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LITHUANIAN - AMERICAN
NEWSLETTER

THE YEAR OF ST. CASIMIR, 1484-1984

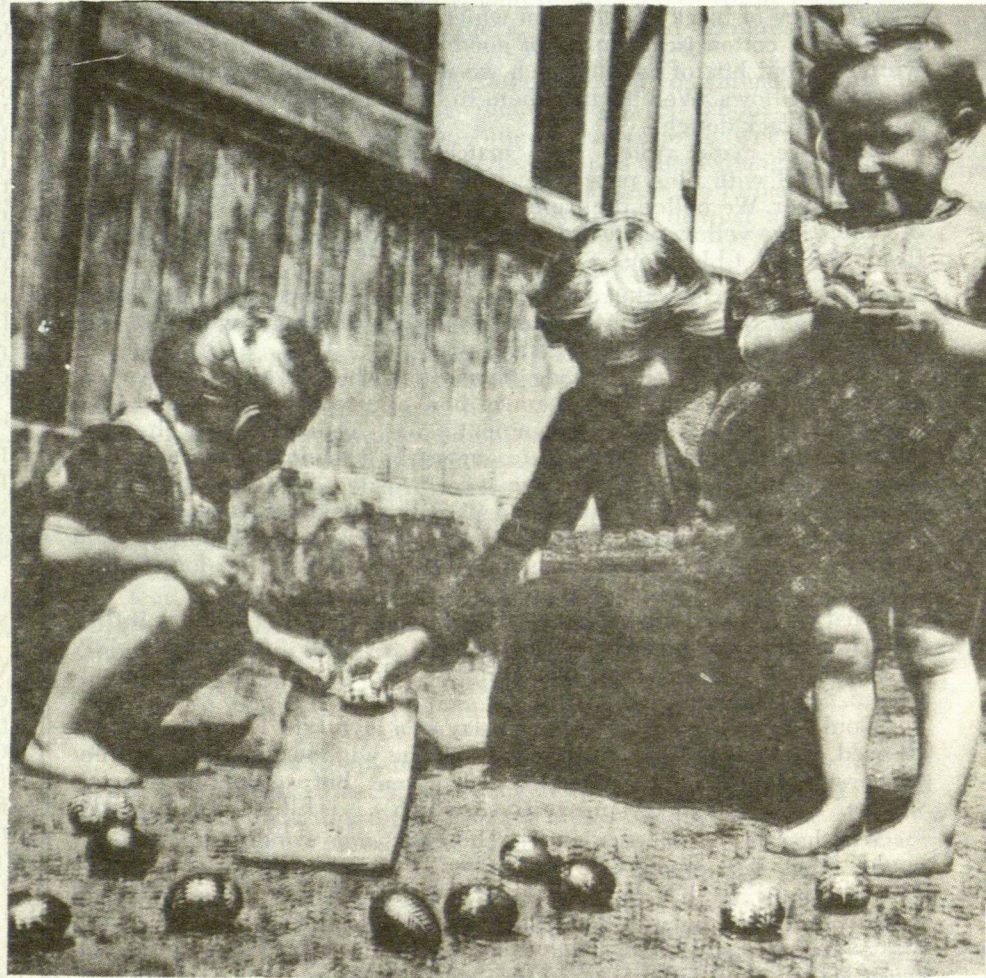
Vol. 8, No. 4, April, 1984

A HAPPY LITHUANIAN EASTER!

People all over the world, throughout eons, have regarded the egg both as a simple reality and a symbol, often mystical. Lithuanian Easter eggs are special. Each is a symbolic package stacked with folk art, folk lore, rich with pagan and Christian beliefs, charms, magic rituals, inciting varied games for children and adults, and historically the motive for small humorous folk dramas. Our Easter eggs are like the galaxies spinning in the heavens — starbursts and sunflares — but earthly reminiscent of fishbones and snowflakes. The earth and heaven are linked in the Lithuanian Easter egg, a symbol of universal love.

Families and friends exchange Easter eggs. Girls present their finest eggs to attract young men. Eggs are lovingly left on graves. It was once believed that Easter eggshells, buried in the four corners of the field, would insure a fine harvest. An egg, buried under the threshold, would protect the family from evil. An egg, buried in cow manure in the barn, would protect the cows from serpents intent on consuming cowmilk.

The earth itself is like an



Little people celebrating Easter in Lithuania 1933

Buračas photo

egg. In the springtime, out of its cold hard shell bursts the colorful excitement of life. And people themselves spend their lifetimes breaking out of their shells. At birth the foetus emerges from the shell of the womb and spends years learning to become a complete human being. At death,

he has the final shell to break through, a fire-tried spirit emerging into unimaginable dimensions.

We wish you a Happy Easter. May your tree of life, which encloses the cross in its heart, reach great heights that lead to the Resurrection. — **Damutė**

EASTER FRAGMENTS: SIBERIA 1949

Elena Juciūtė

In our prison cell, we felt that spring had arrived; the violets were blooming in the woods and branches had adorned themselves with pussywillows. We longed for these beauties of spring, but here such pleasures were not within our reach.

It was Easter time and, deliberately, we acquired the traditional pussywillows and violets: we made them ourselves. We kneaded a large piece of black dough, from which we used to make rosaries. One of us had a cotton jacket made of good quality cotton. From the lining, we pulled out bits of cotton which we rolled into balls and transformed into pussywillows. We attached them to branches which we had shaped out of the black dough.

And we made violets from matchboxes. One side of each box was covered with blue paper, the color of violets, while the other had yellow paper. We pulled the paper off and ripped up pieces in the shapes of violets. The yellow paper we crumbled into tiny balls which we stuffed inside the violet blossoms.

On Easter morning as we were praying in our cell, the peephole was suddenly opened by the guardwoman, who shrieked: "Where did you get those flowers?"

We told her we had made them, but she did not believe us. She commanded us to bring them to her. She took one look and then returned them, without a comment. We were pleased, because indirectly she seemed to appreciate our work. It made our creative work seem especially beautiful. But we were worried that even this small pleasure would be taken away from us. We sensed the constant movement of the peep hole as if more than one guard were watching us and our "treasure." Later when we returned from our walk, we found more guards at our door, looking into our cell.

That was indeed a compliment but it would have been better if they had not intruded upon us and let us pray in peace: "By Your holy Resurrection . . . awaken us, Almighty, from this nightmare . . ."

Could this be reality? On Easter day — a joyful day! And we are not allowed even to climb up to look through the window to see if the tree-tops are growing green! We want to sing hymns, but we are not allowed; silence is demanded in prison which is filled to capacity.

We thought of our hometown churches and wondered if people would sing the joyous Easter hymn *Linksmā diena mums nušvīto* (A happy day has dawned for us!). Perhaps they were singing out of habit, but not from the heart. Is it possible ever to be happy again? There are not many hearts left unpierced by the sword of sorrow. For some it is the father, and for some the husband, murdered; for others — a sister in jail, a dear one deported, or awaiting death in the woods. For some it's a loved one dead or gone without a trace.

We prayed for the living and the dead, the known and unknown, acquaintances and strangers. We trusted that those who knew us before Easter, would not forget us on Easter morning. We all talked of our dear ones at home

I was silent — my cell was quiet. I thought: my mother and sister are alive, they surely remember me. But where are they? Did they manage to survive the storm of the war?

Thus passed the Easter of 1949, without a joyful Alleluia under lock and key and under the eye of the guards at the famous Lukiškis prison in Vilnius.

(from *Pėdos Mirties Zonoje*)

PILGRIMAGE

MARCH 4

As Pope John Paul II gave his Apostolic Blessing to the one thousand Lithuanian pilgrims in St. Peter's Basilica on the occasion of the fifth centenary of St. Casimir's death March 4th, old and young were moved to tears of joy and the sense of solidarity both with Lithuanians scattered over the world today, those in Lithuania, and the Lithuanians who suffered through the centuries of our history. His message, part of which the Holy Father rendered in Lithuanian, transformed every man and woman, girl and boy — even the few non-believers present — into inspired, re-dedicated human beings confident of grace.

"It feels like Easter dawn. The Resurrection," murmured a young Lithuanian American. "Not in my wildest dreams," whispered a *Grandinėlė* dancer in national costume, "did I ever think I would be so close to the Holy Father bodily and spiritually."

What was essentially a spiritual experience of the supremely beautiful Mass on the occasion of St. Casimir's commemorative jubilee materialized into a positive political force. It awakened the world around the globe through press, radio and TV to the immovable determination of Lithuanians to pursue their quest for freedom and independence for Lithuania. The world so quickly forgets the tribulations of a small country. Too often it fails to recognize its very existence. What the pilgrims to Rome helped accomplish was more forceful and persuasive and influential on world thought than any mammoth Lithuanian cultural festival has ever — or can ever — match in power and significance.

Afterwards in the days that followed, the pilgrims grew increasingly troubled by the failure of Chicago

TO ROME

1984

Lithuanians to participate in the pilgrimage in more substantial numbers. "Incredible," said one man, "that we have only fifteen representatives from Chicago, the great Lithuanian center in the United States!" Everyone asked: why? What happened to Chicago? One observer commented dourly, "Too many would-be chiefs, and not enough followers." "It seems we rally to each other's support only when matters get too hopeless for us," said a lady sadly. The Knights of Lithuania and the representatives from Pennsylvania (the American-born!), however, had come through as the backbone of the pilgrimage. History was repeating itself and reflecting the days when stalworthy peasants who kept Lithuania alive found leadership towards Lithuania's future independence in men like Dr. Basanavičius, while the affluent and power-hungry remained Polonized, contemptuous of the "country bumpkins."

The pilgrimage ended in Assisi where a Franciscan priest escorted the pilgrims to the tomb of St. Francis, spoke at length about the saint's Christ-like love and humility, prayed with the pilgrims, and then said, "You may now want to sing one of your Lithuanian hymns." At this point, without hesitation, the group of over 100 people raised their voices without prompting as naturally as daybreak in darkness — with the Hymn to Marija. Thereupon, they left the lower church, mounted the steep steps skyward, and proceeded to Mass in the upper church.

It was a fitting and symbolic end to the pilgrimage, especially after the stupendous glory of the previous Sunday's Mass in St. Peter's Basilica, to join St. Francis in his humility (he was buried not in a coffin but a horse's trough, around which his tomb was built), to meditate

EASTER WITH CZESLAW MILOSZ

Winner of the 1980 Nobel Prize for Literature

In his novel *The Issa Valley* Czeslaw Milosz shows the development in Lithuania of young Thomas in the hostile atmosphere of the Polish land-owning gentry to which his family belongs and the "Lithuanian country bumpkins" whom his grandmother despises although "her photograph might have served to illustrate a book on the country's original inhabitants." His teacher Joseph is a nationalist with sympathies on the side of Lithuania, but must teach Thomas to read and write in Polish. He views Thomas' family, who regard themselves as Polish, with the distaste one would have for a person who commits an act of treason.

Thomas loves the Lithuanian countryside with its animals, woods and lakes and he is nurtured by his relationship with various Lithuanians. He is not wholly aware of the bitter antagonism between Poles and Lithuanians. Milosz says, "Had he crossed paths with a young Englishman brought up in Ireland or with a young Swede raised in Finland, he might have found many analogies." He grows up to distrust any "heated" references to flags and emblems.

Thomas is generally oblivious to the hostility between Poles and Lithuanians, especially during Easter "when poppy seeds were ground in earthenware bowls and Easter cakes raided for the nuts." Milosz writes:

The most eagerly awaited event of the season was the performance on Holy Saturday. Fifteen- and sixteen-year-old boys, after weeks of rehearsing, came running into the church with a roar, bearing dead crows lashed to poles. Devout old women, exhausted by a strict observance of fast and by endless prayer, their heads drooping lower and lower, were suddenly roused from their drowsy meditation by a dead crow dangled before their noses; those who had brought eggs in bundles to be blessed were similarly taunted. The skits were staged on the church lawn. Thomas's favorite was the persecution of Judas. First they ran him off his legs, corralled him, showered him with insults, hung him till his tongue bulged, then pulled down the corpse; but lest he got off too lightly, he was flipped over on his belly, pinched till he groaned, his drawers lowered, his rear end stuffed with straw, a soul blown into him, until finally Judas jumped to his feet, screaming that he was alive.

Then came the sleepy holiday patter, the sweet taste of rolls—and the egg-rolling contests. The children's course was made of turf, slightly curved to the inside and lined with strips of tin to increase the momentum. No two eggs rolled alike, and you had to guess by its shape whether to position it on the right, left, or in the middle of the rut. And just when the coast was clear, just as your egg started catching up with the others, spread out like a herd of cows; when it was on the verge of hitting another egg and making its owner a winner, it would suddenly take to wobbling and obeying its own private whim, either skirt it by a finger or stop just short of it.

Algirdas Genotis

on his prayer, "Lord, make me an instrument of your peace . . . where there is hate let me bring love . . . where there is darkness, light . . .", and to pray for personal and national guidance.

The Statue of Liberty met the

homeward-bound pilgrims who now perceived in her crumbling elegance the very message which the Holy Father and St. Francis of Assisi had imparted to us in Italy and which St. Casimir has made a part of our lives.

Demie Jonaitis

A thousand Lithuanian pilgrims from two continents reached the zenith of spiritual joy and confidence when they received the Holy Father's Apostolic Blessing in St. Peter's Basilica, March 4th.

THE HOLY FATHER

BLESSES LITHUANIANS
IN THEIR DIASPORA

Dear Brothers and Sisters,

I am very pleased to greet you today, Lithuanians from around the world who have come to Rome to commemorate the fivehundredth anniversary of the death of Saint Casimir, the Patron of Lithuania. Although you presently reside in countries outside Lithuania, you are united by a common ancestral heritage. And you stand in loyal solidarity with your brothers and sisters in your land of origin who are unable to be here with us. Many of them will be celebrating today, together with the bishops in the City of Vilnius, where for centuries the remains of Saint Casimir have been venerated. In spirit and in prayer let us join with them, imploring Saint Casimir's special intercession for the Lithuanian people and nation.

Many Lithuanians, from the nineteenth century onwards, and in particular after the last World War, have had to leave their homeland for various reasons. As they emigrated to new lands, they carried with them their spiritual and cultural treasures, especially their veneration of Saint Casimir. Many are the religious and social foundations established under his name. Many are the churches which, with great effort and sacrifice, have been built and dedicated to this noble saint. Associations

for Lithuanian young people, such as the Knights of Lithuania and the Lithuanian Boy Scouts, have chosen Saint Casimir as their patron. The Church has been blessed with the foundation of the Sisters of Saint Casimir, and provinces of the Marian Fathers and the Franciscan Friars have placed themselves under his special protection. Here in Rome there exists the Pontifical Lithuanian College, which under the title of Saint Casimir prepares young men of Lithuanian origin to serve the Church so that Saint Casimir has become a strong link between those still living in your homeland and Lithuanians throughout the world.

Centuries ago, the Church proclaimed Casimir a saint and placed him before us not only to be venerated but also that we might imitate his heroic virtues and follow his example of holiness. His witness of great faith and fervent piety continues to have special meaning for us today. To the young he offers a challenging call. His life of purity and prayer beckons you to practise your faith with courage and zeal, to reject the deceptive attractions of modern permissive society, and to live your convictions with fearless confidence and joy.

His life also shows us the importance of the Christian family. For Casimir was one of twelve

children, and from his earliest years he learned that each child is a unique gift from God and that a home built on the love of God is truly a pearl of great price.

Men and women religious can find in Saint Casimir an inspiration for their consecrated lives, as they recall how he embraced a life of celibacy, submitting himself humbly to God's will in all things, devoted himself with tender love to the Blessed Virgin Mary and developed a fervent practice of adoring Christ present in the Blessed Sacrament. To all he was a shining example of poverty and of sacrificial love for the poor and needy.

Dear Lithuanian sons and daughters, as we celebrate the five-hundredth anniversary of Saint Casimir's death, I make this special appeal to you: remain one in solidarity with the Church in your land of origin. Your brothers and sisters still living there eagerly look to you in their sorrows and joys in the daily difficulties of life. They appreciate your support. They count on your prayers. Be firm in preaching the gift of the Christian faith which you have received, remembering how your ancestors preserved and defended it even to the shedding of their blood. And come to the aid of those living in Lithuania by making fervent petitions to God



At a private audience with Lithuanian pilgrims, Pope John Paul II warmly welcomes students from the Vasario 16 high school in Germany, especially Gabija Diavaraitė whose mother is Lithuanian and father from Mali.

Arturo Mari photo

and commending them to the care of Saint Casimir. Above all, lift them up in prayer to our Lord and Redeemer, the source of all courage and hope.

I also urge you to preserve with care the many religious and cultural traditions which you have inherited. The very soul of Lithuania is reflected in your culture, and that culture has served greatly, in the course of history, to pass on the values of the Gospel from one generation to the next. Remain faithful then to your religious and cultural

heritage. Be rightly proud of it. Make it the foundation of the education of your youth, as you seek to make them loyal sons and daughters of the Church. And I ask you to join me in praying for an increase in religious vocations. May the Lord call many of your young people to a life of joyful service in the priesthood or religious life.

This fifth centenary of the death of Saint Casimir happily occurs during the Holy Year of the Redemption, a time of grace for all in the Church, an event

which calls us all to conversion and spiritual renewal. May you be inspired by Saint Casimir to receive in abundance the special graces of the Jubilee. May his example motivate you to an ever greater pursuit of holiness and an ever deeper love of Christ our Redeemer.

To all of you here present today and to your families and relatives at home, and to all those striving to live the Christian faith in Lithuania. I cordially impart my Apostolic Blessing.

AFGHANISTAN: THE SHAME

S. Žiemys

For almost three years now the bloodshed has been going on in Afghanistan. Aggressors attacking that peaceful land which had been untouched by any political wars began a fratricidal war. Forced to participate in this war also are representatives of other nations: Ukrainians, Estonians, Latvians and Lithuanians. Oppressed themselves, they are being forced to obey the brutal orders of Russian officers to spill their own blood and that of the Afghans.

There are even more and more tragic reports of Lithuanians killed in Afghanistan. The casualties are returned in sealed caskets and buried secretly. Mothers are not allowed to view their slain sons. No matter how much his mother asked the accompanying soldiers to open the casket of the slain A. Bulvičius at the "Communism" Communal Farm, *Rayon* of Vilkaviškis, no one was touched by her tears; her weeping and laments failed to stir the officer. Other mothers, even though successful with their pleas to open the sealed casket, fare no better: they find only a soldier's cap and a handful of sand.

However, the worst thing hap-

pened to one family in Vilnius. The parents wept and pleaded with the soldiers to let them open the casket, all in vain. Then the relatives got the soldiers and their officers drunk. The latter, reeling from drink, disobeyed their orders and opened the coffin. But it would have been better for the parents if they had not. Lying in the casket was not their son, but some Asiatic.

Slain Lithuanian soldiers are buried secretly, with the help of military commissariates. Only they do not always succeed in carrying out the burials in secret.

During the summer of 1980, twenty-year-old Vladas Čereška of Šilutė was killed in Afghanistan. His friends found out that Vladas was to be brought to the railroad station. They all waited at the station. However, they did not see the coffin that day, nor the next. Only on the third day did the body arrive. The young people took the casket from the soldiers and brought it to Vladas' home on N. Melnikaitės gatvė, in Šilutė. Some KGB agents tried to bear the casket, but the young people took it from them too.

The procession wound its way

along the streets of the city. Vladas' friends lit torches, even though angry KGB agents around them ordered them extinguished. Čereška's funeral became a special kind of demonstration, a protest against oppression and against the policy by which our brothers are dying against their will, in the interest of foreigners. Since then the KGB of Lithuania has given orders to bury those killed in Afghanistan as quietly as possible, in secret.

Our young men are dying in far-away Afghanistan. They bring the coffins to Vilnius, Kaunas, Klaipėda, Alytus, Panevėžys, Šiauliai, Druskininkai and other cities. They bring them back to all *rayons*. They bring them also to the villages.

We had the opportunity of speaking with a young man of twenty-one back from Afghanistan. He was completely gray, trembling, and aged. I wanted to ask about his experiences there, but he could not talk about them. He had known too many horrors. For this sensitive and good man, life has been ruined.

Sent on occupation duty in Afghanistan most often are good youths, who are conscious of their Lithuanian nationality, good students. Is this a coincidence?

I was able to speak more extensively with one soldier back from Afghanistan. It was obvious how he had changed, how vulgar he was, even bestial. He told me himself: "We saw and did such things there, that nothing surprises us anymore."

He described how a group of soldiers, passing through a village shoots at anything. He joined in the shooting, for otherwise he would be shot himself. He still remembers with horror how he shot a beautiful young girl. He described how they shot Afghan insurrectionists in groups of 20 - 30 people, after first breaking their bones with karate chops. At the end he told me:

"Foreigners know only a little bit of the truth about Afghanistan... very, very little... Now I know why the flag of the Soviet Union is red. It has soaked in the blood of Afghans, Hungarians, Poles, Estonians, Latvians and Lithuanians."

THE GLORY

Lithuanian soldiers fighting in Afghanistan are honored for their international commitment and the people of Lithuania are "enlightened" by the February issue of Kremlin-directed cultural journal *Pergalė* which features Algirdas Ferensas' paean to bloodshed for the communist cause "Afghanistan Today." These highlights give you the gist: "I was working in Afghanistan and witnessed at first hand what happened during and after the April Revolution of 1979 which turned the country into new channels of growth. Suffering economic, racial, religious and national inequalities, the people had appealed to us for help. The Revolution was followed by agrarian reform, and land was confiscated from 250 thousand landowners who had enslaved the masses. To prevent the reorganization, bandits burned, looted and killed... One of the most important changes was the enlightenment of the masses — 8 million illiterates. Hundreds of schools were opened... Bandits burned, looted and killed... I have a horrible photo of a mother amidst scattered schoolbooks, holding a child killed by the bullets of a bandit... I have talked with soldiers from Lithuania... They take pride to be internationalizing our communist way of life..."

OUR POPULAR GODWRIGHTS



Folk sculpture: Rūpintojėlis

To Lithuanians, the small heart-wrenching Christ - Rūpintojėlis is a beloved symbol, the most popular of all Lithuanian sculptures. The Rūpintojėlis comes in a variety of forms and sizes and is the creation of village "godmakers". It presents a seated Christ, who leans on his elbow, and looks down at the passersby. The right hand supports his head while the left rests on the lap. The head is large and often out of proportion with the body. The artists who created Rūpintojėlis were peasants and worked with crude tools. On a larger head it was easier to create the expression that the artists desired to achieve.

The arm, supporting Christ's head and resting on the knee, is elongated. If a normal length arm were to hold up the head, the face would be looking downward. The artists, found a way to have Christ's face seen by the people. Such figures were usually placed at the crossroads, either in a tree or within a small wooden house or chapel set upon a pole. They were not distinguished by elegance, but by originality of their form and deep concentration.

A 1500-year old ancestor of Rūpintojėlis can be found in Germany. The Germans refer to it as *Der Schmerzmännchen* (humanity in agony). France and Poland have similar creations.

The word Rūpintojėlis comes from the Lithuanian verb *rūpintis* — to worry or to be concerned.

Rūpintojėlis first made his appearance in the huts of the peasants, not in the castles of the nobility, because Christ is identified with the poor, the peasant who suffers. The peasant sought consolation in these representations of Christ. The weary peasant, trudging home after a hard day's work, stopped before the Rūpintojėlis, lifted his cap in greeting and reflected: "Like me, Christ also suffered". Thus the individual became identified with the passion... the suffering Christ. The peasant was reassured: "His suffering came to an end and so will mine".

In present day Lithuania, the Rūpintojėlis sculptures, which were scattered all over the landscape for hundreds of years, are disappearing. The occupying Russians have many excuses for this: "They are rotting away and therefore they are dangerous to passerby. They offend the atheistic public". The real excuse is—they are afraid of the spiritual power Rūpintojėlis emanates.

In 1984 we can identify the Rūpintojėlis with our St. Casimir. He too is concerned for us. The communist will never eradicate Rūpintojėlis who will remain in the hearts of the Lithuanians — as a symbol of hope. Every Lent comes to an end, and after it — comes the Resurrection.



Jonas Gludenis, born 1870, was a well known "godmaker" in Mazeikiai. (Buračas Archives)

Dalia Bulvičius

Rev. Juozas Tumas-Vaižgantas

SIN AT EASTER

Kazys was the first to hurry back on Easter morning. He had gone around the church in procession as usual, but all the time he had felt uneasy. When his heart seemed to have stopped beating for a moment, he knew that something dreadful had happened at home. Either the house was on fire or an equally frightening calamity had taken place. All the joy of Easter left him and he grew very alarmed. He could scarcely contain himself until he reached his wagon, and then he drove home as fast as he could.

He left his horse standing in the yard and rushed into the house. There was no one there, and it was cold in the living room. The fire had not been lit. Anelja was nowhere to be found, neither in the parlor nor in the bedroom nor in the storehouse.

She has run away with Jonas, Kazys thought to himself. He could not remember having seen Jonas in the church.

Or she has made an end of herself, he thought anxiously. He ran across the open shed and there he found Anelja kneeling on the floor in an awkward position.

"Anelja, little one! What is wrong? Are you ill or something?" He spoke to her as a father to his child who had suddenly been taken ill.

He lifted her up in his arms and carried her into the house. Then Anelja opened her eyes slowly and looked carefully at her husband. She was astonished at the expression she saw on his face. It was full of love and anxiety and pity for her. Anelja was very moved. She pressed her face to his and began to weep in a desperate manner.

"Tell me, Anelja, what has happened to you? Has anybody harmed you in any way?" asked Kazys.

"My dearest husband, my God-given one . . . At the very time of the Resurrection, when the church bells were ringing out . . . Jonas and I . . ."

Kazys understood. He grew pale as a corpse, then reddened as if all his blood had rushed to his face. He put Anelja to bed, covered her up with blankets and closed the door quietly. Then he went straight into the barn to rummage among some old pieces of iron in a box there. He chose one that best

suited his purpose and then hurried towards the Butkys farm. He was looking for Jonas.

The house was empty and there was no sign of either Jonas or his mother anywhere. Where were they? he wondered.

As the days passed by, Kazys did not forget his plan to take revenge on Jonas. He was a grown man, after all, and not some shepherd boy to be trifled with. But even the soul-shattering events that had taken place on Easter day had not cured him of his love for Anelja.

Jonas was not long in regaining his composure. He did not have the slightest wish to leave his village. Nothing mattered to him anymore — neither his mother, nor the village gossips, nor Kazys himself, for that matter. All he wanted was to be close to Anelja, come what may. Yes, even if his soul were to fall into the hands of the devil, such was the strength of his feeling for her.

As soon as Jonas heard that Anelja was feeling better and that she had overcome her nervous shock, he was full of longing for her. He longed to be with her again, to see her, to kiss her, and to be happy with her as he had been in those early hours of Easter morning. He went on tormenting himself in this fashion day after day. He was ready to do anything in order to

gain Anelja for himself. Not for a moment did it occur to him to ask what Anelja would have said to such a suggestion. It did not occur to him that Anelja, who had succumbed to her feelings once, would perhaps be strong enough to resist him in the future. He could not imagine that Anelja would change in her feelings for him. His plan to win her for himself was always at the back of his mind.

In the end, it was Kazys and not Jonas who brought matters to a head. Kazys made no further attempt to talk to Anelja about what had taken place between her and Jonas. But when he went to bed at night, he could not sleep. He had forgiven Anelja her weakness, but how could he be sure that Jonas would not try to win her for himself yet again? No one in the whole world could have given him this assurance, and he could not go on living with doubt.

One market day, Kazys saw Jonas crossing the yard and he called to him, "Jonas, let's go and talk things over. How much longer do you suppose we can go on living like this?"

Jonas glanced at Kazys' face and froze. But at the same time he welcomed the opportunity of coming to some sort of a solution. Hadn't he been waiting for just such an opening himself? Without saying anything, he put on his jacket and walked over to the other yard. Then he and Kazys drove off.

Instead of keeping to the main road, which would have taken them to the town, Kazys drove past the highway and began to descend into the valley known as Valley of the Pewits.

There was a saying at Puzionys that just as a ploughman cannot live separated from the soil, likewise the pewit birds could not exist without the marshes. Jonas and Kazys were children of nature. They worked hard in the fields, but when they wanted to enjoy themselves a little, they had always gone to the Pewit Valley. They had known Pewit Valley well, ever since they were small boys.

In the early spring, when they were youngsters, Kazys would say, "Jonas, do you know that that boy who works on Gimbutas' farm has already brought home pocketfuls of pewit eggs? Let's go on Sunday."

"Nest robbing? Are you mad? We're much too old for that, now," Jonas would reply disdainfully, for the sake of form, while his heart was beating fast with joy.

Nevertheless, they enjoyed going to the Pewit Valley very much. They could spend the whole day there, wading



Valius

through the marshes, jumping from one mound to another and laughing at each other good-naturedly if either of them happened to miss his footing and sink up to his knees in the tar-black mud, while flocks of pewits continued to screech above their heads. If, however, they happened to come across a nest, they would never touch the eggs. The eggs were beautiful, but to touch them was to invite the bird to abandon her nest that year, as the pewit invariably did on scenting an unfamiliar smell.

The pewits always greeted the two lads as if they were lawbreakers and criminals, and whirled around their heads screeching for all they were worth:

"Everything belongs to us here! Everything belongs to us here!" they seemed to be saying.

"Do you think they're afraid of us?" Kazys would say to Jonas. At heart, they felt that the pewits wished them no harm, just as on their part neither Jonas nor Kazys had ever hurt a defenseless bird in their lives. They felt themselves better men, better human beings as a result of this contact with nature.

What was Kazys thinking, now, what was he planning to do, as they drove into the Pewit Valley? Unconsciously, he may have been looking for a satisfactory way out of his predicament. He stared absently at the piece of iron that he had tossed into the wagon before leaving home. He was listening attentively to the music that the pewits were making and for a moment, at least, he had forgotten all his troubles.

Suddenly, Jonas noticed the piece of iron lying in the wagon and a thought flashed through his mind: he's going to try to kill me with it!

He was seized with fear, he grabbed the weapon and hit Kazys on the head as hard as he could. One blow would have been sufficient but Jonas could not stop himself from hitting him again and again.

At last he realized what he had done and he began to scream and shout with terror. He tore at his clothes and his hair and started to run away as fast as he could. But his foot caught against a mound and he stumbled and fell.

The pewits began to screech and circle about him. They shouted and quarreled among themselves, almost touching him with their wings.

"Living, living, living!" they called out to him.

(Translated by Danguolė Sealey)

(From *Sin at Easter and Other Stories*,
Manyland Books, NY.)

BIRDS OF PREY IN LITHUANIA

What would you say to setting out one evening in mid-winter for a remote forest, wading deep in snow and staying there till dawn just to hear a sound resembling the hoot of a train? You stand alone and listen to hair-raising u-u-uuh and look into glaring eyes. . . . For Bronius Šablevičius, ornithologist from Ignalina National Park in Lithuania, such outings are a common matter. Not from a calendar but from the call of birds, he learns about forthcoming spring.

He watches; he reports. He evaluates. He knows the registration of bird population is necessary. It reveals that today, it is the birds of prey that suffer most: the eagle-owl, asprey, golden eagle, peregrine falcon. . . . 12 species which are regarded as becoming extinct and entered into the Red Data Book of the Lithuanian S.S.R.

A bird of prey and his prey constitute a certain biological system, — explains Bronius Šablevičius. — A bird of prey can not exist without his prey and vice versa. Man's large-scale extermination of birds of prey destroys this natural "mechanism." The opinion that birds of prey cause much harm to hunting economy is wrong. Though the hook-beaked birds find it hard to regain man's benevolence (in Lithuania falconry was practiced since the 14th century and geralscons equalled the most valuable animals) the attitude towards birds of prey is slowly changing. Of great help in this respect are laws on animal protection adopted in Lithuania.

Not all birds of prey easily adapt in the changing landscape of our

motherland to the rapid development of engineering and tourism, they react to timber falling, land amelioration, etc. Eagles of all kinds, peregrine falcons and eagle-owls are particularly sensitive to environmental changes. Unnecessary curiosity like picture-taking, counting eggs, etc makes birds leave their nests. It has been estimated that nearly all hook-beaked birds prefer the calm of virgin century-old forests. One of the most effective means of protection is the retention of certain forests and marshes in order to safeguard a hatching bird. It is necessary to proclaim an area with a radius of 100-200 meters from a nest a micropreserve.

These are Bronius Šablevičius recommendations. The result of lengthy observations. His concern for the destiny of birds of prey is appreciated by everyone who talks with him. Birds are his calling, concern and love. "My work at the National Park can be likened to a holiday". Resolute, unyielding and loving, he defends the much maligned birds of prey indispensable to the balance of nature. Recently he collaborated on writing a book with E. Drobelis, *Owls and Birds of Prey*. He often contributes articles to specific periodicals, valorously defending the role of birds of prey.

One way to increase the population of birds of prey is to build nests. Šablevičius knows how to build such sturdy nests that would sustain even the weight of a man. He himself standing in such a nest reminds you of a bird surveying his kingdom.

Jonas Albertavičius

MEN OF PREY IN LITHUANIA

(Submitted by W.J. Markalonis)

It is a little-known fact that although the Communist Party of the Soviet Union is hostile to religion and the campaign against it is unabated. . . , it has long been a central objective of the party to manipulate religious organizations and influence them in such a way that they will support elements of Russian foreign policy.

It is much less well known that the Russian intelligence service (KGB) within the framework of this policy trains "church workers" who are sent to posts in the countries of the West and

the Third World. Several training centers for "religious agents" are located at Geodosia in the Crimea and at Lvov in the Ukraine, and Lithuania.

This is a matter of training agents by whom priests and preachers can be influenced. The impression must also be created that the communist peril is quite nonexistent. The East European ecclesiastical functionaries who are willing to exert themselves to that end get full support from their governments in connection with their trips.

(From *The War Called Peace*, Western Goals)

A DISTINGUISHED LITHUANIAN

IN THE TRADITION OF ST. CASIMIR

South America's Colombia has a half-hour television program Mondays which is called "Human Values". Colombia's most distinguished citizens, its writers, actors, politicians and artists, are interviewed. Last August prominent journalist J.M. Valencia interviewed well-known Lithuanian Silesian priest Stanley Matutis.

Stanley Matutis was still a youth when he left his native land Lithuania in 1930 to study in a Silesian school in Italy. Having inherited Don Bosco's ideals and dedication, he was sent as a missionary to South America to work with the youth in the jungles. In 1947 he was transferred to Colombia's Atlantic seaboard, the port city of Barranquilla to San Roque's parish. This parish was in the worst part of the port city of Barranquilla, a slum area called the Black Zone (la Zona Negra). Few were brave enough to go out at night. This was an area for thieves, prostitutes and other shady characters. The streets were unpaved, garbage everywhere, no sewers, no water mains. Poverty and misery and hardship had taken over this part of the port city.

From the first day of his arrival, Father Matutis made up his mind to cope with the desperate situation and bring in some semblance of order to this seemingly hopeless area. The residents remember and love to relate how Father Matutis himself started sweeping and cleaning the streets, because no one else took the trouble to do it. He then established a free school. Later he

established a night school to which shoeshine boys, newsboys and the needy were accepted.

Today, the San Roque parish schools have turned this suburb into a clean white city! This again proves that man's dreams can be realized. The schools now have 1700 youths attending in a high school, night school and a vocational school where handicrafts and general sciences are taught. This is a poor people's university. Accepted are only poor youth. After graduating they go to work in their field of training.

Violence and crime subsided in the city of Barranquilla. The local community of well-to-do people, the government and other organizations came in to aid this Lithuanian clergyman so he could continue his difficult work.

His main source of income is a lottery which he himself started very early. This lottery has its own fine history and it has some humor, too. The very first lottery had nothing to offer, only a hen. This hen started it all . . .

For his outstanding services, the government of Colombia in 1971 awarded Father Matutis the order of Cruz de Boyace. Again in 1977 he received the Honoris Causa.

The presidents of this republic have visited Father Matutis. Its ministers and high ranking military, Vatican's representatives and local clergy, as well as we, salute him with pride and affection.

Dr. Vytautas Stasiukynas

YOUTH FROM THE LITHUANIAN UNDERGROUND:

We have lost two dear priests . . . the Rev. Alf. Svarinskas and the Rev. S. Tamkevičius . . . We, young Lithuanian religious believers, certainly understand better than anybody else what the loss of these priests means for Lithuania. We have received from them so much support, spiritual encouragement, good advice.

Let facts speak for themselves: young people, even children, unafraid of anything, are zealously collecting signatures under statements asking for the freeing of these priests. Their courage often astounds even older

people, and sometimes the priests; although during the days of the trial the whole Lenin Avenue was swarming with KGB agents and militiamen, young people were not afraid to express their solidarity with the defendant, the Rev. A. Svarinskas, by gathering at the court building. Several of them had to pay for that by forfeiting their university diploma or by having to leave high school; some had to spend 5-10 days in the militia cellars and to pay a fine.

We resolve and hope that, with the blessing of God, new Svarinskases, new Tamkevičiuses, new beacons of the Nation and of the Church will arise.

THE OTHER SAINT OF LITHUANIA

St. George's feastday which falls on April 23 marked the traditional beginning of spring in Lithuania. Dahlias, the favorite flowers of Lithuania, were named after St. George (*jurginiai*), and were traditionally planted on his feast.

Since the legendary St. George was a dragon slayer and maiden protector who rode a stallion, he became the protector of animals in Lithuania. It used to be tabu to work the horse on the feastday of St. George lest the saint become angry and the horse get sick, be torn by wolves or suffer some other calamity. In the morning the horses were taken to a lake and given a bath to protect them against sickness.

A variety of food was brought to church and piled before the saint's altar or picture. Two loaves of bread were baked and five eggs were inserted into each. These were carried around the fields 12 times; then one was buried in the soil and the other consumed. This insured a year-round protection of the sheep from attack by wolves and the cows from succumbing to disease.

Children born on St. George's day and baptized with his name were especially blessed. George (*Jurgis*) was one of the most popular names in Lithuania.

CAMP AUŠRA PLANNED FOR ST. MARY'S VILLA

We are accepting applications from boys and girls from grades 3 through 8 for a week or two camping experience from July 8th through the 21st at St. Mary's Villa, Elmhurst, PA. Since interest in ethnic cultural heritage has been growing in our country, Sister Angela, C.J.C., is co-ordinating a camp experience for non-speaking Lithuanian youth, as well as for those who know the language, or for any young person who may be interested in broadening his knowledge of the culture of another ethnic group. Besides regular camping activities such as participation in a variety of sports, swimming and nature hiking, the program will include Lithuanian folk dancing, singing, and instruction in folk art. The weekly fee is \$55.00. For further information and reservations, contact Sister Angela, C.J.C. 25 South Broad Mountain Avenue, Frackville, PA 17931 (tel. 717 874-0351) before May 30th.

**LET'S MAKE IT
A DATE:
OUR FOLK DANCE FESTIVAL**

We look forward to the seventh Lithuanian Folk Dance Festival which will be held July 1, 1984 at 2:00 PM., in the Coliseum, Richfield, Ohio, 35 miles south of downtown Cleveland. The Coliseum can seat over 16,000 spectators. 48 folk dance groups with over 1800 dancers responded to the preliminary registration. The Lithuanian Folk Dance Institute selected some traditional, some less familiar dances and some dances that have never yet been presented at the festivals. Mrs. Jadvyga Regina is the director of the dance. An orchestra of 59 professional musicians will accompany the dancers. Some dances will be performed to the music of *kanklės* (zithers) and some others to folk songs rendered by a choir of over 250 members. The orchestra and the choir will be conducted by Algis Modestas, Bronius Kazėnas, Vaclovas Verikaitis and Rimas Kasputis.

Tickets to the festival, at \$5.00, \$7.00, \$10.00 and \$14.00 per person, will be available at the Coliseum, 2923 Streetsboro Rd., Richfield, Ohio, 44286, tel. (216) 659-9100, or at the local Ticketron agencies. Many guests may find it more convenient to get both the festival tickets and the tickets to all other related events from the local agents or from the Admissions Committee. Organizations buying at least 25 tickets will get a \$2.00 discount off the ticket price. Orders or inquiries should be mailed to Mrs. Valdonė Žiedė, 18706 Kildeer Ave., Cleveland, Ohio, 44119. Checks must be made payable to the Lithuanian Folk Dance Festivals Inc.

❦❦❦ AČIŪ LABAI ❦❦❦

\$55. — Dovidas Dubauskas, Calgary, Canada.

\$50. — Bronie Apshaga, MD. Charlestown, RI.

\$50. — Baltic Tours, Newton, MA

\$35 — Malvina and Jonas Klivečka, Woodhaven, NY.

\$25 — J.A.V. Lietuvių Bendruomenė, Detroit.

\$25 Albinas Gaidys, Kingwood, TX

\$20 — Peter Mardosa, Flushing, N.Y.

\$10. — Albert Špokas, Cleveland, Oh.; Lilian M. Lauzonis, Niagara Falls, N.Y.

\$5. — Mrs. Kecioris, Carmel, N.Y.; Jadvyga Jokubaitis, Palm Beach Shore, FL.; John and Karen Burg, Homer, Ak.; Mrs. J. Revukas, Cranford, N.J.; Mrs. Gedas Grinis, Flossmor, IL; Zigmąs Grybinas, O'Fallon, IL; Albert Snyder, New Phil., PA.; V. Beleckas, Sunny Hills, FL.; Edmund Drukteinis, MD, Palm Harbor, FL; Albert Macelis, Merchantville, N.I.

\$2. — G. Bakunis, Torrington, CT..

TREAT YOURSELF TO:

LITHUANIAN EASTER EGGS by Antanas Tamošaitis, published by the Lithuanian Folk Art Institute. Available at: BRIDGES, 341 Highland Blvd., Brooklyn, N.Y. 11207. (\$25 plus \$1 for postage)

This is more than a book about the techniques and patterns of Lithuanian Easter egg decorating. It is a dramatic ethnic experience which involves the reader in the Eastertide activities of our grandparents and great-grandparents so that even a half hour's perusal of the book transports us back into the past and it's like visiting relatives we wish we had known personally. We rejoice with them in their everyday lives, in the beauty of each flower and snowflake, and in the well-being of their bees and cows. We even become involved in the hearty merriment of peasants.

Antanas Tamošaitis is a painter, graphic artist, tapestry weaver and teacher. A 1929 graduate of the Art Institute in Kaunas, Lithuania, he produced twelve books about Lithuanian folk art. He has not only the artist's appreciative eye for the originality of peasant creations, but a warmth of spirit which makes the folk artists very real and endearing. His present book with its 1870 illustrations, both in color and black and white, is an achievement of which we are so proud that we do not relegate the volume to our book shelves but keep it on our coffee table to share with our guests as a conversation piece and a tribute to the spirit of Lithuanian people.

—D.X.

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GERA ŠEIMININKĖ — COOKING LITHUANIAN STYLE

**MOIST BOBA
"SULTINGA BOBA"**

Boba is a traditional Easter cake. It is not easy to make; great care and accuracy are required in its preparation. Usually these cakes are high, round, six-cornered, or octogon shaped. They need to be baked in an even heat.

- | | |
|--------------|-----------------------|
| 4 cups flour | 6 oz. butter |
| 2/3 cup milk | 1/2 cup sugar |
| 1 oz. yeast | 1 lemon |
| 10 egg yolks | 1 level teaspoon salt |

Warm the milk, mix in 1 cup flour, diluted yeast, and let stand to rise. Then add the salt and beat well. Add the egg yolks, creamed with the sugar until white, and remaining flour. Beat very well, add well-creamed butter, and let stand again to rise. Then beat well again, and pour into prepared but-

tered baking pans.

Pour the dough into pans only to 1/3 of the pans. Put in a warm place to rise. When the dough has risen to 3/4 of the pan, put carefully into the oven and do not touch for one hour. To test if done, insert a long toothpick. If it is clean when removed, the cake is done. Remove cake from oven and let stand to cool in the baking pan. Then remove from the pan. When completely cooled, moisten with the following syrup:

- | |
|--|
| 1 cup water |
| 1/2 cup sugar |
| 1 lemon peel (only the very top layer) |
| 2 teaspoons of rum or arrack |

Put cake on oblong platter and pour syrup over all sides. Roll cake back and forth to absorb all the syrup. Serve on an attractive doily.

INVITING YOUNG MEN OVER 18

Lithuanian Youth Camp
June 24 through June 29
at Dainava, Camp in Manchester, Michigan (near Detroit). Activities: sports, Lithuanian food and culture, history,

politics, folk dances prep. for the 7th Lithuanian Dance Festival July 1 in Ohio. For information: Pranas Prancėvičius, World Lithuanian Youth Ass., 5620 South Claremont, Chicago, IL, 60636. (312 - 778 - 0777)

**APRIL DATES IN
LITHUANIAN HISTORY**

- 1313 — Lithuanians sink 75 German vessels in the Nemunas.
- 1579 —The first school is founded in Vilnius.
- 1372 — Lithuanians burn the Byelorrussian fortress Perejaslavl.
- 1388 — The Teutonic Knights wage war against Žemaitija
- 1097 Lithuanians murder the first Christian prophet Vaitiekus.
- 1831 — Lithuanians stage an uprising against the Russians in Vilnius.
- 1315 — Gediminas becomes the Grand Duke of Lithuania
- 1228 — The Mozures with the aid of Teutonic Knights wage war against Lithuania.
- 1290 — The Teutonic Knights destroy Lithuanian fortress Kalainė.
- 1398 —Vytautas, Grand Duke of Lithuania, promises to give Žemaitija to the Teutonic Knights.
- 1512 —Lithuanians defeat the Tartars at Vilnius.
- 1904 — The written word in the Latin alphabet and in Lithuanian is again permitted in Lithuania.

Bridges published by the Lithuanian - American Community of the U.S.A., Inc. Through this newsletter, the publishers hope to re-establish ties between the detached, mobile Lithuanian-Americans and their Lithuanian heritage by presenting items on Lithuanian culture, conditions in the homeland, events and personalities in America, and the aspirations of all who subscribe to the idea that Lithuania desires to be an independent and free nation again.

Published eleven times a year. Editor: Demie Jonaitis; Associate Editor: Dalia Bulvičius. Entered as Third Class Matter at Post Office in Brooklyn, N.Y. Subscription rate: \$5.00 for one year. Editorial address: Bridges Editors, D. Jonaitis, 79-18 Park Lane South, Woodhaven, N.Y. 11421. Unsolicited manuscripts must be accompanied by stamped self-addressed envelope if return is desired. Use of material from Bridges permissible only if proper credit is given to Bridges, authors, artists, photographers. New subscriptions, change of address and renewals: Bridges, 341 Highland Blvd., Brooklyn, N.Y. 11207.

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