational organs.

In Point 18 of the *Regulations for Religious Associations*, it is pointed out that the teaching of religion can be allowed only in

spiritual schools opened in accordance with established procedure. Hence, young men attaining adulthood have the right according to their beliefs and making use of the freedom of conscience granted them by the Constitution, to enroll in spiritual schools. Presently in the Soviet Union, eighteen spiritual schools of various denominations are operating: six Orthodox academies and seminaries, two Catholic seminaries, a Muslim academy, a Judaic yeshiva, an Armenian church academy, a seminary of the Georgian Orthodox church, other spiritual schools and various courses for clergy.

In the Theological Seminary of Kaunas, presently there are over 130 seminarians studying. Every year, up to thirty young men are accepted for this spiritual school upon recommendation of the local pastor.

However, based on the Soviet Constitution, the Church is not allowed to interfere in the functions of public educational organs. Religious organizations are forbidden to organize work with children or minors, from organizing special meetings of children, youth, women or others, as well as organizing meetings or groups dealing with the bible, literature and handicrafts, as well as organizing trips, children's playgrounds, opening libraries or reading rooms. For organizing such meetings, circles or groups not having any connection with the carrying out of worship, offenders are liable to administrative penalties — punished by fine.

In Soviet laws for cults, it is also stated that teaching children and minors religious things is allowed only privately, that is, in the family, and only the parents are allowed to teach this in keeping with their beliefs, and only to their own children.

However, attempts are still frequently made to argue about these questions. Some clergy of the Catholic Church explain that parents allegedly have a weak grasp of religious truths, do not moreover know their prayers, and do not remember much of the Church's teaching. Hence, in their opinion, it is necessary for ministers of cult to teach children religious things. However, listening to such "philosophy", the question arises whether parents who know nothing about religion and who, moreover, do not know their prayers, can be called believers, and where are their so-called religious convictions? Will such parents be able to answer for the results of their children's up-bringing when the children are taught by outsiders: clergy or nunny women?

And finally, will such parents be able to carry out and live according to Par. 64 of the Constitution, in which it is said that the citizens of Soviet Lithuania must be concerned about the education

of their children, prepare them for work useful to society, and to rear them as honorable members of the Socialist society.

Thus, the basic law of our country, the Constitution, does not only confer upon the parents certain rights, but also imposes great obligations, especially rearing the young generation.

There are parents who, inspired by the Catholic Church, claim that we have no religious textbooks — catechisms; that they are old and worn and hence parents have nothing from which to teach their children religious matters. This is not so! The Liturgical Commission formed by the bishops of the Catholic Church has prepared a new, 127-page catechism, entitled *The Light of Our Faith*, and the *Vaizdas* Press published 60,000 copies of this publication in Vilnius in 1980. The catechism cost the Church only 22 kopeks per booklet.

After they had obtained the little religious textbook, new accusations started up that the edition of the little catechism was too small, that it is difficult for children to understand, etc. Quantities of the catechism published not only suffice to provide for all children preparing for First Confession and for teenagers being prepared for Confirmation, yet no small surplus remains. Besides, a catechism may be used for more than one year. In school, for instance, people study from the same textbooks for several years. Next year, 50,000 copies of a catechism will be published. Is that little in comparison with editions of other books published?

Sometimes, in organizing the group teaching of religion to children, an attempt is made to justify it on the basis of "parents' rights". Pney say 'It's my child, and I'll raise him as I wish.' I would say that is an incorrect and very narrow understanding of parents' rights. Children are not the property of the parents. They are the future citizens of socialist society, and as such, they must be raised by the combined efforts of the school, the family and society.

In the Lithuanian SSR Education Law, among the basic principles of public education is written the secularism of teaching, without the influence of religion. By this law, parents and persons representing them are, among other things, obliged to educate children in the spirit of high Communist ethics. This every father and mother must realize deeply. In other words, religious training, even though carried on in the family, must not become a tool of coercion.

The rights and duties of our country's parents and guardians are regulated by certain norms supported by law. For example, in Par. 65 of the Soviet Lithuanian *Code for Marriage and the*

Family, we find indicated: 'Parents are obliged to rear their children, to concern themselves with their physical development and education, prepare them for work useful to society, and to rear them as respectable members of the socialist society.'

In other words, Soviet law has not granted parents any rights. It is in this way that our laws differ from the laws of bourgeois states, where the child is under the unlimited authority of the parents. However, even those who speak quite reverentially about parents' rights sometimes forget that children also have rights.

Right after the October Revolution, N. Krupskaya spoke very accurately about the rights of parents and children. She wrote, "The school is separated from the Church not for reasons of logic, but in the name of children's rights. Among us, much is said about parental rights, but very little about children's rights. If it is universally accepted that the law must defend the helpless child from too much exploitation, not only from the factory owner but by the parents, then very little is said about the necessity of defending his soul from everything which works to the detriment of that soul."

Thus the Soviet state is interested in seeing that every little citizen, even in the family, be educated in accord with society's interests. Not by accident does it say in the foundations of public education law, "The law obliges parents to conform education in the family with education by the schools, preschool and postschool agencies and with the work of social organizations. This is why Soviet law considers any form of organized group religious training as Church interference in the affairs of the state as a violation of the law.

Moreover, Par. 19 of the Soviet Lithuanian *Code for Marriage and the Family*, delineating the rights of spouses states, "The spouses in a family have equal rights. The spouses decide together on the education of children and other questions of family life."

Hence, no minister of cult has any right without the consent of both parents to baptize their children, carry out First Confession or to confirm them. For, in the event of a dispute, the spouses or one of them can apply to the appropriate government organs and request that the guilty persons, including ministers of cult, who have violated Soviet law, be answerable.

So Soviet law, proclaiming and guaranteeing freedom of conscience, at the same time determines certain limits for the activity of religious organizations to which they must adhere. And those ministers of cult who transgress these limits as did, for instance, the priest mentioned in the beginning of the article, must be

held accountable.

Petras Anilionis
Lithuanian SSR
Commissioner of the Council for
Religious Affairs attached to
the Council of Ministers of the USSR.
(*Peasants' Newspaper*), October 16, 1986

SCHOOL FOR HYPOCRISY

Response to the Distinguished Teacher Bernardas Šaknys

Parents have a prior right to choose the kind of education that shall be given to their children.
Universal Declaration of Human Rights -Art. 26 (3)

On August 27, 1986, I was painfully surprised by your article in *Tiesa (Truth)*, "The Compromised Conscience and Hypocrisy". It surprised me because your frequent statements in the press until now created the image of a thinking author concerned with abolishing evil. Your article of August 27 dimmed this image considerably.

In the article, you agonize together with an anonymous father whose son a woman prepared for First Communion at the request of relatives. You state that the child, a convinced Pioneer, betrayed his ideals, allowing himself to be bribed with a holiday gift — a Japanese tape recorder.

You are scandalized at the behavior of Miss Elena Ver-sekytė, laboratory technician at the Scientific Experimental Institute for Tuberculosis, who took some children to the church in Nedingė. You condemn non-believing parents who are so doubtful about the ideological formation of their offspring, and you once more allow the anonymous father to express himself: "It is the spiritual damaging of children, the development of hypocrites. What are they (the catechizers) butting in for? Why are they bothering the innocent soul of a child, disturbing the tranquility of childhood? After all, it is contrary to our laws which forbid the collective teaching of religion to children."

In order more authentically to express my disagreement with the basic theses of your accusation, I will speak about what I lived through, endured and experienced. Mind you, this is not self-

aggrandizement, nor an attempt to appear better than non-believers. It is a desire to explain to you that we believers are also people no less than you atheists and that we have our own convictions which are the most important part of personality. We have the right to live according to our convictions, to express them in all those ways in which you do (if we are equal before the law).

We have the right to share our convictions with others, to all those who have decided that they are worth more, better founded or nobler than those of the atheists. It is in view of this that I wish to share with you some thoughts which have bothered me for a long time.

I grew up in a believing family; both my parents were white-collar workers. Among the children of our neighborhood, I was the only one with a religious background. One scene has stuck with me since childhood: A little group of teenage tenants of the building were standing around a pile of stones left by the builders. Someone suggested that we kill any snakes lurking under the stones — after all, they are so vile... So the crushing of the helpless creatures began. But I remembered the simple catechism lessons about Jesus of Nazareth, and perhaps for the first time, I stood up one against many, protesting against the cruelty.

And the reason was not with "fear of hell" or "reward of heaven" so much to the liking of your propaganda, but simply revulsion against sadism, the intuitive feeling that this was incompatible with the ethical ideal of Jesus already ingrained in my soul. Why did the other children, even those who had grown up in the families of active atheists, not have this? We grew, and the problems and incidents became more complex.

In our class was a girl of moderate intellectual abilities from a neglected home who was therefore constantly being picked on. Once, a gang of high schoolers, seizing her, took her to a nearby lake to give her a ducking. I was unable to stop them because the odds were too great, but the thought struck me: "Why they're taking her off just like Christ, whose passion we honor during Lent in the Way of the Cross..."

In everyone's eyes, she was the Ugly Duckling. All around her were her enemies... The "ducking" ended when after pushing the girl into the cold water of the after-thaw (at the edge it was shallow), her school-mates taunted her and dispersed.

Neither the Pioneers' badges nor those of the Communist Youth League kept them from participating in the exercise. And the only one left to utter a kind, encouraging word to the weeping girl

was a believing, non-member of the Communist Youth League, who was not afraid of public opinion or ridicule for befriending the out-cast.

I knew a believing teacher, who although he playfully and easily used to demolish atheistic arguments in school in my hearing, himself attended church elsewhere. He knew that if he expressed religious inclinations publicly, he would immediately be out of work (like the teachers Mrs. Kaušienė, Mrs. Brilienė, Grigas and others). I do not agree with such concealment. He should have gone to the local church, even at the cost of losing his job. Openly. Straightforwardly. Only living like that produces inexhaustible peace of conscience and the appreciation of one's own human value.

However, the compromise made by this teacher, like that made by a great part of Lithuanian educators, does not in the least explain the juridical side of the matter: How can the principal of freedom of conscience be squared with preventing believers from working in education. How does it differ from the *Berufs-verboten* — prevention from working in one's profession, in connection with "unsuitable" views?

In your column, you are irritated by the lesson of hypocrisy. The Pioneer, taught prayers, kneeling in church!

But I will be annoyed by the opposite phenomenon. When I entered First Form, no one asked (*just* as they do not ask groups of children every year), whether I was better acquainted with the ideas of Christ or of Lenin. No one even introduced me to the latter — they pinned a star on me and I was a Little Octobrist. I am grateful to my parents who refused to allow them so to ridicule their believing son.

Enrollment in the Pioneers' organization was similar, and kerchiefs were tied on many religious children. Here, I myself was mature enough to protest, saying, "I cannot be a Pioneer because I am a believer. It is a free-will organization, so why are you forcing me to join?"

The teachers as instillers of conscientiousness, it seems, should have been glad: here is a child who does not wish to be a hypocrite. But this did not happen. The *rayon* Pioneer leader was annoyed and proceeded to berate my teacher. Those who "changed their stripes" were left in peace. I saw that the school was little concerned with convincing us of the truth of atheism, with "re-forming" our world-view — the important thing was that the class be 100% Pioneers and Communist Youth; how that was accomplished

would not appear in the reports.

For this methodology so demoralizing to youth, I felt and continue to feel revulsion. My acceptance into the Communist Youth organization was accompanied by still one more argument from the teachers: an attempt was made to convince graduates that without a Communist Youth membership card, there was little hope of obtaining a students' card. However, this did not convince me of the truth of either Marxism or atheism, and I did not become a member of the Communist Youth. The prognoses of my teachers were confirmed: I did not last long in advanced studies. Even though I surpassed many of the Communist Youth in proficiency, I was expelled after the KGB became especially interested in my views and the manner of their expression.

Please do not misunderstand. I am not complaining for the wrong done me; on the contrary, I am fortunate for having been able to suffer it for my faith (let us compare the concern expressed in your article over unbelieving high school students trading-in conscience and going to church for various prizes.)

The thought occurs: Is it worth inculcating convictions which the child will exchange for jeans, a transistor, candy or money? And if an adult with such convictions is offered a luxurious villa, a *Zhiguli* or a junket abroad, will he again lightly betray his country and his principles?

I come to the conclusion that if it is possible to bribe a conscience, that means *there is none*, it has not been formed. Pioneer and Communist Youth arguments are too weak to form a strong and bribe-proof conscience. However, my interior disposition, my joy at giving up something for Christ does not, once again, explain or justify the juridical side of crass behavior of a discriminatory nature. Is it not clear that by such exclusivity and privileges, not only are the idealism and principles of our young people not encouraged, but on the contrary, ugly moral defects — careerism and conformism — are cultivated?

You have read here a few fragments of the biography of a believing individual. But how many more such stories — and more painful ones — could many believers in Lithuania and the entire Communist empire tell? At school, the university, in military service and in my work, I met hundreds of contemporaries. I noticed a strange law in action: If a young man does not drink excessively, behave promiscuously, if he is creative, you will find that he is a believer (or friendly with believers); if a young woman is modest, decent and thoughtful, you will find she goes to church; if in a young

family there is harmony, mutual respect and interests are not limited to the collective garden, you will find that their apartment is decorated with artistic pictures of Christ and Mary (not "fly-specked" as your propaganda keeps stereotyping it). Problems connected with world-view are of concern mostly to people of this circle.

An absolute majority of my non-believing acquaintances live "for the moment", interested neither in Marxism nor idealism. Their needs revolve around career, personal ambition and pleasure. In the army, one most often correctly identified a believer by the fact that he did not use Russian profanity and did not take advantage of younger soldiers. My religious contemporaries as well as the priests of my acquaintance were honest, educated people, seeking the good.

Father Sigitas Tamkevičius and Father Alfonsas Svarinskas, sentenced to concentration camp in Siberia and exile, were ahead of Gorbachev: in 1980-81, they were urging Catholics to rescue the nation from the tragedy of alcoholism. Most of us, then, just as in the days of Valančius, kissed the cross and swore ourselves to sobriety and abstinence. The priest himself is a living example of the ideal he proclaims. He is now in prison, while of those who in Brezhnev's day called the warning against the flood of wine "exaggeration", it seems no one has suffered.

Father Juozas Zdebskis, who died in an automobile accident February 5, in strange circumstances, used to propagate the idea that the highest human ideal is to be love in service. From his lips was constantly heard, "Whatsoever —good or bad— you do unto *anyone*, you do unto Christ."

And the priest demonstrated this to hosts of people in need of help, by his heroic life. He used to go as far afield as the Siberian tundra and the Caucasian Mountains, visiting soldiers, prisoners, exiles and the sick. He used to find the humble abode of the invalid abandoned by everyone.

We have looked at one or two manifestations of goodness in the lives of believers. What inspired, aroused and suggested all of them? Was it not the radiating ideal of the person of Christ? Who will count such instances in the lives of all those who love Christ? It is enough to study the work of the missions of Mother Theresa and Albert Schweitzer for the objective investigator to become convinced what a potential for humanism is contained in the Christian message. Can one therefore consider true the assertion of the book *Adolescence*, that "The involvement of children in religious ceremonies ...does untold harm to the development of the

adolescent's consciousness and clutters his mind with unnecessary ideas."

There is no "damaging of the consciousness" if those touched by it work conscientiously, are not drunkards and do not use profanity. And to call the idea of the Absolute Good — God — unnecessary, is worse than obscurantism for it is this idea which is probably the most indigenous and the most desired by human nature. See, for instance, the idealizing of two people who love one another, and the personifications of Justice and Honor, found in contemporary Lithuanian literature where the protagonists virtually shout their belief in God and find in Him the strength to defend their ideals (e.g., Beatrice in the drama of J. Grušas.)

Your article suggests that "the efforts of the cosmos, of the human intellect, to pry into the mysteries of the Universal in time", belief in God and in Christ, have been universally rejected and are not worth talking about, that it is only a few women teaching children "completely contradictory ideas about the origin of mankind and the order of the universe". You call the views of believers "the snares of religion", with which "science has been contending for centuries".

Allow me to ask, "What science?" Is it the science of Newton? Newton doffs his hat when pronouncing the word "God". The science of Pavlov? Pavlov used to bow and cross himself passing a house of worship. The science of Galvani? Galvani was a member of the Third Order: Such people you (in print, no less) ridicule as church mice. Well then, perhaps you're talking about your own private science which you have not yet originated. Every person of goodwill knows that there has never been a universal condemnation of religion — neither in the area of science nor of ethics. Anyone looking at life with an open mind sees that the Gospel of Christ provides the groundwork for a worldview for millions of people even today, and is a force inspiring creativity with good. Doestoyevsky long ago remarked correctly, 'You deny God and Christ, but you do not realize how dirty and sinful everything would become without Christ... By doing away with Christ, you banish from the world the incomparable ideal of beauty and good.'

Let us not forget that the first human being alighting on the surface of the moon left there a tablet containing sacred scripture; that the majority of contemporary scientific leaders were deeply religious people. Even today, religious — specifically Christian ideas — inspire humanistic social movements, musical, literary and artistic creations which win international recognition. On what

basis, then, do you proclaim the religion of Jesus to be something from the stone ages, outmoded, and having no right to exist in the consciousness of people, and especially of children? You speak of teaching groups of children religion as a transgression against the Soviet law of freedom of conscience. As a matter of fact, in their time, Fathers Juozas Zdebskis, Prosperas Bubnys and Antanas Šeškevičius were sentenced just for transgression of just such a law of "freedom". (How very similar cases recall Czarist Russian repressive measures against home-grown teachers during the press ban in Lithuania!)

However, the word "law" doesn't have the same magical connotation to 20th Century people as the word taboo had for the Africans. We know that the Nazis also acted in accordance with "the law", and even tried in this way to justify themselves during the Nuremberg trials. This, however, did not save the criminals from their just punishment. It is the duty of a citizen to see whether a law does not contradict itself, whether it is humane, and not to rush blindly to obey it. All kinds of regulations limiting handing on of religious beliefs to children are not laws, but an embarrassment! And it cannot be said that man is free if he cannot freely express his beliefs, publicly proclaim his positions, defend his tenets via press, radio and television as you, the unbelievers do, today.

Namely, because of law forbidding us Catholics to do the same in the country in which, according to Gorbachev, we must each be a steward, I feel constrained and discriminated against because there is no legal publication in which I could spell out my Catholic outlook on events taking place in society; there is no bookstore where I could obtain religious or philosophical literature, poetry or Christian literary works, for example, Henrick Sinkievicz's *Quo Vadis*, honored with a Nobel Prize; there is no cinema where I could see a film interpreting the problems of life, morality and beauty from the Catholic viewpoint; there is no kindergarten, there is no school where the children of believers are not constantly reared in a tendentious manner (often being scolded, ridiculed and seduced with privileges) against their religious beliefs.

Did we faithful ourselves, constituting a significant segment of the population, choose this situation? Do believing youth, the clergy and intellectuals lack talent to create artistic treasures, educational, cultural and charitable organizations as is done, let us say, in socialist Poland or Hungary? If this does not happen in our country, it means that the masses of believers are forced to repress this in themselves and are not allowed to express themselves. Who

is doing the repressing? And by what right? It is an extremely evil, inhumane act. How are we believers worse than the atheists? In what sense are we "free and equal"? Allow public discussion on television or radio, and let the public itself evaluate and judge where the truth lies.

You fail to do so and the reasons can be only two: Either you consider your own people so immature, so senseless, as not to distinguish, not believe your "truth" and accept our "lie". There are serious reasons for believing that is what would happen. Perhaps it is for this reason that neither in the press nor on the *Argumentai* program discussion between believers and atheists has not taken place to date. You are outspoken and right only in monologue! But that is the Tightness of a dictatorship.

Even though I consider the Marxist world-view to be mistaken in its premises, ever since student days, I liked one of its tenets, constantly turning against itself: "The criterion of truth is the practice of life."

When unbelievers yelled at me threateningly, "Listen and obey!", the faithful said, "Think: Is it good or is it evil?" When unbelievers ridiculed and cursed me, believers sympathized, supported and prayed that I might persevere.

When unbelievers whom I met were people, for the most part, tossed about by hatred, sexual attraction and untrammelled ambition, my believing acquaintances shone with crystal clarity by their selflessness, their fidelity to truth (even to such sacrifices as that of Father Sigitas Tamkevičius, Father Alfonsas Svarinskas, Father Jonas-Kastytis Matulionis and Father Juozas Zdebskis).

In this way, I use the experience of life as a criterion for truth. Therefore, I am a Catholic. Therefore, I defend my right to convey my beliefs to others, a right which you want by your article to deny me.

Hence, I consider the real school for hypocrisy to be that educational system for which you work. I went through it without my soul being twisted out of shape, because in my childhood I met conscientious priests and dedicated teachers of the people who, heedless of draconian laws and of the threat of imprisonment, taught me the catechism well!

Hail to them, the defenders of spiritual freedom for the individual and for mankind!



Julius Sasnauskas in exile.

WE THANK THEM FOR THEIR SACRIFICE!

In the spring of 1986, after completing his sentence in the isolation prison of the Vilnius KGB and exile in Parabel, Julius Sasnauskas returned to freedom. After confinement lasting 6.5 years, Sasnauskas returned to Lithuania unbroken, and is presently living and working in Vilnius.

On November 3, after finishing a four-year sentence in the strict regime women's camp of Mordovia, Jadvyga Bieliauskienė returned. On account of bad health and a request for clemency which her son Žilvinas Bieliauskas wrote, the three-year exile handed down to her by the court was abrogated. Upon her return, Mrs. Bieliauskienė settled in Vilnius.

On November 12, Romas Žemaitis was released from the Chashkan Camp in the Region of Orenburg, after finishing a two-year sentence. He carried out his sentence among criminal convicts in especially difficult circumstances and at a very young age, being 18-20 at the time.

The faithful met with great joy and thanksgiving the prisoners of conscience returned from Soviet camps to their

homeland.

The sacrifices of Jadvyga Bieliauskienė, Julius Sasnauskas and Romas Žemaitis, placed on the altar of God and country, are proof that even in the nightmare of prison, it is possible not to break in spirit, not to sell one's soul, that the spirit can and must not bend to violence; it is a guarantee that the Church and the nation are unconquerable as long as they have sons and daughters determined to sacrifice.

PRIESTS ASSAULTED AGAIN...

On the night of October 17, 1986, the pastor of Pušalotas, Father Albinas Pipiras (61 years old) was assaulted and seriously injured.

Somewhat earlier, Father Pipiras was harassed over the phone by unknown criminals. In August, during the day, someone broke a window and three men and three women broke into the rectory of the parish of Pušalotas in broad daylight, one of them had a revolver with him and only after they noticed many people in the next room did the burglars flee. The incident was reported to the militia of the Pasvalis *Rayon* however... they did not react seriously.

About a week before the attack of October 17, the dog guarding the rectory was poisoned.

On the night of October 17, four persons slept in the rectory: The pastor, Albinas Pipiras, a ten-year old relative — the pastor's godson, a sick eighty-year-old old lady — the pastor's aunt and the sacristan, Rimutis Kudarauskas. The assailant, tearing out the window from the street side, broke into the room in which the priest's young relative was sleeping.

After ordering the boy to cover his head and lie still, he broke into the next room where Kudarauskas was sleeping. Kudarauskas was beaten up and knocked unconscious with a blow to the head; a pool of blood was found in the room.

Father Pipiras, hearing the commotion in the neighboring rooms, turned on the light and saw before him a masked man holding in one hand a knife and in the other, a cleaver. Father Pipiras tore the mask from the intruder. His assailant struck and wounded the priest several times with blows to the head. Barely alive and bleeding profusely, his skull fractured and his right arm sprained, Father Pipiras was cast into the basement. For some time, after

knocking the recovering Kudarauskas unconscious again with a blow to the head, the assailant took over the rectory. Finally finding 1,500 rubles and taking several tape recorders, he washed the bloodied Kudarauskas himself, bound his wound with a towel and ordered him to drive him to Klaipėda in the pastor's automobile while in his hands he held the knife and axe with which he constantly threatened the driver.

From Klaipėda, he ordered him to drive to Kaunas. After consuming too much alcohol along the way, the murderer fell asleep. With 2 kilometers left to Šilalė, he ran out of gas. Kudarauskas hailed a passing automobile and asked to be driven to the nearest militia station. Arriving, the militia handcuffed the drunken culprit. It was discovered that he was a Georgian, Aleksandr Galasvil, a product of the militia academy.

On the morning of October 17, when their pastor, Father Pipiras, failed to show up for Mass, the faithful came to the rectory looking for him. They found the seriously injured priest who had spent four hours in the basement. At the Panevėžys Hospital, he required four hours of cranial surgery. After the operation, Father Pipiras did not regain consciousness for several days. Once he did so, Father Pipiras' health began to improve.

The circumstances of the break-in are being investigated...

During the evening of October 16, residents of Pušalotas noticed strangers walking around outside the rectory. Some questions are raised by the fact that on the morning of October 17, militia personnel and the prosecutor of the *Rayon* of Pasvalis looked over the rectory by themselves and only when people began insisting were public witnesses drafted. A relative of the pastor, a minor, states that on the night when Galasvil broke into his room, through the window, he saw three men with cigarettes running away. The old lady claims that a few minutes after the assailant had left the rectory, an automobile which had been parked not far from the rectory that night drove away. Father Pipiras had also heard people talking outside his window.

On October 23, the Pasvalis *Rayon* newspaper, *Darbas (Work)*, briefly reported the aforesaid incidents. In the article, Prosecutor S. Bietkis writes:

'For self-serving motives, Albinas Pipiras, a resident of the City of Pušalotas, was assaulted in his home the night of October 16 into the 17. Pipiras was seriously injured and Rimutis Kudarauskas was slightly injured. With the assistance of the public, the as-

sailant was apprehended that same day. It was determined that the assault was carried out by Aleksandr Galasvil, a twenty-nine-year-old citizen of Georgian nationality, residing in the Kaliningrad Region, not employed anywhere. According to available information, he broke into Pipiras' home alone."

SEARCHES AND INTERROGATIONS

Katinas - Vilnius

In connection with the raids of May 22, 1986 (searches were carried out at the homes of Kaunas residents A. Patackas, Antanas Patackas, engineer Paulius Martinaitis, art critic Petras Kimbris, engineer Edvardas Šugžda, photographer Gytis Ramoška, et. al., see *Chronicle of the Catholic Church in Lithuania*, No. 71), up till October 21, about sixty individuals were questioned by the Security Police. Among them were: Kaunas residents philologist Vytautas Ališauskas, mathematician Algis Saudagas, Aušra Saudagaitė, architect Rimantas Zimkus, sculptor Vladas Rukša, Adelė Urbonaitė, D. Kurklinskienė, Ramūnas Kurklinskas, engineer Adelė Misiūtė, instructor at the agricultural academy Vladas Kudirka, Arūnas Rekašius, engineer Vytautas Volskis, agricultural academy instructor Prutenas Janulis, student Jūratė Banevičiūtė, ex-political prisoner Liudas Simutis, pensioner Birutė Federavičienė, former instructor at the agricultural academy Juozas Algirdas Lazauskas, restorer Antanas Jucevičius, laborer Kostas Lukėnas, architect Vytautas Petrašonis, the former political prisoner Petras Plumpa, architect Henrikas Sambora, mathematician Rolandas Razulevičius, Nijolė Patackienė (wife of Algirdas Patackas), Mrs. M. Dambrauskienė (wife of political prisoner Liudas Dambrauskas; the chekists all suggested that Mrs. Dambrauskienė submit a request for clemency in writing if she did not want her husband to die in prison), engineer Viktoras Krūminis, philosopher Albinas Plėšnys, Vilnius residents philologist Rimantas Matulis, physician Gaudenta Juozapaitytė, engineer Juozas Prapiestis; Dr. Ramūnė Butkevičiūtė working in the *Rayon* of Zarasai, a resident of Garliava, et. al.

All under investigation were asked about their ties with Algirdas Patackas, Algis Saudagas and Petras Kimbris. Investigators tried to find witnesses who would confirm the "anti-Soviet activity" of those investigated and of individuals who had been searched, especially Antanas and Algirdas Patackas. Antanas Patackas was accused of being involved with the book, *Father Ambraziejus*

Jakavonis, 1886-1986, and the authorship of a publication concerning the Lithuanians of Byelorussia. In their investigations, the chekists affirmed that the ties of those under investigation with religion were of no interest to them, but they would constantly throw up various questions regarding worldview or directly connected with religion.

Šiluva

On September 8, 1986, at about 4:00 PM, Alfonsas Bumbulis, who had collected signatures in the church of Šiluva for the return of the church of Klaipėda was detained in the bus station of Siluva by KGB and militia. Militiamen drove Bumbulis to the Militia Department of Šiluva after taking away from him the texts with their signatures. From Šiluva, Bumbulis was driven to Raseiniai where *Rayon* Judge Šumauskas read the bill of particulars alleging that Bumbulis, had vilified militiamen and failed to carry out their orders. Bumbulis tried to deny the false accusations, saying that about thirty people had witnessed the incident at the Šiluva bus stop, and they could testify that there had been nothing of the sort, and that the aforesaid accusations had been tendentiously fabricated. As usual in such cases, Judge Šumauskas was not concerned with the truth, declared "there are enough witnesses" and sentenced Bumbulis to seven days in jail. Bumbulis remained in the Raseiniai jail until September 15.

The chekists and militia acted rudely with collectors of signatures, destroying the texts of their petitions and signatures concerning the return of the church of Klaipėda in Seda, Kartena and other places.

OUR PRISONERS

Lately, life has become much more difficult for prisoners as have their ties with their loved ones. It is three years now since Father Alfonsas Svarinskas has been granted a visit with his people. According to laws currently in effect, he is due one long (2-3 days) and two short (2 hours) visits. Letters from Father Svarinskas have not come since June. His family inquired of the camp administration why they do not receive letters from the prisoner. Camp administrators, as if wishing to ridicule, replied "Ask the prisoner himself why he does not write." Father Svarinskas' last letter to reach Lithuania was written June 25, received August 28 (1986).

From Father Sigitas Tamkevičius' letters:

'Today, my thoughts fly to the not too distant past. Three years have gone by since that day when on May 5, having offered the unbloody Sacrifice of the Lord, I left home... A long journey awaited me, on which God alone can accompany one. It is comforting to think that many join me in prayer. At all times, I feel at my side Him who called Himself the Way, the Truth and the Life. And for one who possesses the Truth, knows the Way and is on the way not to death, but to Life, the sky should be clear at all times. I am convinced that the road to life with God over the Urals is neither longer nor worse than other roads...

The spirit of May is with me even here. How precious were May evenings throughout twenty years of pastoral work. In spirit, I visit all those places where I worked, I visit the young and the old and wish for them all that their love for Mary, the Mother of God, be very lively in their hearts. I pray for all my former parishioners, that God would give increase to that which I once sowed imperfectly. I would like to bring many to Christ. I would like to share with everyone the joy, the spiritual treasure, to which I generously helped myself at the feet of our Heavenly Mother. How good it is today to recall those evenings when hundreds of voices like one single family would sing *Sveika Marija, Motina Dievo (Hail Mary, Mother of God)* ...

Once again, thank you for everything. How good it is to know that in our small nation, there are so many big hearts. God grant that this most Christian mark — doing good to one's neighbor, should be alive in the heart of every fellow countryman.

May, 1986

P.S. According to regulations, when a prisoner has carried out half his sentence, his case is reviewed. Ordinarily, if a prisoner has not transgressed against prison or camp regimen, his sentence is shortened or commuted, but that is applied only to criminal offenders. For political prisoners or those sentenced on account of their religion, the prison administration and KGB use this "resentencing" as another attempt to break a person's will, his personal convictions and to force him, after renouncing his views, to submit an appeal for clemency in writing. Such an attempt which people call "brain-washing" was carried out with Father Sigitas Tamkevičius. July 29-

30, he was delivered from Perm to the KGB office in Vilnius. Here he was held until August 29. According to Father Tamkevičius, the chekists treated him with courtesy and respect.

In an attempt to arouse a greater longing for liberty, Father Sigitas Tamkevičius was shown three videotapes of church life in Lithuania, one of which was a recording of the ceremonies in connection with the solemn inauguration of His Excellency, Bishop Juozas Preikšas, in the Cathedral of Kaunas. On August 19, 20 and 21, Father Tamkevičius was allowed two hours each to visit with his brothers and with his former housekeeper, Miss Ona Dranginytė.

During the visits with his people, Father Tamkevičius stated that he had refused to write a petition for clemency because it was obvious that he would go free only in the event that for some political reason or other, they "throw me out of the gates of KGB headquarters".

On August 29, Father Tamkevičius was sent by prisoner transport from Vilnius back to Perm, and after a journey which lasted two weeks, was brought to his earlier place of imprisonment; he was put to work just as earlier, in the kitchen.

Father Jonas-Kaštytis Matulionis writes:

I thank you for the letters — those which have reached me and those which have not and have been returned to you... The writer Chingiz Aitmatov writes in the magazine *Literaturnaya Gazieta* (August 13, 1986), "The immortality of a nation lies in preservation of its language. Each nation treasures its own language. Each one of us must sense a filial obligation to the nation which has reared us to preserve the purity of the language it has given us, and to enrich it..."

After more than half a year of correspondence in my native language, the camp administration informed me that they do not have a translator and that henceforth, it would be possible to correspond only in the Russian language. I doubt whether this is the only reason which made the administration take such measures. (Father Matulionis refused to submit a request for clemency. — Ed. Note) I am sorry for my sister... she knows no Russian at all...

Fall is approaching... the scenery here is wonderfully beautiful. With God providing the strength, I have no complaints about my health — may His holy will be done! I know that our homeland is presently celebrating the religious festival of Šiluva. In spirit I am trying to take part in it myself. May the blessing of Mary, the Mother of God be with you at all times. My heartfelt greetings

and best wishes to everyone, everyone who remembers me.

September 8, 1986

P.S. On July 31, 1986, Father Jonas Kąstytiš Matulionis was visited in prison in far-off Trans-Baikal-Chita by his sister, Albina Kibiltienė, his former housekeeper Miss Monika Galeckaitė and Miss Bronė Kibickaitė. Only his sister and Miss Kibickaitė were allowed to visit the imprisoned priest. Two days later, releasing them from prison, the camp administration searched the women who had participated in the visit. Miss Kibickaitė was forced to disrobe completely and directed to carry out certain exercises, even though prison personnel walked back and forth just beyond glass doors. This was terrible moral mockery. During the search, a prayerbook and other books were taken from Miss Kibickaite. They were not allowed to hand over any food to Father Matulionis. His spirits were cheerful, even though his health is poor and the conditions are very difficult.

M o r d o v i a

From Docent Vytautas Skuodis, confined in the Mordovia camp, his relatives have not received any letters since June. (Vytautas Skuodis has since been released and arrived in the United States on September 8, 1987 — Trans. Note) According to information available, Docent Vytautas Skuodis on September 8, 1986, Lithuanian National Day, sent the Attorney General of the USSR a petition in which he indicates that he considers the exile into which political prisoners are sent to be murder-genocide.

Balys Gajauskas is incarcerated in Perm, in special regime Camp BC-389-36. His term ends April 20, 1987. Irena Gajauskiene, his wife, had her last personal visit with her husband in 1984 and a general visit in June, 1985. Since June, 1986 (almost five months), relatives have not received any letters from Balys Gajauskas. To questions concerning undelivered letters and visits, the prison administration responds: "...We inform you that for infringement of camp rules, visiting privileges have been suspended for Citizen Gajauskas. Regarding questions about correspondence, please address Citizen Gajauskas." It is signed by Camp Chief Domatov; sometimes the signature is illegible.

Recent news has reached Lithuania that Balys Gajauskas has been seriously injured, stabbed in the chest near the heart, and he has been hospitalized for two months. Mrs. Gajauskienė, wishing to find out more details about the condition of her husband's



Povilas Pečeliūnas

health and the misfortune which occurred, sent a telegram to the camp administration. The inquiry was answered as follows: 'The state of Balys Gajauskas' health is satisfactory.'

From a letter of Povilas Pečeliūnas:

This year, I am receiving very few letters, not only from abroad but also from Lithuania..

The ending is uncompromising: here is the guiding star which will not allow one to lose one's way, and from this flows perseverance. I have nothing more interesting that I can write. What can be special in this gray loneliness, almost an island among forests, swamps and water. And this in the north of Siberia.

What do I need most? Oxygen! For me, with my low blood pressure, this is truly not much, but is it not the most important thing? Patience, perseverance and as little thinking about oneself as possible. After all, it's worse for others.

Vladas Lapienis writes:

There is no need to fear for the future because like this day, so all others come from God. If days of unpleasantness, trouble, humiliation and suffering come, let us be calm: The Lord is coming! He brings the chalice of suffering, and with it He brings even more grace, light and great strength to do all things with love: to suffer, to thank and to win.

October 28, 1986

From Algirdas Patackas' Biography

Algirdas Patackas was born on September 8, 1943, in Trakiai. In 1965, he completed studies at the Polytechnic Institute, Department of Chemical Technology, worked a few years in industry and afterwards, went to work as a junior scientific associate at the Vilnius Institute of Chemistry where he did research for his doctoral dissertation. Constantly persecuted by the KGB, Patackas became *persona non grata* to the institute administration: it was suggested that he transfer to the Geological Institute and from there, he was released after less than a year on account of budget cut-backs.

In 1976, a raid was carried out on Patackas, the pretext for which was the ties he maintained with Lithuanians living in Byelorussia. In 1982, dismissed from work, Patackas found employment cutting hay with a scythe and clearing ditches in the woods. During the winter, he cleared the city streets. In this way, Patackas worked right up until his arrest July 29, 1986.

On May 22, during a raid, much religious and national literature was taken from Algirdas Patackas: J. Cicėnas' *Paskutinė auka* (*The Final Sacrifice*), the pamphlet „Kunigui A. Jakavoniui" ('To Father A. Jakavonis'), the article — a letter to the bishops, „Krikščionybė ir sąskaita" ("Christianity and Purity"), a collection of articles, „Ethos — baltų kultūra ir savišamonė" ('The Culture and Self-image of the Baits'), typescripts of poems by Kazys Bradūnas, a manuscript *Lietuvos krikštas kaip esminis baltų istorijos posūkis* (*Baptism as the Decisive Turn in the History of the Baits*), a samizdat book *Seinių Suvalkų kraštas* (*The Region of Seiniai Suvalkai*), a map of Lithuania, seven tape cassettes, various photographs and small pictures and an old crucifix by Svirskis.

From Algirdas Patackas' father, Antanas Patackas, forty various publications were taken, among them: *Birštono-prelato K.*

Olšausko byla (The Birštonas-Monsignor K. Olšauskas Case), Motiejus Gustaitis, Šeini Suvalkų kraštas, Palaimintasis Mykolas Giedraitis (Blessed Mykolas Giedraitis), Vyskupas Mečislovas Reinys (Bishop Mečislovas Reinys), a typewriter, many photos, etc.

Algirdas Patackas was indicted on the basis of criminal code Par. 199, Art. 10, accused of producing and disseminating "libelous" underground literature, organizing lectures on topics concerning Baltic culture and religion, gathering material concerning "bourgeois nationalists", organizing a reception for political prisoner Petras Plumpa in his apartment, etc.

NEWS FROM THE DIOCESES

Vilnius

On October 8, 1986, the bishops of Lithuania, the administrators of dioceses as well as the rector of the seminary were summoned to the office of the Commissioner of the Council for Religious Affairs, Petras Anilionis, in Vilnius. After starting with his accustomed scolding of the bishops for not bringing "extremists" to heel, the Commissioner presented the bishops with three drafts written allegedly by some priests or other (if so, it was obviously not without the government's knowledge), of a joint declaration by the bishops of Lithuania supporting the political line of Moscow on questions of peace and disarmament. Anilionis repeatedly demanded that the bishops sign one of the three documents.

Bishop Vincentas Sladkevičius of Kaišiadorys expressed surprise that the worst possible timing had been chosen for such a wish on the part of the government. "A couple of days ago, on September 30, in an editorial from *Pravda* reprinted in *Tiesa*, the faithful and we bishops were called representatives of 'views untruthful from beginning to end.' Why then were the signatures of liars needed? Unless it was to trample our authority in the eyes of the public... in your editorial, you urged people to fight us with all means at their disposal while we are being forced to sacrifice our authority on your account," said Bishop Sladkevičius.

"What do you understand by 'all means'?" the Commissioner asked.

"The propaganda apparatus, the KGB..." the bishop explained.

"You are libeling us! For that, you can be taken to court! Where in the editorial is the term KGB?" Anilionis shouted, pulling

out a newspaper. 'If you don't want to, don't sign, others will sign...' he heatedly scolded the bishop for speaking in the name of all.

"The whole world knows that the USSR is an atheistic state out to destroy religion. You are suggesting that we sign a document in which it says 'We wholeheartedly concur with the the leaders of the Soviet government...' What's the use of that? Enough pain is caused by those who grant unthinking interviews abroad," said Bishop Antanas Vaičius of Telšiai.

'Why do we have to sign here, and not at home after due consideration of what we are signing?' Bishop Sladkevičius interjected.

"Give us the drafts, we'll think it over ourselves," Bishop Vaičius addressed the Commissioner.

The Commissioner for Religious Affairs would not go along with that, saying 'If I give them to you, you'll pass them on to the extremists who will write in whatever they wish!'

Anilionis was also displeased with Bishop Sladkevičius' statement, 'Some things in the declaration we will delete, and some things we will add, for example, that more freedom be granted to believers...'

'What kind of freedom do you still lack,' the Commissioner fumed.

Archbishop Povilonis explained to him that it is forbidden to catechize children and priests are penalized. The other bishops concurred.

Finally, Anilionis gave in, allowing the bishops themselves to prepare the document. The bishops signed the document they had edited themselves.

During the reception, the Commissioner unexpectedly suggested that as a "favor", the newspaper *Gimtasis kraštas* (*Native Land*), should print certain news items from the life of Catholics in Lithuania. For that, a priest would have to be appointed by the ordinaries who would work with the editors of the newspaper. Despite the fact that it made the Commissioner very unhappy, the bishops nevertheless refused the proffered favor.

Nevertheless, *Gimtasis kraštas* has begun to publish news of the life of Catholics in Lithuania. Optimistic rumors were even heard in the West: 'Perhaps *Tiesa* will also begin publishing such news?'

However, the very first news items were already full of misinformation... Mentioned was the participation of the bishops Antanas Vaičius and Juozas Preikšas in the religious festiva Šiluva.



Bishop Julijonas Steponavičius

Nothing was said of Bishops Julijonas Steponavičius and Vincentas Sladkevičius; also omitted was the fact that Bishop Antanas Vaičius had participated two whole days in the "Calvaries". It was made up of whole cloth that on October 8, a Peace Petition had been signed at the seminary.

Quoted later in the aforesaid article is the text, not of the document edited by the ordinaries, but the words of Commissioner Anilionis' proposed draft for a peace petition...

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

From: The Priests of the Archdiocese of Vilnius
of the Catholic Church in Lithuania

A Petition

In 1987, the faithful of Lithuania will celebrate the 600-year jubilee of Lithuania's baptism. After 600 years, Christian doctrine has taken deep root in our people. The Constitution of the USSR, as well as that of the Lithuanian SSR guarantees citizens freedom of conscience. Often, however, the exaggerated zeal of certain government officials in spreading atheistic ideology reduces those Constitution guarantees to nothing.

1. The Apostolic Administrator of Vilnius, Bishop Julijonas Steponavičius, has for more than twenty-five years been removed from his duties as administrator of the Archdiocese of Vilnius, for no crime and without trial, has been detained in Žagarė, far from his archdiocese. We request that Bishop Steponavičius be allowed to perform his duties.

2. The Cathedral of Vilnius is the cradle of Catholic Lithuania, but this shrine has been taken away from the faithful. Saint Casimir is the Patron of Lithuania, but the church named for him has been converted into a Museum of Atheism. The Church of Mary, Queen of Peace in Klaipėda, erected with the donations of the faithful, has been taken away from them and turned into a concert hall, while in the meantime the faithful are forced to suffocate in a tiny church. In Klaipėda at present, over 175,000 residents live, of whom the great part are believers, Catholics. We request that the confiscated churches be returned and that churches be allowed to be erected in the Cities of Naujoji Akmenė, Elektrėnai, Sneičkus and in the of Vilnius and other large cities.

3. The Code of *Canon Law*, (Canon 528, 1) obliges the pastors of parishes to teach religious truths to the children of believing parents. For the carrying out of this essential priestly duty, priests are penalized by fines, warnings and, in the not too distant past, even by deprivation of freedom. We ask that the *Regulations for Religious Associations* be amended so as not to clash with duties imposed on priests by Church law and priestly functions.

4. There are still not infrequent instances where the faithful, especially job-holders, and also children and youth being educated atheistically, are terrorized by threats, ridicule and otherwise. Religious children are forced to join atheistic organizations. We request that such transgressions not be tolerated, and that the faithful, especially children, not be terrorized for the public and zealous practice of religion.

5. In the Constitution, the principle of the separation of

the state from the Church and the Church from the state is proclaimed. Government officials, however, interfere in what is purely a canonical activity of the Church: The organizing of diocesan priests' councils, the appointment of priests to various duties, the assignment of new bishops, even the choice of a vocation — blocking some young men from enrolling in the seminary. We request that the civil government not interfere in clergy appointments or church duties, that they would not interfere with suitable candidates to the priesthood to prepare in one way or another, and to be priests.

6. The Constitution guarantees equality of all citizens. That is beautiful! The atheists spread atheistic ideology by press, radio and television, often explaining in a distorted way the truths of religion and even calumniating Church representatives. Believers, meanwhile, have no access to these means of communication, even when they would like to justify themselves and to defend themselves from unfounded accusations. We request that the faithful be accorded the same freedom of speech, press and dissemination of religion as the atheists make use of in Lithuania.

7. When priests and laity make public these injustices perpetrated on the faithful and the evils occurring in our life, they are accused of calumniating the Soviet system, and for that they are punished. Yes, for example, according to the Soviet press, Fathers Alfonsas Svarinskas and Sigitas Tamkevičius were tried and sentenced. You see, they presented the facts of the spread of drunkenness in our society. We ask that the cases of priests and laity sentenced be reviewed, and that they be released.

We ask you, Mr. General Secretary, as the head of state, to abolish these anti-Constitutional wrongs, and to redress the injustices being done to the faithful.

June 13, 1986, Vilnius

Signed by the following priests, Fathers:

1. Antanas Andriuškevičius, 2. Vaclovas Aliulis, 3. Josifas Aškelevičius, 4. Romualdas Blažys, 5. Jonas Boruta, 6. Aldas Antanas Čeponis, 7. Metardas Čeponis, 8. Vladas Černiauskas, 9. Petras Daunoras, 10. Antanas Dziekan, 11. Kazimieras Gailius, 12. Konstantinas Gajauskas, 13. Stasys Idzelis, 14. Ignas Jakutis, 15. Pijus Jakutis, 16. Vytautas Jaskelevičius, 17. Bronislovas Jaura, 18. Nikodemus Jaura, 19. Juozas Juodagalvis.

20. Pavelas Jurkovianec, 21. Jonas Kardelis, 22. Algis Kazlauskas, 23. Algimantas Keina, 24. Juzafas Kvietkovskis, 25.

Jonas Lauriūnas, 26. Stasys Lydys, 27. Stasys Markevičius, 28. Kazys Meilius, 29. Konstantinas Molis, 30. H. Naumovičius, 31. Juzefas Obremskis, 32. Edmundas Paulionis, 33. Mykolas Petravičius, 34. Alfonsas Petronis, 35. Juozas Donatas Puidokas, 36. Stasys Puidokas, 37. Vytautas Pūkas, 38. Petras Purlys.

39. Bronislovas Sakavičius, 40. Justinas Saulius, 41. Leonas Savickas, 42. Marijonas Savickas, 43. Antanas Simonaitis, 44. Martynas Stonys, 45. Jordanas Slėnys, 46. Alfonsas Tamulaitis, 47. Česlovas Taraškevičius, 48. Steponas Tunaitis, 49. Albertas Ulickas, 50. Jonas Vaitonis, 51. Domas Valančiauskas, 52. Antanas Valatka, 53. Kazimieras Valeikis, 54. Stanislovas Valiukėnas, 55. Donatas Valiukonis, 56. Kazimieras Zemėnas.

Not signing:

1. Janas Charukevičius, 2. Jonas Grigaitis, 3. Kazimieras Kulakas, 4. Zenonas Patiejūnas, 5. Kazimieras Pukėnas, 6. Vladislovas Velymanskis.

To: The bishops and administrators of dioceses in Lithuania

From: The Priests of the Archdiocese of Vilnius

A Petition

We, the undersigned priests of the Archdiocese of Vilnius, concerned that the 600-Year Jubilee of the Baptism of Lithuania be suitably commemorated, request the bishops and administrators of dioceses in Lithuania:

1. To invite our Holy Father, Pope John Paul II to visit Lithuania in 1987, on the occasion of the Jubilee.

2. To request our Holy Father, Pope John Paul II, on the occasion of the 600-Year Jubilee of the baptism of Lithuania, to proclaim the Servant of God, Archbishop Jurgis Matulaitis, Blessed; to try to acquaint the faithful more widely with the life, virtues and work of the Servant of God, Archbishop Jurgis Matulaitis; to arrange officially for the veneration of Mykolas Giedraitis, who enjoys the title of Blessed; to publicize those other saintly individuals of our nation: Father Andrius Radmina, Father Jurgis Pabrėža, Father Alfonsas Lipniūnas, Archbishop Mečislovas Bishop Vincentas Borisevičius, Professor Stasys Šalkauskis, Prof. Pranas Dovidaitis, Marija Pečkauskaitė, et al.

3. To see that the administration and faculty of the seminary be priests of high ecclesiastical character, and to get rid of

those unsuitable; to try to see that candidates to the seminary be carefully chosen, in accord with canonical requirements and the decrees of Vatican II; to pay serious attention to problems which arise, and to expell unsuitable seminarians.

4. To continue the successfully initiated popularization of sobriety: at least once a year to plan temperance days in all dioceses and parishes.

5. To observe strictly the Apostolic See's decree of March 8, 1984, regarding the participation of priests in international conferences:

6. To request the government of the Soviet Union:

a. For the exiled Apostolic Administrator of the Archdiocese of Vilnius, Bishop Julijonas Steponavičius, to be returned to his duties;

b. Not to obstruct priests from catechizing children, something Canon Law requires so explicitly (Can.52, par.1);

c. That the faithful, especially the youth and children, not be persecuted, terrorized for open practice of religion, and not be forced to join atheistic organizations;

d. That the Cathedral of Vilnius and the Church in Klaipeda be returned to the faithful, and that construction of churches be allowed in new cities (Naujoji Akmenė, Elektrėnai, Sniečkus, Ignalina) and in the suburbs of Vilnius, Kaunas, and other cities;

e. To review the sentences of Fathers Alfonsas Svarinskas, Sigitas Tamkevičius and Jonas-Kastytis Matulionis, and of laity sentenced for defending the rights of the Church and of the faithful, and to release them;

f. To grant believers the same freedom of speech, of the press and of belief enjoyed by the atheists in Lithuania;

g. That the civil government not interfere with the preparation of suitable candidates for the priesthood, nor with their priesthood;

h. That the civil government not interfere in the appointment of clergy to ecclesiastical responsibilities.

Vilnius, July 13, 1986

Signed by 62 Priests

Signed by the following priests, Fathers:

1. Antanas Andriuškevičius, 2. Vaclovas Aliulis, 3. Josifas Aškelovičius, 4. Romualdas Blažys, 5. Jonas Boruta, 6. Aldas Antanas Čeponis, 7. Metardas Čeponis, 8. Vladas Černiauskas, 9. Petras Daunoras, 10. Antanas Dziekan, 11. Kazimieras

Gailius, 12. Konstantinas Gajauskas, 13. Stasys Idzelis, 14. Ignas Jakutis, 15. Pijus Jakutis, 16. Vytautas Jaskelevičius, 17. Bronislovas Jaura, 18. Nikodemus Jaura, 19. Juozas Juodagalvis.

20. Pavelas Jurkovlianec, 21. Jonas Kardelis, 22. Aleksandras Kaškevičius, 23. Algis Kazlauskas, 24. Algimantas Keina, 25. Tadas Kondrusevičius, 26. Juzafas Kvietkovskis, 27. Jonas Lauriūnas, 28. Stasys Lydys, 29. Stasys Markevičius, 30. Edmundas Minkevičius, 31. Konstantinas Molis, 32. H. Naumovičius, 33. Juzefas Obremskis, 34. Edmundas Paulionis, 35. Ignas Paberžis, 36. Mykolas Petravičius, 37. Alfonsas Petronis, 38. Juozas Donatas Puidokas, 39. Vytautas Pūkas, 40. Petras Purlys, 41. Bronislovas Sakavičius.

42. Justinas Saulius, 43. Leonas Savickas, 44. Marijonas Savickas, 45. Antanas Simonaitis, 46. Martynas Stonys, 47. Jordanas Slėnys, 48. Alfonsas Tamulaitis, 49. Česlovas Taraškevičius 50. Adolfas Trusevičius, 51. Juozas Tunaitis, 52. Steponas Tunaitis 53. Albertas Ulickas, 54. Jonas Stanislovas Ulickas, 55. Jonas Vaitonis, 56. Domas Valančiauskas, 67. Antanas Valatka, 58. Kazimieras Valeikis, 59. Stanislovas Valiukėnas, 60. Donatas Valiukonis, 61. Kazimieras Zemėnas, 62. Stasys Puidokas.

Not signing:

1. Janas Charukevičius, 2. Jonas Grigaitis, 3. Kazimieras Kulakas, 4. Zenonas Patiejūnas, 5. Kazimieras Pukėnas, 6. Vladislovas Velymanskis.

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

From: Priests of the Archdiocese of Kaunas of the
Catholic Church in Lithuania

A Petition

In 1987, the Catholic faithful of Lithuania will commemorate the 600-year jubilee of the introduction of Christianity into Lithuania. During these 600 years, Christian teaching has sunk deep roots in our Lithuania. The USSR Constitution guarantees freedom of conscience and freedom of religion, but the activists of atheism nullify this Constitutional guarantee:

1. The children of believing parents are persecuted in school for public church attendance, and they are forcibly enrolled in atheist organizations against the wishes of their believing parents. Those not enrolling are warned that they shall not be able to enroll in college or university. Those who do enroll are forbidden to fulfill religious obligations, forced to dissemble and thus from

childhood, are made to act hypocritically. This is a serious mistake on the part of our society.

2. Various employees and teachers are unable publicly to fulfill their obligations as required by their convictions and conscience. Hence, in order to fulfill their religious obligations, they are obliged to travel to distant places where no one knows them, or to marry or baptize children by night lest anyone see them. Teachers who are believers must speak contrary to their own conscience, like atheists, even though Article 50 of the USSR Constitution guarantees freedom of conscience. When someone in a responsible position leaves his wife and children, and remarries, it is considered a personal matter, for which he is not penalized. But if a government employee publicly fulfills his religious obligations, he is demoted.

3. The USSR Constitution guarantees the equality of all citizens before the law. But how is it in real life? The atheists have everything: press, radios, television, while the faithful are prevented from making use of these communications media. After World War II, only a fraction of families of believers were able to obtain prayer-books and catechisms. The atheists are served by all schools, beginning with kindergarten and ending with the universities, while the teaching of catechism to the children of believing parents is forbidden, even in church, and priests are penalized for teaching it. The faithful are not allowed to organize trips, make use of automobiles: it is even forbidden to go by taxi to religious festivals; e.g.: to Siluva or the Calvary of the Lowlanders. In hospitals and nursing homes for the aged, the faithful are not always allowed to summon a priest for the patient before death. It is forbidden to pray at the bier of a believer in funeral establishments, as is customary among Catholics. These are just a few examples.

4. According to USSR Constitution Art. 50, the Church is separated from the state, but in reality it is otherwise: When the bishops or administrators of dioceses appoint or transfer priests from parishes, the Commissioner for Religious Affairs, as the representative of the atheistic government to the detriment of the Church's well-being, has the final say regarding the appointment of priests to parishes or their removal, the choice of candidates for bishop or diocesan administrator, the appointment of instructors to the seminary, the admission of candidates to the seminary and with too few of them allowed to be admitted, there is a great shortage of priests. The Commissioner for Religious Affairs interferes in the internal affairs of the Church: the formation of priests' councils and colleges of consultors; civil government officials interfere even in

the services: Why did this priest hold services and not some other? Why prayers were recited for suffering priest-prisoners... they interfere even in families and in the creation of church committees...

5. Christianity was first introduced to Lithuania in Vilnius, so the Cathedral of Vilnius is the cradle of Christianity in Lithuania, and this shrine has been confiscated from the faithful; Saint Casimir is the Patron Saint of Lithuania, but the church named after him in Vilnius has been transformed into a Museum of Atheism. This is an insult to the faithful.

6. The USSR has obligated itself to abide by the *Universal Declaration of Human Rights*, Art. 18 of which states: "Everyone has the right to freedom of thought, conscience and religion; this right includes freedom to change his religion or belief, and freedom, either alone or in community with others and in public or private, to manifest his religion or belief in teaching, practice, worship and observance."

The USSR has also obligated itself to abide by the Helsinki Accords, Art. 7 of which states: "Participating states will conscientiously carry out their obligations according to international law of the appropriate agreements and other agreements to which they are a party."

Hence, the abovementioned offenses committed against the faithful are a transgression against international obligations.

7. When priests and faithful make public the wrongs and calumnies committed against them, they are accused of vilifying the Soviet Union and they are brought to trial like Fathers Alfonsas Svarinskas, Sigitas Tamkevičius, Jonas-Kaštytis Matulionis and some Catholic laity who have sentenced for defending the rights of the faithful. We ask you to release them.

We ask you as the leader of the state to do away with the above-mentioned anti-Constitutional evils and others and to repair the wrongs being done to the faithful.

1986

Signed by the following priests, Fathers:

1. Jonas Albavičius, 2. Jonas Aleksiūnas, 3. Jonas Augustauskas, 4. Jonas Babonas, 5. Feliksas Baliūnas, 6. Eugenijus Bartulis, 7. Vytautas Brilius, 8. Viktoras Brusokas, 9. Prosperas Bubnys, 10. Alfonsas Bulotas, 11. Mykolas Buožius, 12. Izidorius Butkus, 13. Juozas Čepėnas, 14. Kęstutis Daknevičius, 15. Antanas Danyla, 16. Juozas Dobilaitis, 17. Gerardas Dunda, 18. Jonas

Fabijanskas, 19. Pranciškus Gaižauskas, 20. Bronislovas Gimžauskas, 21. Jonas Girdzevičius, 22. Zigmąs Grinevičius.

23. Stanislovas Gruodis, 24. Vytautas Griganavičius, 25. Gustavas Gudanavičius, 26. Antanas Ylius, 27. Antanas Imbras, 28. Juozas Indriūnas, 29. Leonardas Jagminas, 30. Leonas Jakubauskas, 31. Antanas Jokubauskas, 32. Gintautas Jankauskas, 33. Antanas Jurgutis, 34. Stanislovas Kadys, 35. Juozas Kaknevičius, 36. Leonas Kalinauskas, 37. Jonas Kazlauskas, 38. Algirdas Kildušis, 39. Petras Liubonas, 40. Vladas Luzgauskas, 41. Romualdas Macevičius, 42. Eimutis Marcinkevičius, 43. Petras Martinkus, 44. Pranciškus Matulaitis.

45. Kleopas Jakaitis, 46. Aleksandras Markaitis, 47. Juozapas Matulevičius, 48. Petras Meilus, 49. Ričardas Mikutavičius, 50. Petras Mikutis, 51. Aleksandras Milašius, 52. Romualdas Mizaras, 53. Algirdas Močius, 54. Petras Našlėnas, 55. Bronislovas Nemeikšis, 56. Pesliakas, 57. Vladas Petkevičius, 58. Steponas Pilka, 59. Petras Petraitis, 60. Vaclovas Polikaitis, 61. Jonas Povilaitis, 62. Vladas Požėla, 63. Povilas Pranskūnas, 64. Boleslovas Radavičius, 65. Vytautas Radzevičius, 66. Vaclovas Ramanauskas.

67. Aleksandras Ramanauskas, 68. Juozapas Razmantas, 69. Liudvikas Semaška, 70. Eduardas Simaška, 71. Antanas Slavinskas, 72. Boleslovas Stasiutis, 73. Kazimieras Statkevičius, 74. Jonas Survila, 75. Viktoras Šauklys, 76. Pranciškus Ščepavičius, 77. Jonas Tamonis, 78. Vaclovas Tamoševičius, 79. Petras Tavoraitis, 80. Jurgis Užusienis, 81. Juozapas Vaičeliūnas, 82. Alfredas Vanagas, 83. Boleslovas Vairą, 84. Juozapas Varvuolis, 85. Jonas Voveris, 86. Lionginas Vaičiulionis, 87. Jonas Račaitis, 88. Pijus Žiugžda.

To: The Bishops and Apostolic Administrators of Lithuania

From: Priests of the Archdiocese of Kaunas

A Petition

We undersigned priests of the Archdiocese of Kaunas, concerned that the 600-year jubilee of the Baptism of Lithuania be properly commemorated request the bishops and diocesan administrators of Lithuania:

1. To invite our Holy Father, John Paul II, to visit Lithuania in 1987 for the solemnities.

2. To request our Holy Father, John Paul II, on the occasion of the 600th Anniversary of the Baptism of Lithuania, to proclaim the venerable Archbishop Jurgis Matulaitis Blessed; to see during the preparatory period that the believing public become

more widely acquainted with the life, virtues and work of Archbishop Jurgis Matulaitis; also to publicize the veneration of Mykolas Giedraitis, bearing the title of Blessed. We ask that the faithful be introduced also to the other spiritual greats of our nation: Father A. Rudamina, Father Jurgis Pabrėža, Archbishop Mečislovas Reinys, Archbishop Teofilus Matulionis, Bishop Vincentas Borisevičius, Father Alfonsas Lipniūnas, Professor Stasys Šalkauskis, Professor P. Dovidaitis, Barbora Žagarietė, writer Marija Pečkauskaitė.

3. That the civil government not interfere in the affairs of the seminary of Kaunas, especially in appointing the administration, the instructors and even choosing students for the seminary. In the existing abnormal circumstances, there are many cases in which students finish the seminary and are ordained to the priesthood, not only disinclined to care for the needs of the faithful, but themselves unwilling to live a spiritual life. This is not only painful, but also detrimental to the Church. It is regrettable that even mentally ill individuals are ordained. Canon Law and the Decrees of Vatican II call for a very careful screening of candidates: "In all selection and testing of seminarians, necessary standards must always be firmly maintained, even when there exists a regrettable shortage of priests. For God will not allow His Church to lack ministers if worthy candidates are admitted, while unsuited ones are... directed toward the assuming of other tasks..." (The *Decree on Priestly Formation*, Chapter III, Number 6).

The plight of the Church is very difficult when the civil government meddles in the affairs of the Church: assignment of priests to parishes, choice of bishops and diocesan administrators and even in the makeup of priests' senates and colleges of consultors.

4. To continue the auspiciously begun work of temperance: at least once annually to arrange temperance days in all parishes and dioceses. To strive not only for sobriety, but even for abstinence among clergy and laity.

5. For clergy not to participate in activities forbidden by our Holy Father Pope John Paul II.

6. That the bishops and diocesan administrators of Lithuania request the government of the Soviet Union:

a. To return to his duties the exiled apostolic administrator of the Archdiocese of Vilnius, His Excellency Bishop Julijonas Steponavičius;

b. To review the sentencing of Fathers Alfonsas

Svarinskas, Sigitas Tamkevičius and Jonas Matulionis, as well as lay faithful, for defending the rights of the Church and the faithful and to release them;

c. To allow priests to catechize children as Christ and Canon Law oblige them;

d. To refrain from persecuting and terrorizing the faithful and especially children and youth for the public profession of religion, something which Art. 50 of the USSR Constitution guarantees, and not to coerce them to join atheistic organizations; in institutions of learning during the process of educating children and youth not to infringe on the rights of believing parents to rear their children in accordance with their religious beliefs;

e. To grant believers the same right of utilizing media to disseminate their worldview, as that used by the atheists;

f. Not to turn Sundays into workdays and Catholics to be allowed to assist at Mass and for Christmas at least not to be a workday, and the faithful be allowed to celebrate it freely;

g. To return to the faithful the Cathedral of Vilnius, the Church of Saint Casimir, the church in Klaipėda and to allow new churches erected in the new cities: Naujoji Akmenė, Elektrėnai, Snei

also in the suburbs of Vilnius, Kaunas and other large cities. We trust that the 600-year jubilee of the baptism of Lithuania will be celebrated more solemnly than was the 500-year jubilee of the death of Saint Casimir in 1984.

Fathers:

1. Jonas Albavičius, 2. Jonas Aleksišūnas, 3. Jonas Augustauskas, 4. Jonas Babonas, 5. Feliksas Baliūnas, 6. Eugenijus Bartulis, 7. Vytautas Brilius, 8. Viktoras Brusokas, 9. Prosperas Bubnys, 10. Alfonsas Bulotas, 11. Mykolas Buožius, 12. Izidorius Butkus, 13. Juozas Čepėnas, 14. Kęstutis Daknevičius, 15. Kazimieras Dambrauskas, 16. Antanas Danyla, 17. Juozas Dobilaitis, 18. Gerardas Dunda, 19. Jonas Fabijanskas, 20. Pranciškus Gaižauskas, 21. Bronislovas Gimžauskas, 22. Zigmas Grinevičius.

23. Vytautas Griganavičius, 24. Gustavas Gudanavičius, 25. Antanas Ylius, 26. Antanas Imbras, 27. Juozas Indriūnas, 28. Leonardas Jagminas, 29. Kleopas Jakaitis, 30. Antanas Jokubauskas, 31. Jonas Girdzevičius, 32. Eugenijus Jokubauskas, 33. Gintautas Jankauskas, 34. Antanas Jurgutis, 35. Stanislovas Kadys, 36. Juozas Kaknevičius, 37. Leonas Kalinauskas, 38. Jonas Kazlauskas, 39. Al-

girdas Kildušis, 40. Petras Liubonas, 41. Vladas Luzgauskas, 42. Romualdas Macevičius, 43. Eimutis Marcinkevičius, 44. Petras Martinkus, 45. Pranciškus Matulaitis.

46. Juozapas Matulevičius, 47. Petras Meilus, 48. Ričardas Mikutavičius, 49. Petras Mikutis, 50. Antanas Milašius, 51. Romualdas Mizaras, 52. Algirdas Močius, 53. Petras Našlėnas, 54. Bronislovas Nemeikšis, 55. Kazimieras Pesliakas, 56. Vladas Petkevičius, 57. Petras Petraitis, 58. Steponas Pilka, 59. Aleksandras Počiulpis, 60. Vaclovas Polikaitis, 61. Jonas Povilaitis, 62. Vladas Požėla, 63. Povilas Pranskūnas, 64. Jonas Račaitis, 65. Vytautas Radzevičius, 66. Boleslovas Radavičius.

67. Jonas Rakauskas, 68. Vaclovas Ramanauskas, 69. Juozapas Razmantas, 70. Liudvikas Semaška, 71. Eduardas Simaška, 72. Antanas Slavinskas, 73. Boleslovas Stasiutis, 74. Kazimieras Statkevičius, 75. Jonas Survila, 76. Viktoras Šauklys, 77. Pranciškus Ščepavičius, 78. Jonas Tamonis, 79. Vaclovas Tamoševičius, 80. Petras Tavoraitis, 81. Jurgis Užusienis, 82. Juozapas Vaičeliūnas, 83. Boleslovas Vairą, 84. Alfredas Vanagas, 85. Pijus Žiugžda, 86. Juozapas Varvuolis, 87. Jonas Voveris, 88. Lionginas Vaičiulionis.

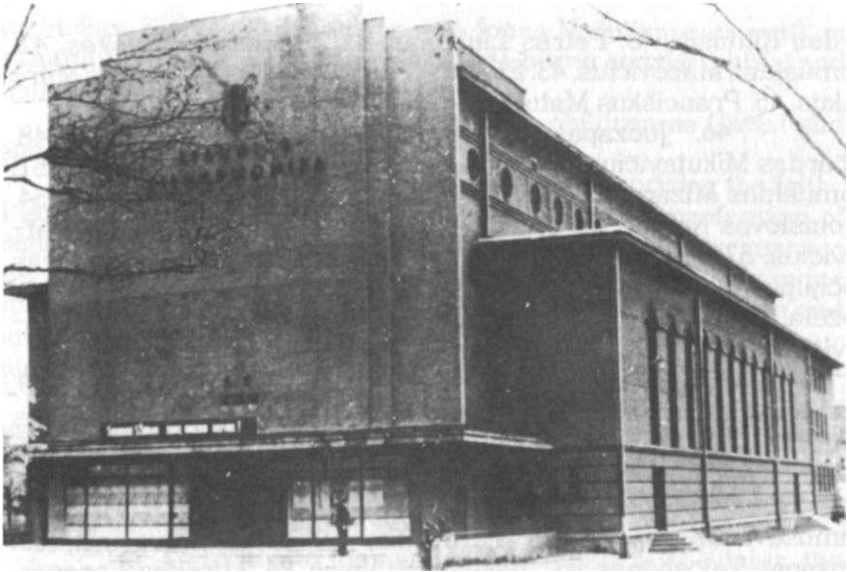
To: Mikhail Gorbachev, General Secretary
of the Central Committee of the
Communist Party of the USSR

Konstantin Kharchev,
Chairman of the Council for Religious Affairs
LSSR Council of Ministers

From: The Catholics of Klaipėda and All Lithuania

A Petition

We, the Catholics of the City of Klaipėda and all Lithuania, erected with our own funds in 1961 the Church of the Queen of Peace in Klaipėda, a 200 sq. meter dwelling, and three garages. That same year, even before it was put to use, by order of Nikita Krushchev, the church and all its structures was taken away from us and turned into a concert hall. We have been wronged because we never have committed any crime. We built the church with government permission. Now, we have nowhere to pray. The little church we have is 12 meters wide and 22 meters long — 48 sq. meters are occupied by the presbytery, leaving 216 sq. meters for the faithful. We do not fit: some individuals faint from the stuffiness in church, others are



The Klaipėda church after conversion to a concert hall.

forced in the heat, cold and rain to stand outside, to kneel on snowy, dirty sidewalks and the powerful ventilators installed are very noisy. The windows are open the winter and summer, and people often become ill from the cross draft.

In 1939, about 60,000 residents lived in Klaipėda, and five churches served them. When the church was being erected in 1961, about 80,000 people lived there, and now, there are 200,000 living there. In 1961, with the closing of the churches in Nida, Juodkrantė and Klaipėda, there were about 130,000 Catholics in the surrounding areas.

To date, the following have been approached concerning the return of the Church of the Queen of Peace in Klaipėda:

1. In 1974, a petition was sent with over 3,000 signatures, to Chairman Kuroyedov.

2. In March, 1979 — a declaration to Leonid Brezhnev, Chairman of the Presidium of the Supreme Soviet, and to Kuroyedov, with 10,241 signatures.

3. In October, 1979 — a petition to Leonid Brezhnev and Kuroyedov with 148,149 signatures.

4. In 1980, a petition to Brezhnev and Kuroyedov with 600

signatures.

5. In June, 1981, a delegation of three individuals called on the Central Committee of the Communist Party and the Council for Religious Affairs.

6. In 1981, for the second time, a ten-person delegation visited the Council for Religious Affairs.

7. In 1982, a petition was sent to Leonid Brezhnev and Kuroyedov with 21,033 signatures.

8. In 1982, a petition was sent to Leonid Brezhnev.

9. In 1982, for the third time, a delegation of ten persons visited the Council for Religious Affairs in Moscow.

10. In 1983, a petition was sent to Andropov and Kuroyedov with 22,539 signatures.

11. In 1983, a fourth time a ten-person delegation visited the Council for Religious Affairs in Moscow.

12. In 1984, a petition was sent to Konstantin Chernenko and to Kuroyedov with 11,202 signatures.

13. In 1984, for the fifth time, a four-person delegation visited the Council for Religious Affairs in Moscow.

14. In 1984, for the sixth time, a three-person delegation visited the Council for Religious Affairs in Moscow.

15. In January, 1985, for the seventh time, a delegation of three persons visited the Council for Religious Affairs in Moscow.

16. In May 1985, for the eighth time, a four-person delegation visited Moscow.

17. In May, 1985, war veterans and participants sent petitions to Gorbachev and the Council for Religious Affairs.

18. In 1985, the faithful of Klaipeda sent Mikhail Gorbachev a petition with 1,135 signatures.

19. In 1986, petitions were sent to the Chairman of the USSR Council of Ministers and to the Council for Religious Affairs, with 10,501 signatures.

20. In 1986, for the ninth time, a delegation of the faithful visited the Council for Religious Affairs in Moscow.

For several years now, it has been suggested that the present little church be reconstructed and enlarged by a few hundred meters. We do not agree with such a suggestion for we could be left without any church. Such remodelling takes very long: they have been remodelling the theater in Klaipeda for the sixth year, the teachers' home for about ten years, etc. Once again we repeat we will not agree to remodelling the little church. People from all continents sailing in and seeing our situation and the wrong

committed against us are surprised at such action on the part of the government.

On the occasion of the 600-year jubilee of the Baptism of Lithuania, we request that you redress the wrong done us — to return the church we built for ourselves or to put up another just like it. Living conditions force us to do so.

Klaipėda, 1986.

This petition was signed by:

Archdiocese of Vilnius - 507 believers
Archdiocese of Kaunas - 2313 believers
Diocese of Panevėžys - 6600 believers
Diocese of Telšiai - 1259 believers
Diocese of Kaišiadorys - 2242 believers
Diocese of Vilkaviškis - 7706 believers

To: Petras Griškevičius, First Secretary of the Central Committee
of the Communist Party, LSSR

Copy to: The Editor of Soviet *Woman* magazine

A Petition

In the USSR and LSSR Constitutions, the equality of all citizens before the law is emphasized, and we are reminded that it is forbidden to incite hatred in connection with religious cults.

We are firmly convinced that the editors of *Tarybinė Moteris (Soviet Woman)* transgressed against the principles of the Soviet Constitution by publishing in issues number two and three, 1986, Vladas Balkevičius' article, "The Holy Family", which was full of the most horrendous calumnies against the persons of Jesus and Mary, dear to believers. The author of the article knows well that the calumnies he repeats have long ago been answered, but he repeats them nevertheless. The conclusion keeps suggesting itself that the author's only purpose was to ridicule the Christian religion and to insult and demean the faithful. How would the Communists react if the same sort of calumnies against persons dear to them, Party activists, were to appear in the Catholic press or priests' sermons. The Communists would feel insulted and demeaned. Such behavior would incite hatred between faithful and atheists.

This is how dishonorably V. Balkevičius and the editors of *Soviet Woman* acted. We demand that the editors of *Soviet Woman*

and Vladas Balkevičius publicly retract the calumnies against the persons of Jesus and Mary dear to us. We request you, First Secretary, to see that atheist articles of such a nature would never appear again.

Signed:

Archdiocese of Vilnius - 486 believers
Archdiocese of Kaunas - 2313 believers
Diocese of Panevėžys - 6600 believers
Diocese of Telšiai - 1259 believers
Diocese of Vilkaviškis - 5720 believers
Diocese of Kaišiadorys - 2301 believers

To: The Chairman of the Presidium of the LSSR Supreme Soviet

From: Fathei Alfonsas Pridotkas

Resident of Žarėnai, Telšiai *Rayon*

A Petition

The pope of the Roman Catholic Church appointed Bishop Julijonas Steponavičius Apostolic Administrator of the Archdiocese of Vilnius. The commissioner of religious cults deposed the bishop from office and exiled him to Žagarė in the *Rayon* of Joniškis. From the Archdiocese of Vilnius, which belongs to him, he was exiled to a different diocese, and a different parish. This was done twenty-five years ago. After the passage of twenty-five years from the beginning of his exile, this fact has been of interest to many residents of Lithuania. The following questions arise:

1. Can the Commissioner for Religious Cults transfer or exile a bishop from his diocese to another?

2. Who gave the commissioner such a power, and when?

3. What is the longest period for which the Commissioner for Religious Cult can exile a bishop to a diocese not his own?

I would be very grateful if you answered these questions for me.

It is surprising that Bishop Julijonas Steponavičius has already spent twenty-five years in exile, but the exile still goes on. It has occurred to me to inquire of legal specialists whether Bishop Steponavičius had been treated according to applicable public law promulgated and known to all, or perhaps someone went too far, perhaps they exceeded their mandate. On this matter, I inquired

with the Juridical Consultancy of the College of Attorneys and asked them to answer these few questions:

1. How long a sentence can the Peoples' Court give? It replied, "Fifteen years."

2. For what kind of transgressions? 'For betrayal of the homeland (Par. 62), for spying (Par. 63), for aggravated homicide (Par. 104), for larceny on an especially large scale (Par. 5)."

3. What is the longest period of exile for which the Peoples' Court can sentence one? 'From two to five years."

4. For what kind of crimes? 'For crimes touched upon by Articles 62, 63 and 96."

5. Besides the Peoples' Court, can someone else hand down a sentence to exile so that a citizen could live only in a special place? 'They cannot."

6. Can any agency or government official exile a citizen without a decision of the Peoples' Court? "They cannot."

7. Can the Commissioner for Religious Cults exile a priest or bishop from his residence to some other *rayon*, to another dwelling place, without the decision of the Peoples' Court? "They cannot penalize them thus as an official of cult, there is no such law."

8. It would seem that someone is being arbitrary. "So it would seem!"

What kind of thoughts arise? Traitors, spies or murderers can be punished by exile only by decision of the Peoples' Court, and that, for no longer than five years? The bishop has remained in exile for twenty-five years already, and there is no end in sight. It would be interesting how that could be compared with the Criminal Code. The bishop is not a traitor to his country, was never a spy, has committed no theft, but with regard to the length of his exile, he is worse off than they. The penalty imposed on the bishop (according to his exile) has exceeded the limits of the sentences of the worst criminals by 500%.

The greatest criminals have the right to legal defense. They can apply to attorneys to defend them, call witnesses for the defense, present proofs of innocence and take advantage of promulgated law. They know what sentence could be applied to them, and once sentenced they know when their time will end. In a trial, the judge hands down a decision in consultation with associate judges after hearing arguments by prosecution and defense; with Bishop Steponavičius however, something strange occurred. Even to a legal specialist, it would seem that there was something like arbitrariness here, that the Criminal Code contains no paragraphs on

the basis of which they could exile the bishop from his diocese for over twenty-five years. In my opinion, that is arbitrariness: someone is exceeding promulgated law. How does all this seem to you?

Was Bishop Julijonas Steponavičius treated justly? If you think otherwise, I would ask you to say so. If you find any truth in my statement, I sincerely ask you to do everything possible to see that Bishop Steponavičius' exile be terminated, that he be allowed to return to Vilnius and there perform the functions to which he was assigned by the Holy Father.

Help to defend him so that on April 18, 1986, celebrating the very special Diamond Jubilee of his life (his seventy-fifth birthday), he would feel your good will and at least, on the eve of his jubilee, he would receive from you the news that his exile had been terminated.

His address:

Joniškio *Rayon*
235467,
Žagarė
Zdanovo 5-2

I would be grateful to receive the reply to this petition.
Žarėnai, October 1, 1986

K a u n a s

This year the Commissioner for Religious Affairs, Petras Anilionis, has been visiting the seminary in Kaunas quite frequently. Speaking to first-year seminarians at the beginning of the scholastic year, the Commissioner urged them to maintain unity, not to form factions and not to try finding out which seminarians have agreed to cooperate with the KGB. Such factionalism, in the words of Anilionis, is detrimental to Church and state. According to him, such factionalism inspired by "extremists" is a source of scandal to Lithuanians in the U.S.A. and their publication *Akiračiai (Horizons)*.

V i l n i u s

During the summer of 1986, the priests of the Archdiocese of Vilnius sent a letter to Mikhail Gorbachev, supreme leader of the U.S.S.R., in which they set forth certain problems and submitted some requests. The communication was sent with the address of the pastor of Linkmenys, Father Jonas Lauriūnas.

On October 17, Commissioner Petras Anilionis of the

Council for Religious Affairs visited Father Lauriūnas, and conveyed to him verbally the Soviet government's reply to the aforementioned communication from the priests.

On November 4, twenty priests who had signed the document from the clergy were summoned to the Vilnius chancery. They were given a verbal response. The main points of the reply are as follows: Bishop Julijonas Steponavičius would not go to Vilnius, since he was assigned to Kaišiadorys where he refused to go, and besides, he is not inclined to obey government law.

The Cathedral of Vilnius, moreover, will not be returned to the faithful: If there is to be a bishop in Vilnius, he will be able to call any church his cathedral.

The Church of Saint Casimir will not be returned. Believers can call any church they have by Saint Casimir's name.

It is not necessary to increase the number of churches in Vilnius because those existing suffice (eleven churches), which are usually not full on Sundays. (This is not so! The churches are full of the faithful!)

It does not make sense to erect churches in the new suburbs: people can travel to church by bus just as they travel to work (But the government tries to see that clubs, kindergartens, stores and cinemas be as convenient as possible, and the church should be no exception — Ed. Note.)

It is unnecessary to erect churches in the new cities such as Elektrėnai, Naujoji Akmenė, etc. The faithful of these cities can avail themselves of neighboring parish churches.

The faithful of Klaipėda shall not get back the nationalized church of the Queen of Peace. Those to blame for this are clergy who, in erecting the church, were guilty of abuses. Permission is given to enlarge the present church of Klaipėda. Instead of 300 sq. meters, it should be 800 sq. meters; then it would fully satisfy the needs of the faithful.

Group instruction of children is forbidden, since such a law has been promulgated.

The children of believers in our country are not victims of discrimination: They can, without any trouble, get into higher learning and take responsible posts. The Commissioner mentioned a few examples of the parish of Linkmenys and the *Rayon* of Ignalina; only he did not say whether those people currently can go to church publicly without interference.

The state does not interfere in the internal affairs of the Church, it only maintains order: the Priests' Council of Vilnius, ac~

ording to Petras Anilionis, was constituted not in accordance with Canon Law, so the government was obliged to become involved. Some priests are not keeping state law, so they also cannot be registered for work in this or that parish; some candidates for the priesthood carry political stains — how can such men be admitted to the seminary.

There shall be no amnesty for Father Alfonsas Svarinskas or Father Sigitas Tamkevičius.

There are no plans to allow believers to publish a newspaper. Sermons are sufficient.

It is the Commissioner's belief that communications from priests are being written, not in order to gain anything, but to cause as much disturbance as possible. Such thinking can arise only in the minds of the atheists, among them, Petras Anilionis.

Of what use is "disturbance" to priests and faithful? The only useful thing would be freedom! Why is it that the one committing the injustice is doing all the complaining? For the sake of a disturbance or in order to stop being wronged? In the days of the Czar, the Lithuanians did not have a *Chronicle*, but they used to write complaints to the government concerning the unjust press ban; they used to write in order to regain freedom of the press. Does the one being wronged no longer have the right to cry out, and does Soviet law forbid the faithful, Soviet citizens, to apply to their own government with petitions?

Šiluva

The talk given by our Holy Father, John Paul II, to worshippers gathered in Rome, in the course of which the festival of Mary, the Mother of God was going on at Šiluva, was publicized to the faithful world-wide, evoking a deep response in the hearts of the faithful of Lithuania. Great crowds of the faithful from throughout Lithuania converged on the shrine in Šiluva to celebrate the eight-day festival of the Name of the Blessed Virgin Mary — *Šilinės*. However, the occasion this year did not pass without interference by the government. Purveyors of religious objects and those collecting signatures defending the interests of the faithful of Lithuania were picked up. The last day of the festival, buses from the bus terminal in Raseiniai and a taxi cruised, avoiding Šiluva. Among the faithful, people showed up who undertook to walk from Raseiniai to Šiluva. Along the way, the worshippers prayed the rosary for priest-prisoners and other prisoners of conscience.

Invited to give the sermons during the festival was the

pastor of Eržvilkas-Paupis, Father Petras Meilus. Everything was cleared with the *rayon* government. About ten days before the festival, the Office of Religious Affairs announced that Father Meilus would not be allowed to deliver the sermons at Šiluva. Msgr. V. Grauslys was ordered to draw up a list of priests from the nearest neighboring parishes. The situation was eased by the bishops who came to the festival, and who, without special permission of Petras Anilionis, delivered the sermons during the principal Mass: On Wednesday — priests' and temperance day — Antanas Vaičius, Bishop of Telšiai spoke, bringing out the beauty and power of faith and its importance in the life of the nation.

On Saturday, September 13, the traditional day dedicated to devotees of Mary, Bishop Julijonas Steponavičius celebrated the principal Mass and preached. In his sermon, the bishop presented arguments against the article published in Soviet *Woman* magazine, insulting the Blessed Virgin Mary and the feelings of the faithful, and urged everyone to pray in atonement.

On Sunday, Bishop Juozas Preikšas offered the principal Mass and preached, reminding worshippers of the special blessing bestowed by the Holy Father on the faithful praying at the religious festival of Šiluva. On Monday, Bishop Vincentas Sladkevičius spoke to the faithful.

Throughout the eight days of the festival, there were especially many people in church. Approximately 50,000 communions were distributed.

After the notorious swine fever, processions of worshippers from Tytuvėnai to Šiluva were strictly forbidden by the atheists. However, believing youth, zealous priests and worshippers joining in this beautiful initiative exchanged the procession for another form of prayer — penance. For several years now, the faithful praying the rosary together have been going around the church on their knees along the churchyard pavement. This year, urged by our Holy Father, John Paul II to participate actively in the festival of Šiluva, the faithful of Lithuania decided on nocturnal adoration in the church of Šiluva the night of September 13-14, and early in the morning with the rosary prayers on their lips, to go around the Šiluva church praying for the blessing of Mary, the Mother of God, for the nation and for the entire world. Several hundred of the faithful, most of them youth, participated in the procession of atonement.

Š i l u v a

On September 10, 1986, on the way back from the festival

of Šiluva, the pastor of the parish of Užuguostis, Father Jonas Katulis, stopped by the Raseiniai Farmers' Market. In taking out his wallet, he accidentally pulled out a handful of religious cards. Seeing them, an official in civilian garb introduced himself to the priest and asked him to stop by the militia station to check what he was carrying in his suitcase. Only when he realized that he had accosted a priest, the chekist relented.

Rozalimas (Pakruojis *Rayon*)

On June 8, 1986, in the church of Rozalimas, the religious feast of the Sacred Heart of Jesus was being celebrated. The church of Rozalimas has been considered a holy place by the faithful from of old, famous for its miraculous statue of Jesus of Nazareth. Crowds of worshippers usually throng to this festival. The pastor of the parish, Father Anicetas Kisielius, invited the pastor of Šeduva, Canon Bronius Antonaitis, to preach the sermon.

With about a week remaining before the festivals, officials of the *rayon* inquired of the chairman of the parish committee which of the priests would be delivering sermons during the festival. The chairman explained that Canon Antonaitis had been invited. Right before the festival, the *Rayon* Executive Committee Vice Chairwoman informed the pastor, Father Kisielius, by phone that the *rayon* government, in consultation with Vilnius, forbade Canon Antonaitis to deliver the sermon in the church of Rozalimas. "Let Canon Antonaitis pull in his little wings! Let him change his lifestyle! Let him renounce extremist views..." the Vice Chairwoman fumed.

Pilviškiai (Vilkaviškis *Rayon*)

On September 13, 1986, the administrative Commission of the Executive Committee of the Vilkaviškis *Rayon*, consisting of J. Urbonas, Vice Chairman B. Butkevičius, Secretary G. Gudžinskienė, members S. Kaspas G. Pabrinkienė and A. Krievienė fined Father Gvidonas Dovidaitis, Pastor of the parish of Pilviškiai, 25 rubles for organizing a trip to Karaliaučiai. Refusing to accept this verdict, Father Dovidaitis, on September 20 sent an open letter to *rayon* committee Vice Chairman Urbonas, and all members of the administrative committee.

"...During the French Revolution when crucifixes were banned from the schools, the mayor of one city expressed regrets over it. Immediately, he received a letter from the president dismissing him from his duties. The man dismissed sent the president

a letter in which he wrote 'I am going to hang your order for my dismissal on the wall. It will be my diploma of honor which will tell our children that obeying one's conscience is the most sacred thing in life.' To the same end and urged on by the same feelings, I am writing this letter.

"The letter which you sent me does not dishonor me as a priest. On the contrary, it is like a citation of honor.

"You and your colleagues who took part in my punishment may be at peace with your consciences because you behaved according to law. It is not long ago that citizens of Jewish ethnicity and some other countries were not allowed to use the sidewalks. They had to walk out in the road like animals. All that was done in keeping with the law. Those same Jews were shot, and that was done also in keeping with the law. During the German occupation, my former professor, the Rev. Canon Dr. J. Stakauskas, while director of the Vilnius State Archives, saved eighteen Jews from death. According to the law, he was liable to death, but he obeyed his conscience and not the laws posted on every lamppost. During the terrible war years, he remained a man unafraid of anything when many promulgators of the law and executors of the law became beasts. He was involved in rescuing people at the very time when others, based on the law, gladly shot thousands.

"How history and mankind judged those laws and their executors we know today.

"Laws are not permanent, they change because those who promulgate them change. Those who in defending the law forget to be human are to be pitied.

"It is too bad and shameful when a person loves only himself, only his own comfort and convenience, but it is worse and more shameful when a person loves that which is not worth loving, when a person fears that which must not be feared and which degrades a person; when a person chooses for his gods those things which serve to degrade and shame him.

"Every one of us regrets much in our life; no one has ever or will ever regret what good he did..."

Father Gvidonas Dovidaitis writes in his letter that during the session of the Administrative Commission he was not even allowed to explain himself: "When I asked them to define the terms, for example, 'What is an excursion?', not one of the five women was able to answer. Instead of explaining, they shouted, 'Don't interrupt!' and on this note the session ended."

The letter indicates that in the warrant, the date of the

excursion is incorrect, as are the places visited. The directors of serious offices should investigate matters more seriously, otherwise, they can just become objects of ridicule. Such "information" shows up in warrants because there is too much dependence on hearsay or conjecture, and this does not befit serious agencies.

'So we learn from history and mistakes. Let us be students," Father Gvidonas Dovidaitis ends his open letter.

Kiaukliai (Širvintai Rayon)

On March 11, 1986, Rimantas Bilotas, Executor of the Širvintai Rayon Court and Mrs. Janina Cetrauskienė, Director of the District Draft Board, came to the rectory of the parish in Kiaukliai. They demanded that the pastor, Father Rokas Puzonas, pay a 50 ruble fine for a procession of the faithful which took place on All Souls' Day last year. When Father Puzonas stated that such fines are illegal, and that he considered them as discrimination against the faithful, the officials in the presence of witnesses Algimantas Danilevičius and Arūnas Naina, picked from the priest's personal library approximately seventeen books worth 50 rubles and drew up a lien. The pastor refused to sign the lien.

Kiaukliai

On June 3, 1986, Teofilė Gaidamavičienė, mother of Father Pranas Gaida, Editor of *Tėviškes Žiburiai*, was interred in the cemetery of Kiaukliai. The deceased had attained ninety-four years of age, ten of which she had spent, together with other members of the family, in Igarka, in Siberian exile. Holy Mass for the soul of the deceased was celebrated by the pastor, Father Rokas Puzonas, together with priests from the neighboring parishes: Father Jonas Tomkus, pastor of Želva and Father Antanas Arminas, pastor of Pusnė. During the homily, the difficult and sensitive role of the Lithuanian mother was described. People went to communion in great numbers, and all three priests accompanied the remains to the cemetery. Here, *Marija, Marija* and *Lietuva brangi* were sung.

Immediately after the funeral, Chairman Vladas Karaliūnas of the Živuliai District; Aldona Kalinina, a teacher in the Middle School and Communal Farm Party organizer Juozas Sabakuonis showed up at the Kiaukliai parish rectory and filled out a complaint in which it was indicated that Father Puzonas, during the funeral of the deceased, Mrs. Gaidamavičienė, organized a procession to the cemetery, thus transgressing against Art. 214 of the Code of LSSR Administrative Law. The pastor refused to sign

the document, explaining that it is the duty of a priest to accompany the deceased to the cemetery.

On July 16, Father Puzonas received a written summons to come to the Širvintai *Rayon* Executive Committee where an administrative case concerning the funeral of Mrs. Gaidamavičienė would be considered. The priest did not go to this "parody" of a trial. On July 22, outside the rectory of Kiaukliai, District Chairman V. Karaliūnas was again waiting together with school Principal Jadvyga Gaitienė and Party organizer Sabakuonis. The chairman stated the pastor had committed two transgressions against law and order: on June 17, accompanying the deceased Juozas Geliūnas to the cemetery and June 19, organizing a procession from church to cemetery to the grave of the Polkas' little son who had died tragically last year. The officials threatened to punish the priest for every time he accompanied the deceased to the cemetery. The pastor explained that he would never obey laws contradicting church law and tradition, and asked in the future that they never bother him on such matters.

July 22, Father Puzonas received an announcement that for the funeral of the late T. Gaidamavičienė, he had been given a 50 ruble fine.

Molėtai

On June 19, 1986, at 11 o'clock, Executive Committee Vice Chairwoman Danutė Gancerienė, Secretary Šidagienė, Financial Section staff Girskienė, Teacher Losinskienė of Middle School I, Teacher Laučkienė and Teacher Kirilova of Middle School II, came to the parish church in Molėtai and found 70 children. On August 20, 1986, the newspaper *Tarybinis mokytojas (The Soviet Teacher)* carried Vytautas Mockevičius' article in which he writes, "... the Commission determined that in the church of Molėtai, two groups of children: those from Molėtai, Utena, Panevėžys, Vilnius and other city schools were being taught catechism collectively by Father Juozas Kaminskas and by Miss Stasė Rokaitė, who was helping him. The author of the article affirms that the children are not the property of the parents, and such a "crime", the teaching and preparation of children for First Communion, is a transgression of "Constitutional guarantees of freedom of conscience."

Šilalė

On July 17, 1986, Director Lesčiauskas of the Interschool Manufacturing Combine (*Tarpmokyklinio Gamybinio kombinato*)

forced his way once more into the church of Šilalė, bringing along with him Chairwoman J. Paulauskienė of the *Rayon* Executive Committee and Mrs. O. Gudanavičienė, inspector of Minors' Affairs. This was the second visit government officials to the church of Šilalė (see CCCL No. 71 — Ed. Note), the so-called commission found in church some elderly women and a group of children preparing for their questioning prior to First Confession. The pastor, Father A. Ivanauskas, was faulted because of the fact that the children were in church without their parents, and a citation was written out. On July 21, Father Ivanauskas was summoned to a meeting of the *Rayon* Executive Committee Administrative Commission. Since it effected not only the pastor but the entire parish of Šilalė, and especially the families of believers which were preparing their children for First Confession and Communion, on the appointed day, when the priest showed up at the *Rayon* Executive Committee offices, there were already nearly two hundred persons with a petition to the chairman of the *Rayon* Executive Committee.

In the petition, the faithful expressed their displeasure at the arbitrariness of the officials. They wrote: "Not one of the children came to church without knowledge of their parents. First time, their parents brought them and stated that their child wants and they wish that their children make their First Confession and Communion. The parents of children of that age are all workers and not pensioners. "And if we," the parents wrote, "stayed in church with our children for hours on end during working hours, what then would the government and our superiors say? Hence, Lesčiauskas' statement that the children cannot be in church without their parents is meaningless and ill-conceived... We are annoyed at the repeated intrusion of government officials into church, and we advise them to carry out such raids and to go after thieves, drunkards and those committing wrong. Then they would really contribute to the betterment of our nation... We request that the *Rayon* government stop these attacks in church."

The petition was signed by over three hundred believers. The Administrative Commission, consisting of Chairwoman Karinauskienė, Secretary G. Piperienė and members V. Alonderienė, A. Juška and J. Šimelio on the pastor, Father A. Ivanauskas, a fine of 50 rubles.

Pajevonys (*Vilkaviškis Rayon*)

On July 22, 1986, in Pajevonys, the centenary of the erection of the church was being celebrated. His Excellency, Bishop

Juozas Preikšas, came to the ceremonies. Regardless of the fact that the bishop's visit to the parish was cleared with the Commissioner for Religious Affairs in Vilnius, Vice Chairman J. Urbonas of the *Rayon* Executive Committee summoned the pastor of Pajevonys, Father Juozas Pečiukonis, reprimanded him and gave him a warning in the name of the *rayon* government.

Veisiejai (Lazdijai *Rayon*)

On August 10, 1986, a religious festival was being celebrated in Veisiejai. Because the pastor, Father Stasys Mikalajūnas, without consulting the *rayon* government invited clergy help for the festival, the *Rayon* Administrative Commission fined the Chairman of the Veisiejai Church Committee 25 rubles.

Paringys (Ignalina *Rayon*)

During the summer of 1986, the Sacrament of Confirmation was administered in the parish church of Paringys. Participating in the solemnities without benefit of *rayon* government permission were priests of surrounding parishes: Ignalina, Melagėnai, Tverečius, Švenčionai and Švenčionėliai. The Ignalina *Rayon* Executive Committee considered it a crime, and officially warned the pastor of the parish of Paringys, Father Edmundas Paulionis, and the church committee.

August 12, 1986, the *Rayon* newspaper *Nauja vaga* (*The New Furrow*), published an article by Chief Inspector V. Kizas of the Council for Religious Affairs entitled, "Some Thoughts Recalling a Religious Holiday." Chief Inspector Kizas quoting and subjectively interpreting some paragraphs of Canon Law such as 526.1 and others, tried to show that the *Regulations for Religious Associations* do not contravene Canon Law, and therefore priests inviting clergy of neighboring parishes without the knowledge and approval of the government commit a transgression not only against the government, but against Canon Law.

Utena

The Utena *Rayon* government punishes pastors severely for inviting guest priests to religious festivals without *rayon* government approval. The Utena *Rayon* newspaper *Lenino keliu* (*Lenin's Way*), September 11, published an article by *Rayon* Attorney General K. Rakauskas, "We Are Not Allowed to Break the Law: It Is the Same for Everyone", in which he writes, "The pastor of Saldutiškis, Zenonas Navickas, was warned last year by the *Rayon* Ex-

ecutive Committee and the *Rayon* Attorney General that it is permissible to invite clergy from other parishes to religious festivals and allow them to carry out ceremonies of worship only with consent of the local government..."

Navickas did not respond to the warnings so he was taken to criminal court. Lately, Navickas has been repeating the same "offenses". He invited priests from Kuktiškis, Labanoras and Tauragnai to the festival to carry out religious rites. According to the law, every minister has the right to hold services only in the parish to which he is assigned... Bronius Šlapelis, the pastor of the parish in Tauragnai, and Juozas Šumskis of Užpaliai are constantly offending against this arrangement.

The pastor of Kirdeikiai, Father Juozas Zubrus, upon his arrival in the *rayon*, began visiting the families of workers at the state farm in Kirdeikiai, and advising the children of the workers how to choose a specialty. What does such activity on the part of the minister of cult have to do with satisfying the needs of the faithful? The entire task in connection with the rearing and education of children, their choice of a profession, is taken care of by the appropriate organs. Hence, the intrusion of a priest in what is none of his affair can not be justified.

The requirements of Par. 50 of the *Regulations for Religious Associations* are still not being fulfilled. This paragraph forbids the carrying out of religious rituals and ceremonies out-of-doors, and in the apartments and homes of believers, without special permission of the *Rayon* and City Council of Peoples' Deputies. Transgressing against these requirements, Miss Apolonija Leleivaitė has, since May 1 of this year, been organizing services in her home. Some individuals have been involved in vending activities around the house of worship or the churchyard during religious festivals. In this way, on August 17, outside the church of Utena, engaging in vending activities were a resident of our city, the pensioner Alina Pakalienė, daughter of Antanas; charwoman Elena Velykienė, daughter of Juozas, employed at the the polyclinic... this is a misdemeanor carrying with it for our citizens a fine of up to 50 rubles. Both of the women will be suitably punished.

Government officials told the pastor of Saldutiškis, Father Zenonas Navickas, that he was not allowed under any circumstances to invite Father Petras Baltuška to the festival, since he is included by the government among the priest-extremists.

Fined 50 rubles apiece were the following priests of the Utena jRayon: The pastor of Užpaliai, Father Juozas Šumskis; the

Pastor of Sudeikiai, Father Povilas Juozėnas; the pastor of Palkaniai, Father Petras Baniulis; the pastor of Tauragnai, Father Bronius Šlapelis; the pastor of Saldutiškis, Father Zenonas Navickas; the pastor of Kirdeikiai, Father Jonas Zubrus; moreover, he was warned by the Commissioner for Religious Affairs himself, Petras Anilionis.

Kuršėnai (Šiauliai *Rayon*)

On October 15, 1986, at about 1:00 P.M., two men came to see Father Stanislovas Ilinčius, Dean of Kuršėnai. One of them identified himself as Ažuolas, and demanded 20,000 rubles from the dean for "the liberation of Lithuania". He boasted that the bishops had allegedly commissioned him to collect funds for that purpose. In an effort to convince him, he pulled out and held up a 'list of priests' who allegedly already donated money, and how much they donated. When the dean refused to discuss the matter with the peaceniks, one of them drew out a revolver and began making threats. The pastor calmly replied, "Yell all you want, I'm an old man anyway." At that point, the robber put his weapon back in his pocket and tried with blandishments to convince Father Ilinčius that it was necessary for him to collect the required sum of money, and promised to return for talk.

On the day when the provocateurs made their visit, Assistant Pastor Edmundas Atkočiūnas, living upstairs, was summoned to the offices of the Šiauliai *Rayon* government. When he returned, he found the "visitors" still speaking with the pastor. One could sense that something bad was happening, but the "visitors" would not allow the pastor to be called out and promised to terminate the conversation soon. The threats and arguments lasted about two hours.

From Kuršėnai, the provocateurs went to Gruzdžiai to see Father Juozas Čepėnas and presented him with similar demands, but some visitors gave the pastor a chance to excuse himself from his unwelcome guests. A few days later, those same characters tried to "have a talk" with Vytautas Kapočius, the pastor, but frightened by some parishioners, they took off.

The faithful of Lithuania estimate that this wave of threats and provocations is one way of frightening the priests prior to the Lithuanian Christianity Jubilee.

Panevėžys

On April 7, 1986, city and *rayon* church committee mem-

bers were summoned to the Panevėžys *Rayon* Executive Committee. Some of those who gathered unofficially were propagandists for atheism who, posing as believers, would submit compromising questions. The meeting was conducted by Assistant Commissioner for Religious Affairs Jozėnas, Representative Sruogius of the City of Panevėžys and *Rayon* Executive Staff member Miss Bernotevičiūtė.

At the beginning of the meeting, Jozėnas boasted that thanks to the atheistic government, twenty-one seminarians finished the seminary and were ordained to the priesthood; twenty-one priests visited countries in the West and seven priests visited Africa. Then followed a whole list of prohibitions and threats... priests are forbidden to teach children religion. The teaching of children is a challenge to the law: as an example, he mentioned the parishes of Krekanava and Vaduokliai, whose pastors had been appropriately penalized for teaching children. For visiting priests to give sermons during religious festivals, *rayon* permission is necessary. Jozėnas was particularly displeased by a letter of the priests of Panevėžys to General Secretary Gorbachev. The pastor of the parish of Vaduokliai, Father Boleslovas Babrauskas, and the emeritus priest of Raguva, Father Jonas Vaičiūnas, he called "professional provocateurs" and he promised to square accounts with them at the nearest opportunity. The speaker urged committee members not to allow priests to take up collections in church, or to show slides; he demanded accurate, statistical information concerning the numbers in the parish baptised, married, etc.

The Assistant Commissioner emphasized that all this was atheistic education and could not be called persecution in any way, and he promised all those who did not want to see it that way the same fate as that of Fathers Alfonsas Svarinskas and Sigitas Tamkevičius.

Mikoliškiai (*Kretinga Rayon*)

On October 3, 1986, a small wooden statue of the Sorrowful Mother of God was stolen from the churchyard of Mikoliškiai.

Nevarėniai (*Telšiai Rayon*)

The night of October 18, 1986, culprits broke into the church of Nevarėniai through a window protected by bars and, cutting the wires, made off with the church's large, antique chandelier.

Vilnius

The Dominican Church of the Holy Spirit in Vilnius was

robbed: the offering boxes and sacristy safe were robbed. The church of Sudervė in the *Rayon* of Vilnius has been robbed twice. The churches of Dūkštas and others in the Vilnius area have been burglarized.

Adakavas (Tauragė*Rayon*)

On December 9, 1985, a group of the faithful from Adakavas participated in the anniversary Mass for their late pastor, Father Valentinas Šikšnys in Nevarėnai, *Rayon* of Telšiai. In a few days, all those who had participated in the priest's anniversary were found out: Those who had missed work or school had to submit written explanations. The case histories of those who had been ill that day were investigated at the polyclinic; just as a year ago, government officials went around visiting people. Party Secretary Budrikis of the Communal Farm *Tarybinės Kelias (The Soviet Way)*, Chairman Kolpavičius, Union President Jankevičius, Skaudvilė District Chairman Mikašauskas, Adakavas Eight-grade school principal Bajoriūnienė and Director Dikšas of the Home for the Elderly, distinguished themselves by their "zeal" in interrogating, threatening and pressuring people.

Gargždai (Klaipėda*Rayon*)

On October 4, 1986, the Catholics of Gargždai wrote to CPSU Central Committee General Secretary Mikhail Gorbachev demanding that orders finally be given to the local government to allow raising the roof of the Gargždai church building-barracks. To date, the local government, especially *Rayon* Vice Chairman A. Leita, has only ridiculed the requests of the faithful. The petition was signed by 1,162 Catholics.

Mikoliškiai (Kretinga *Rayon*)

On October 12, 1986, the faithful of the parish wrote a petition to the Council for Religious Affairs requesting that the Commissioner not prevent the parish of Mikoliškiai from obtaining a bus which is needed to bring the elderly to church. When people in Pskov arrange with Moscow agencies concerning the renting of a bus, those agencies immediately receive a letter from Petras Anilionis forbidding them to sell a bus to the parish of Mikoliškiai. This is the way the decision of the LSSR Supreme Court allowing religious associations to obtain means of transportation is carried out in practice. The petition was signed by 185 faithful of the parish of Mikoliškiai.

Viešvėnai (Telšiai *Rayon*)

On October 5, 1985, in Viešvėnai, Bronius Savickis, a disabled war veteran and long-time sacristan in the parish of Viešvėnai, was interred. Among the participants in the funeral were the children of the Viešvėnai eight-grade school. By order of Vice-principal Riešotienė, children with flowers or wreaths had to stand outside. Expelled from the church, they stood around in the belfry since it was cold and raining outside.

Kelmė

On March 26, 1986, at 10:00 P.M., two officials in uniform showed up at the home of Regina Teresiūtė, at Laisvės 11, Kelmė. Not finding Miss Teresiūtė at home, they began shouting and frightening her parents, calling their daughter a parasite and tramp, and threatening to put Regina in jail. They made the girl's father sign some vague documents. At the time, Miss Teresiūtė was employed as organist in the parish of Žalpiai. The officials demanded that when their daughter returned, she should report to the Rayon Internal Affairs Department. When Miss Teresiūtė went to the department, she was told that Žalpiai parish committee chairman Vasiliauskas had terminated her contract three months earlier and so if she did not quickly obtain government employment, she would be brought to trial for parasitism. Arguing that after she finished Middle School she had not been allowed, on account of her religious beliefs, to go on for further studies, Miss Teresiūtė declared that she would go to prison rather than take government employment. As it later became clear, Chairman Vasiliauskas of the Žalpiai church committee had been threatened by officials that if he kept the "political criminal" on the church payroll, he could expect unpleasantness. He was forced to abrogate her contract without informing Miss Teresiūtė.

Since April 1, 1986, Miss Teresiūtė has been working as laundrywoman and charwoman in the parishes of Žarėnai-Latveliai and Bazilonai, but the persecution did not stop. From time to time, Regina's parents are terrorized by visiting militiamen, demanding that the parents use their influence with their daughter to defer to the demands of government officials that she not work for the church. At about 3:00 A.M., the night of May 22, 1986, two uniformed officials knocked at the door of the Teresius' home. Since the militiamen did not deign to introduce themselves or explain for what purpose they were trying to get in, the Teresius' did not admit

them.

Vilnius

On September 29, 1986, resident Jonas Sadūnas was summoned to a delegates' meeting of Building Cooperative No. 99. Cooperative Chairman Petras Žiupsnys inquired why Sadūnas had not brought his sister Nijolė Sadūnaitė, to the meeting. Jonas Sadūnas explained that Nijolė had been expelled from the cooperative fourteen months previously, and so was not obliged to attend meetings; that moreover, she was not a little child who needed to be brought. Žiupsnys declared that Nijolė Sadūnaitė is supposed to reclaim from the State Bank the dues which belonged to her after she was expelled from the cooperative. He added that if she did not withdraw her money within a month, her money would be transferred to a savings account, and if she did not withdraw it for three years, the money would be turned over to the state account (Nijolė Sadūnaitė has paid in 5,000 for her apartment.). Žiupsnys complained that it was five years since he had seen Nijolė Sadūnaitė, and he was trying to find out where she was living. Her brother explained that Nijolė Sadūnaitė had been unjustly expelled from membership in the cooperative, since there are no set limits on a member's absence from his or her own cooperative apartment. Ziupsnys complained that Nijolė Sadūnaitė travels about the whole Soviet Union and so it is practically impossible to find her.

Seda

"At the intersection of six highways, there is a beautiful corner of Samogitia named Seda. The surrounding areas are beautiful to see. Particularly interesting is Plinkšės. Here lies Lake Plinkšiai, surrounded by the forests in which a confrontation took place between some insurgents and the army in 1863.

"Between Lake Plinkšiai and the Sruojas Stream lies a knoll called the Maidens' Hill or Maidens' Fortress Hill. It is said that within it were hidden tunnels leading under the lake to a park. Into them, about two thousand young women had fled to hide from the Swedes. The latter found them and sealed the entrance with a boulder. From beneath it, a spring is said to have burst forth from the women's tears."

This is how Č. Kudaba describes Plinkšės, a little corner of Samogitia, in his book *The Knolls of Samogitia*. This year marks the 360th anniversary of those times when the Swedes overran our land.

Kudaba writes, "This is an important topic: the long struggle of the people against their oppressors. Samogitia was decorated with material cultural monuments by common working people who embodied bright dreams for the future in their creative efforts which the socialist era appreciates and preserves..."

As a matter of fact, looking at contemporary events, we cannot agree with the author's words, "...appreciates and preserves".

Four years ago, on the night of April 3, twenty crosses and two shrines "under state protection" on Maidens' Hill were demolished. Residents of the district and the entire believing public were outraged by the "action" on the part of local atheists and former KGB Chief Laskutov. Complaints were written to the LSSR Council of Ministers, the Central Committee of the Communist Party of Lithuania, the Adjutant General's office in Moscow, the Secretary of the Central Committee of the Lithuanian Communist Party and the television program Argumentai. Instead of looking for the culprits, they investigated those who signed the petitions. In spite of this outflanking on the part of the government atheists, Maidens' Hill lives. From time to time, believing people dare to erect crosses on the hill. This is followed by investigations, surveillance and attempts to detect the "culprits". Obviously, the crosses are immediately uprooted.

During the annual religious festival of Žemaičių Kalvarija (Calvary of the Lowlanders), Maidens' Hill is guarded day and night by the army, and the KGB, which not only prevent anyone from driving up to it, but also from approaching it on foot. Those who try to get in touch with our national history by visiting the hillock are investigated, blackmailed and threatened.

Skuodas

Following is an article entitled, "He built Himself a Pen," which appeared in the Skuodas *Rayon* newspaper, *Mūsų žodis (Our Word)*, February 18, 1986:

"In 1930, the pastor of Ylakai told parishioners to pay an assessment of one *litas* per hectare allegedly for construction of a livestock pen. He would collect the money during the annual parish visitation. I gave no money and the pastor became angry:

"Why won't you help Holy Church?"

"Because, Father, you are comparing the Church with a pigpen,' I replied. 'Let those who wish to raise porkers build their own pigpen.'

"The pastor threatened, 'You're going to have trouble. We'll see!'

"The following year, my husband's father died. When I went to the rectory, the pastor looked at me angrily, referring to some sort of book, and ordered me to 'pay up'.

"'Last year, you didn't pay 10 *litas*, so this year, you must pay 20.'

"I was 2 *litas* short, and the pastor pushed the money back to me. I was forced to borrow and 'pay up'. The pastor won out.

"Eleven years went by. During the early days of the first occupation under fascist Germany, Father Martinkus in a sermon complained, 'Those Communists and atheists would have created a famine and a depression. Let us make an offering to god for for saving us!'

'With the approach of the liberation of Lithuania, Martinkus took off for the West and now he vilifies Soviet Lithuania over Vatican Radio. No wonder. There they pay Martinkus more than was collected in his old parish for the construction of the pigpen, and it appears to be perfectly alright for a representative of Holy Church to besmirch himself with offal for money."

This article was no accident. In *rayon* newspapers, an entire page under the general title "*Akiratis*" ("Horizon") is devoted to such libel quite often, as it was this time. In the *Rayon* of Skuodas, authorship of articles such as this one is usually claimed by Ona Vičiulienė. It is difficult to believe that being barely literate and a long-time resident of the infirmary, the little old lady would have any interest in journalism. It is much easier to believe that the dis-seminators of partisan libel against the Church, religion and clergy are merely hiding behind the little old lady's name, the more so since there is not a grain of truth in the article. In the church of Skuodas, the pastor of Šačiai, Father Vincentas Senkus, rebutted the aforesaid article. He explained:

1. In 1930, Martinkus could not have collected money from the parishioners, since at that time he was not only not the pastor, but he was not even a priest. He was in the second year of the seminary. This is documented in the 1930 edition of the directory entitled *Elenchus*.

2. Father Martinkus never was stationed in Ylakai. He worked in the nearby parish of Židikai, where he erected not a pigpen, but a rectory. The latter had been confiscated and has been so neglected by the "peoples' protectors" that, as a matter of fact, it is reminiscent of a pigpen.

By the efforts of Father Martinkus, a shrine was erected in the Cemetery of Židikai, where the writer and educator Marija Pečkauskaitė, well known to everyone, is interred.

3. The accusation that Father Martinkus is presently vilifying Soviet Lithuania over Vatican Radio is an unprecedented accusation, since it is about ten years since he died!

This is the kind of "truth" which Soviet citizens are fed!

IN THE SOVIET REPUBLICS

The 800-year Jubilee Celebration of Latvian Christianity

This year, the Catholics of Latvia commemorate the 800-year jubilee of the consecration of Latvia's first bishop. In 1180, the Augustinian monk Meinhardt came to what is today Latvia, together with German merchants, and began the work of proclaiming the Gospel. Here, among Lyves and Curlanders living here on the right bank of the Daugava River in Ikšķilē (now the *Rayon* of Uogre, not far from Riga), he erected the first Catholic church in the Baltic region. In 1186, Bishop Hartwig II of Bremen, Hamburg, consecrated Meinhardt the first Bishop of Latvia. Pope Clement III, in a letter written 1188, described Meinhardt as a devout and wise man, endowed with the gifts of the Holy Spirit. He succeeded in planting the seed of God's word among the Lyves, and in spite of the refined efforts of the current atheistic regime, Catholicism has not been destroyed.

The 800-year jubilee celebration by the Catholics of Latvia is a glimmer of hope, encouraging them to persevere during these difficult times of government atheism. In preparation for celebrating the 600 anniversary of the conversion of Lithuania next year, let us see how the atheistic government has allowed our brothers the Latvians to celebrate a similar jubilee. Anyone visiting a Catholic church in Latvia can see hanging in the announcement cases a brief history of the introduction of Christianity into Latvia, in which the Venedic, that is Slavic, origin of Meinhardt is emphasized, and the peaceful nature of his missionary activities is brought out. Among other things, in the Baltic region, he is considered a saint, although according to present norms of the Church, devotion to him is not officially sanctioned. (Just as in the case of our Blessed Mykolas Giedraitis.)

In the publicity, a history of the Church of Ikšķilē is given. This church stood until World War I, when it was demolished. Its ruins have survived to the present day on the premises of a bus

storage depot.

Celebration of the jubilee began May 25, the Feast of the Holy Trinity, with a Mass celebrated by the now deceased Bishop Valerian Zondak in Riga's Catholic Cathedral of Saint James, after which a commemoration of the jubilee was arranged for a hand-picked audience at the seminary. Rank-and-file Catholics were unable to participate in this commemoration, while the Commissioner for Religious Affairs sat in the place of honor.

In the beginning of June, a group of bishops and priests visiting from Western Germany with Cardinal Archbishop Vetter of Munich and Preising made the Catholics of Latvia very happy. On June 5, with the guests concelebrating Holy Mass, the Catholic Cathedral of Riga was filled beyond capacity, even though it was a regular workday, a Thursday. The Catholics of Latvia were overjoyed by the gift of the Catholics of Germany: a statue of Meinhardt, the first bishop of Latvia. The guests visited the desecrated tomb of Bishop Meinhardt in the Cathedral of the Mother of God in Riga, which has been converted into a concert hall. Here, a concert of religious music was presented for the guests from Germany. In the "concert hall", the guests had the opportunity of placing flowers on the tomb of the baptizer of Latvia, and to pray there. If the ordinary Catholic of Latvia tried to do so, he would be penalized for disorderly conduct, for hooliganism. It would be interesting to know whom the atheists will allow next year to place a bouquet on the tomb of one of the baptizers of Lithuania — Grand Duke Vytautas of Lithuania — in the desecrated Cathedral of Vilnius.

The atheistic government made one other concession to the clergy from Western Germany allowing them to offer Mass on the ruins of the first church erected by Bishop Meinhardt in Ikšķilē, in the yard of the bus depot. Rank-and-file Catholics were not told of these services. The only participants at the Mass were a few diocesan chancery staff. A delegation of Catholic bishops from Vietnam was allowed to come to Latvia for the jubilee.

The main celebration of the jubilee took place in the famous Latvian shrine of Agluona, where there is a miraculous picture of the Mother of God, similar to that of the venerable picture in Trakiai. The Catholics of Latvia assert that the authentic picture given by the Emperor of Byzantium to Grand Duke Vytautas of Lithuania on the occasion of his baptism is really in Agluona, and that the one at Trakiai is just a copy. We Lithuanians maintain just the opposite. But this is of no importance. The Catholics of the two sister nations are bound by a common love for Mary, the Mother of

God. Ordinarily, the principal festival at Agluona takes place in connection with the Feast of the Assumption. It lasts for one day; this is all the atheists will allow.

This year, the atheists allowed the principal festival to be celebrated for three days, August 15, 16 and 17.

The principal jubilee sermon was preached by Father Lukšas, pastor of the Church of Saint Albert in Riga, while at the end, Cardinal Vaivods spoke. He rejoiced that apparently the most difficult times of persecution have passed. Twenty years ago, when Bishop Struodas tried to come from Riga for the festival in Agluona, the militia stopped his car and turned it around, whereas now, they do not dare to prevent him from coming to this shrine.

Participating in the celebration were more worshippers than in other years. A whole list of groups of worshippers, especially converts from Lutheranism, came to Agluona on foot from as far away as Riga. The militia did not stop them, even though participants silently recited the rosary and otherwise prayed.

These are very uncertain signs of the easing up on the part of the atheistic government. In the Catholic churches of Riga, the atheists now tolerate children serving at Mass and participating in processions. In the provinces where foreigners rarely go, this is still strictly forbidden.

At the Feast of the Ascención during this jubilee year, the atheists perpetrated a very unpleasant insult against the Catholics of Riga: when the Ascencion procession came out of the Church of Saint Francis into the churchyard, even though it was 12:00 noon of a Sunday, loud dance music was broadcast from the nearby dance pavilion erected on the site of the former cemetery...

On August 1, the four bishops of Lithuania: Bishop Julijonas Steponavičius the Apostolic Administrator of Vilnius; Bishop Vincentas Sladkevičius, Apostolic Administrator of Kaišiadorys; Bishop Antanas Vaičius, Apostolic Administrator of Telšiai and Bishop Juozas Preikšas, Auxiliary to the Apostolic Administrator of Kaunas and Vilkaviškis, participated in the funeral services for His Excellency, Bishop Zondak. The Catholics of Latvia expressed regret that the atheistic government allows the bishops from neighboring Lithuania to take part only in the sad celebration of funerals while they would have wished to see the bishops of Lithuania also at the jubilee celebration in Agluona

We wonder whether the atheists will allow the bishops of Latvia to take part in the 600-year jubilee of the baptism of Lithuania. Let us wait and see!

NEW UNDERGROUND PUBLICATIONS

Aušra (*The Dawn*), No. 52 (92). In February, 1986, a new issue of *Aušra* appeared. The theme of the editorial, "Only on the Way Indicated by Christ," is concern for the future of humanity. "If we do not want future generations to be frightened by terrible concepts, and that black reality: slavery, occupation, aggression, colonialism, racism, fascism, greedy capitalism, atheistic communism and the like would not frighten future generations, we are obliged to carry out the Gospel message of love which destroys the bacteria of hatred, deceit, greed, exploitation and repression, and brings about a healthy spiritual life for human kind; it is a duty to carry the evangelical idea of life to all corners of the world. There is no alternative. We must grasp all that today since tomorrow may be too late."

The publication carries the text of an appeal of Lithuania's Catholics to President Ronald Reagan of the U.S.A., U.S.S.R. General Secretary M. Gorbachev and all the nations of the world. On the occasion of his 60th birthday and the eve of the 34th anniversary of his imprisonment, political prisoner Balys Gajauskas is greeted with verse.

The reader is introduced to the activities of Father Ambraziejus Jakavonis on the 100th anniversary of his birth. There is a continuation of Vladas Lapienis' *Memoirs of a Soviet Prisoner*.

Lithuanian, remember that:

Father Alfonsas Svarinskas, Father Sigitas Tamkevičius, Father Jonas-Kaštytis Matulionis, Docent Vytautas Skuodis, Algis Patackas, Viktoras Petkus, Balys Gajauskas, Povilas Pečeliūnas, Liudas Dambrauskas, Vladas Lapienis, Gintautas Iešmantas, Antanas Terleckas, Algirdas Statkevičius

and others bear the chains of imprisonment so that you might be able to believe and live in freedom.

(Trans, note: Since the translation of this document, the following prisoners have been released: Father Jonas-Kaštytis Matulionis, Docent Vytautas Skuodis, Algis Patackas, Povilas Pečeliūnas, Liudas Dambrauskas, Vladas Lapienis, Gintautas Iešmantas, Antanas Terleckas and Algirdas Statkevičius. Vytautas Skuodas emigrated to the United States of America on September 8, 1987.)

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