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NATO and the European Union...People profiles...Book reviews...XIIth Folk Dance Festival

P E R S P E C T I V E S

This was not the first time that I had seen old Lithuanian books given away for free or sold for pennies at a garage sale. Some of them dated back to the 1880s; some were printed in Lithuania, others in the U.S. All provided records of the cultural treasures Lithuanians tried to pass on to the next generation. Priceless to some, sadly discarded by others.

A group of books were one-act plays for children and adults. One play entitled "Ponas Tuzas ir Ponas Arbuzas" was printed in 1940 in Wilkes-Barre, Pennsylvania. The plot features the antics of two door-to-door salesmen who are trying to sell vacuum cleaners for the "Visavalo Svyperio Bendrove" (Cleans All Sweeper Company). Sadly, the two don't get the sale because the woman doesn't have electricity. Very American in humor, but it read well in Lithuania, too.

The oldest booklet among the group was entitled, Balsas — Voice, printed in 1862 in Vilnius, Lithuania. As others that I have seen printed in this time period, it was printed using the Polish pronunciation or alphabet and the content was religious. Balsas contains the history of Szydława (Siluva) Church, and masses and prayers to be used in honor of Mary, Mother of God. The fact that a booklet was printed with such exact and detailed information underlines the strong Catholic faith during this time period in Lithuania.

Two other booklets printed in 1905 and 1907 featured a synopsis of Lithuania's history and geography and an English short story, medieval in nature, respectively. Only forty or so years after the 1860s booklet, these two were printed using the Lithuanian alphabet and specific dialects resounded. You could almost hear the writer speaking to you using ancient phrases used in conversation rather than what you would expect used in formal writing.

Last, but not least, was a small booklet containing a thousand misles — riddles — printed in Chicago in 1913. According to the editor, Kleofas Jurgelionis, the riddles were collected from people of every Lithuanian region. For example, "Stone legs, wooden waist, glass eyes, straw hat." There is no question, just a descriptive statement in need of identification. Here, the answer was a home.

So what can be done with these small glimpses into our Lithuanian past? One alternative is to contact the Lithuanian Research and Studies Center (5600 S. Claremont Ave., Chicago, IL 60636-1039 Tel. 1-773-434-4545 or e-mail: lithuanianresearch@ameritech.net). They collect print media to preserve the history of our culture. This repository connects the dots between each generation that entered and made a life in the U.S. What we have experienced as Lithuanians in the U.S. doesn't have to end at a garage sale; it can be safeguarded for a younger set of eyes who wish to pray, laugh, and be regaled in the same way their own grand parents had — with books spanning time.

Rasa Ardys-Juška

Editor

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Baltic Countries Officially Join NATO

Lithuania, by submitting the ratification letters of the North Atlantic Treaty in Washington on March 29, performed the last technicality toward its full-fledged membership in NATO. The event marked the end of a decade-long effort to gain membership in the military-political bloc.

During a ceremony in the U.S. State Department, Prime Minister Algirdas Brazauskas handed to American Secretary of State Colin Powell the documents certifying the treaty's ratification in the Lithuanian parliament. The government heads of the other six accession countries presented their ratification letters in Washington as well.

Afterwards the prime ministers of all the new entrants met with President George W. Bush, who officially announced their countries' admission to the alliance.

"The 55-year-old Alliance was originally set up by the West to counter the Soviet Union's military might during the Cold War. NATO's expansion to the Baltic states of Latvia, Estonia and Lithuania has raised concerns in Russia. All three nations were Soviet republics and housed Red Army troops barely 15 years ago. Today we welcome them in the ranks of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization," Pres. Bush said.

"When NATO was founded, the peoples of these seven nations were captives to an empire... They endured bitter tyranny and struggled for their independence. They earned their freedom with courage and perseverance, and today they stand with us as full and equal partners in this great alliance."

Bush also said he was happy to receive the prime ministers of the new NATO members in his Oval Cabinet, where he thanked them for the friendship and the start of cooperation in the name of peace and freedom in the world.

"Welcome to America," Bush said when addressing the government heads. He also extended his thanks to the defense ministers of the seven countries, heads of Albanian, Croatian and Macedonian governments, NATO's Secretary General Jaap de Hoop Scheffer, ambassadors of all NATO member countries, members of the U.S. Administration and parliament, who contributed to the latest expansion of NATO.

"We still live in a dangerous world, where our enemies seek not only the death of multitudes, but the death of liberty itself," Pres. Bush spoke citing State Secretary Colin Powell.

"The major mission of NATO – to defend its members against any aggression – has not

THE INFORMATION CENTER FOR HOMECOMING LITHUANIANS is an organization in Vilnius, Lithuania, which provides information and coordinates services for Lithuanians all over the world. The collect news from many sources including ELTA, BNS, and the local Lithuanian dailies. Žilvinas Beliauskas is director. NATO photo from <http://www.nato.int/multi/photos/2004/m040329a.htm>.

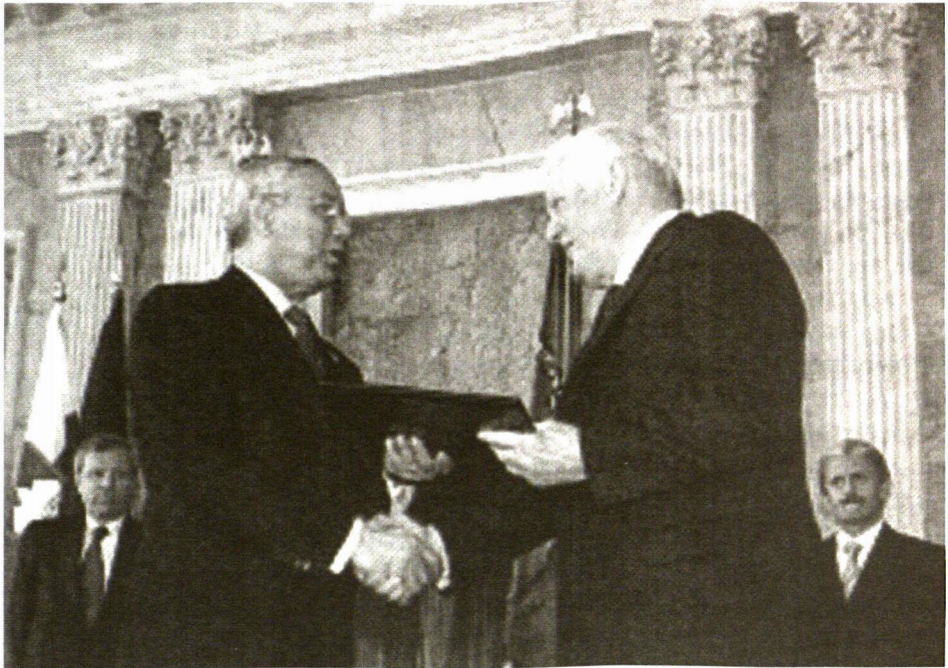
changed. However, the Alliance has encountered a new enemy today, sowing death all around the world, starting from New York and ending in Madrid," he continued.

According to the U.S. president, the new members will add moral clearness to the goals of the Alliance. They understood the U.S. position in Afghanistan and Iraq since they remember the times of tyranny well. "Those countries," Bush spoke, "understand that when democratic countries are not able to respond to threats, much bigger threat may arise. This is why they, like NATO members now, are stepping forward to defend lives and freedom of others."

It has taken ten years for Lithuania to win membership in the western bloc. But some standards, this may be a very short time, but it was a road with many treacherous turns. In 1994, Algirdas Brazauskas, then acting in the capacity of the Lithuanian president, sent a letter to NATO's then Secretary General Manfred Werner to express the country's bid to join the transatlantic organization.

Following eight years of persistent efforts, Lithuania secured an invitation to join the alliance during its summit in Prague on November 21, 2002. After the historic summit, U.S. President George W. Bush came to Vilnius to personally congratulate the residents of Lithuania and the other two Baltic states, Latvia and Estonia, on getting the ticket to NATO.

The Prague summit cleared the way to rati-



Left to right: US Secretary of State, Colin Powell and the Prime Minister of Lithuania, Algirdas Brazauskas.

Photo: NATO

fication of NATO enlargement documents in both the member and entrant states. The Lithuanian Seimas ratified the papers on March 10 of this year.

But the inclusion of former communist Bulgaria, Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania, Romania, Slovakia, and Slovenia in the North Atlantic Treaty Organization is raising concerns in Moscow. The 55-year-old alliance was originally set up by the West to counter the Soviet Union's military might during the Cold War. All three nations were Soviet republics and hosted Red Army troops barely 15 years ago.

Russian Defense Minister Sergei Ivanov said in a recent magazine interview that Moscow might revise its defense policy unless the alliance revises its military doctrine, according to Pres. Bush.

And Konstantin Kosachyov, the head of the international affairs committee of Russia's parliament, told the Russian news agency Interfax on March 29th that NATO has recently been making steps that are unfriendly to Russia.

NATO has tried to convince Moscow the expansion is not directed at Russia, but NATO Secretary-General Jaap de Hoop Scheffer, who was at the White House for Monday's ceremony, told CNN much needed to be done to strengthen NATO-Russian ties.

"We need, in the interests of NATO and in the interests of Russia, a strong partnership, which means that we not only discuss the easy things but also the harder nuts to crack in that relationship," Scheffer said.

Yet, Russia had other things in mind rather than partnerships. Antanas Valionis, the Lithuanian minister for foreign affairs, confirmed on March 30th that Russia ordered three Lithuanian diplomats out of the country.

The expulsion concerned three diplomats working for the Lithuanian embassy in Moscow: consultant for political issues Dalia Sukackienė, minister adviser for economic issues Kestutis Kudzmanas, and Kastytis Kazu-

kauskas, the commercial attaché. The diplomats left Russia after being announced *persona non grata*.

Russia's Foreign Ministry, in a released statement, said the Lithuanian charge d'affaires had been summoned and told the three diplomats had conducted "activities incompatible with their status". This is a usual euphemism for spying.

Rimantas Sidlauskas, the Lithuanian ambassador to Moscow, would not comment on the most recent actions of Russian authorities.

NATO's admission of Lithuania did not go uncelebrated. Lithuania held solemn celebrations of the historic event on April 2, when the country's foreign minister attended an informal meeting for NATO members in Brussels. Next Friday, the Independence Square of Vilnius will host the hoisting of the national and NATO flags and a parade of military vehicles. ♦

Update on "Paksasgate"...

President defends himself to the public, but it is too late

President Rolandas Paksas, who appeared with a televised address on March 25th, said he distanced himself from Yury Borisov, but as a human he understood that the Russian businessman "has encountered enormous hardships in recent months either – he was stripped of his Lithuanian citizenship and is facing deportation from the Baltic country, in which he grew up, had his own business, and was happy with his family". Only a few days later, impeachment became a reality he might not have thought possible.

Pres. Paksas expressed in his speech, "I could [have made] a fatal mistake – to hire my

former sponsor Yury Borisov to work as a public consultant. I understand that this step came [as] a shock leading to confusion in your heads. I learned that my action was difficult to understand to those who believed and still believe in me. I do not try to justify myself, but feel a need to explain the motives that led to such a decision," the president said.

Although Pres. Paksas seemed to make the effort to express his regrets, this did not change the outcome of the Constitutional Court of Lithuania's ruling on April 1st that the actions of President Rolandas Paksas grossly violated the Constitution.

The ruling stated that Paksas, being com-



mitted to Russian-born entrepreneur Yury Borisov for providing financial and other support to his election campaign, illegitimately granted Borisov Lithuanian citizenship and tipped off the man about an operative probe and phone bugging launched against Borisov by Lithuanian law enforcement authorities.

Other anti-constitutional actions by the president included his giving instructions to adviser Visvaldas Račkuskas to exert pressure via law enforcement institutions on the stockholders and senior officials of road company UAB Žemaitijos Keliai to transfer their shares to Paksas's friends and partners. "All these actions constitute a gross violation of the Constitution," the court said in the ruling. A total of six counts were brought against Pres. Paksas.

Lawmakers said the impeachment vote on the president in the Seimas may be held no later than April 8.

The Seimas will need two to three days to hold the vote on ousting the state leader, said Algimantas Salamakinas, the head of the parliamentary ethics and procedural commission. If the court says that Paksas is guilty and lawmakers vote for the removal of Paksas, the impeachment process will end after the official gazette, *Valstybės Žinios*, publishes the results.

A majority of the legislators forecasted that

the court's conclusions will be negative. Paksas himself mentioned that he did not expect a positive decision from the court either.

The March 25th presidential address gave an insight into Paksas's own regrets. As in his previous public addresses, Paksas mentioned that he had encountered huge opposition since the very first day in the office.

"I also failed to see what type of a man Yury Borisov was. I did not have time to learn about him well during the election campaign. I did not see the odd human nature and twists of character hiding behind the seemingly generous aspirations of the businessman. But I would like to be honest and look at him as a human being," the president said.

"I regret my initial decision, which was largely determined by my emotions. I see it as a result of huge tension. But after considering what happened, I understand my mistake. So, I decided to correct it regardless of what can be waiting for me in [the] future. I distance myself from Borisov, and I am not to tolerate any form of pressure either for the state, me personally, or my family."

Presidential adviser for political issues, Alvydas Medalinskas, explained later that the Lithuanian citizens will have two ways to express their opinion about the president – during election or through their representatives in the Seimas.

Lithuania's Prime Minister Algirdas Brazauskas, attending a European Council summit in Brussels, said the speech delivered by President Rolandas Paksas "was overdue".

The latest developments, he added, would prompt those who had hesitated to back the removal of the president to change their minds.

"In my judgment this speech is almost five months late. Then the outcome would have been different," Brazauskas said to reporters in Brussels.

The prime minister stated he had suggested that the president apologize to the nation and distance himself from Yury Borisov in the early days of the scandal.

The impeachment probe commission at the

Lithuanian parliament proposed to impeach President Rolandas Paksas on these following six counts:

- ♦1. *While in the office of the president, he was not entitled to assume and have any commitments to private persons incompatible with the interests of the Nation and the State of Lithuania, but made such kind of commitments to Yury Borisov and was under his influence, and acted in the interest of private persons rather than of the Nation and the State of Lithuania;*
- ♦2. *Failed to ensure protection of a State secret;*
- ♦3. *Exerted unlawful influence on the decisions of private persons and private economic entities in their economic relations, through abuse of authority, unlawful instructions to the advisers, and other actions;*
- ♦4. *Failed to adjust public and private interests in his work;*
- ♦5. *Discredited the authority of powers;*
- ♦6. *Gave unlawful instructions to his advisers and did not take action to prevent abuse of authority by individual advisers in discharging their official duties.*

All of this has prompted people to wonder what the U.S.'s stand is regarding Lithuania's

image and fortitude in this face of adversity. US Ambassador to Lithuania, Stephen Mull, has said he cannot see any danger on the horizon for Lithuania. The American ambassador confirmed the confidence of Washington in Lithuania's democratic institutions.

"Lithuania has a functioning democracy; everything is running smoothly. I think that the situation dating back to October of the previous year and the current scandal have caused tensions in Lithuania. Nevertheless, I believe that the Lithuanian people can be proud that all institutions are in place doing their work. The law enforcement institutions are doing their job, and so are the Seimas, courts, and mass media; everything is done in an open and transparent way. This provides grounds for the confidence of Lithuania's partners, such as America, in the democratic proceedings and rules that you are implementing," he said.

Ambassador Mull added that he did not anticipate any bad after-effects in Lithuania in the nearest future. "Lithuania is joining NATO. This is a good reason to celebrate, and I see no threats. If you are asking me whether I am worried – no, I am not worried," Mull added.



—The Information Center for
Homecoming Lithuanians

Lithuania takes one more step towards membership in EU

The Lithuanian parliament made one more step towards the country's membership in the European Union; it held a vote on supplementing the Constitution with a special act called "On the Participation of the Lithuanian Republic in the European Union." on March 30.

Since an amendment to the Constitution needs to be passed in two votes with no less than a three-month break, the Seimas has done half of the work.

One hundred seventeen lawmakers voted

for the constitutional revision and four were against it.

The final vote on the amendment, meant to provide the principles for Lithuania's participation in the EU, will take place in three months.



—The Information Center for
Homecoming Lithuanians

A Political Profile...

Antanas Mockus-Sivickas ...

Educator, Former Mayor of Bogota, Columbia, and Proud Lithuanian

From activism in the Lithuanian communities to taking a political office, Lithuanians who have grown up in two cultures bring with them insights and experience to a broader population. One such Lithuanian is Antanas Mockus, the mayor of Bogota, Columbia for two tenures ending as of January this year.

Mockus, whose parents Nijolė and the late Alfonsas Savickas, was raised in a Lithuanian household in Columbia. His parents surrounded him and his sister Ismena Ona Vilte with the Lithuanian language and culture. He continues this with his own children, 27 year-old Danute, 8 year-old Laima, and 3 year-old Dalia. His sister also raised her children, sons Antanas and Grantas, similarly, and they speak Lithuanian fluently.

According to Maria Cristina Caballero's article about Mockus for Harvard University's Center for Public Leadership at the John F. Kennedy School of Government, after an academic career as mathematician, philosopher and rector, the top job of The Colombian National University, Mockus decided to run for mayor. He described this new challenge as "a 6.5 million person classroom." (Caballero)

His successful run was chiefly due to the public's perception of him being an honest guy. He had no political experience, but plenty of ideas. "Mockus turned Bogotá into a social

experiment just as the city was choked with violence, lawless traffic, corruption, and gangs of street children who mugged and stole. It was a city perceived by some to be on the verge of chaos. People were desperate for a change, for a moral leader of some sort. (ibid)

His antics and tactics were unusual, but were producing results. "The fact that he was seen as an unusual leader gave the new mayor the opportunity to try extraordinary things, such as hiring 420 mimes to control traffic in Bogotá's chaotic and dangerous streets. He launched a "Night for Women" and asked the city's men to stay home in the evening and care for the children; 700,000 women went out on the first of three nights that Mockus dedicated to them." (ibid)

He made sure that his actions involved the people – he became teacher, mentor and guide to living smarter and better. "When there was a water shortage, Mockus appeared on TV programs taking a shower and turning off the water as he soaped, asking his fellow citizens to do the same. In just two months, people were using 14 percent less water, a savings that increased when people realized how much money they were also saving because of economic incentives approved by Mockus; water use is now 40 percent less than before the shortage." (ibid)

Mockus contends that, "The distribution of

THIS POLITICAL PROFILE is based on information from Maria Cristina Caballero's article for Harvard University's Center for Public Leadership at the John F. Kennedy School of Government. The article is "Academic turns city into a social experiment", March 11, 2004 issue, at <http://www.news.harvard.edu/gazette/2004/03.11/01-mockus.html>.



Antanas Mockus

knowledge is the key contemporary task. Knowledge empowers people. If people know the rules, and are sensitized by art, humor, and creativity, they are much more likely to accept change." (ibid)

Other acts of involving the people to make their lives in the city qualitative included asking them to pay 10 percent extra in voluntary taxes. To the surprise of many, 63,000 people voluntarily paid the extra taxes. During Mockus's tenure in 2002, the city collected more than three times the revenues it had garnered in 1990. Mockus also inspired people to call his office if they met an honest taxi driver. More than one hundred people called, and the mayor met with these honest taxi drivers. During their discussion, he spurred the drivers to pass along hints to improve other taxi drivers' behavior. The "Knights of the Zebra" – a club of good taxi drivers, was the result of this meeting.

"Most important to Mockus was his campaign about the importance and sacredness of life. 'In a society where human life has lost value,' he said, 'there cannot be another priority than re-establishing respect for life as the main right and duty of citizens.' Mockus sees the reduction of homicides from 80 per

100,000 inhabitants in 1993 to 22 per 100,000 inhabitants in 2003 as a major achievement, noting also that traffic fatalities dropped by more than half in the same time period, from an average of 1,300 per year to about 600. Contributing to this success was the mayor's inspired decision to paint stars on the spots where pedestrians (1,500 of them) had been killed in traffic accidents." (ibid)

He leaves a legacy. "Luis Eduardo Garzón, the new mayor of Bogotá, is the first leftist who has been in charge of the second-most important political position in Colombia." (ibid) Mockus explained that Garzón's election was due to the people's heightened awareness of social issues.

Presently, he expressed that he would like to return to the classroom and maybe run for president of Columbia in the near future. "This time his classroom will be 42 million strong." ♦

Marija Remienė

"I am trying to help others understand the admirable character of the Lithuanian people."

The Cultural Council of the Lithuanian American Community has initiated various events in many parts of the United States to commemorate a hundred years of regaining the freedom of the press in Lithuania in 1904. Moreover, there will be a series of seminars conducted at some universities. The first lecture will be delivered by Prof. Dr. Giedrius Subačius at St. Ambrose University, Davenport, Iowa, on Friday, April 16. The host of the seminar is Prof. Dr. Randy Richards. On this occasion we asked him a few questions.

Dear Professor Richards, we met at the reception hosted by the General Consul of the Republic of Lithuania on the occasion of Lithuania's Day of Independence, February 17, this year. How did it happen that you were there to celebrate with us Lithuania's day of Independence?

The official reason I was there is that I am a Professor of Philosophy and Managerial Studies at St. Ambrose University in Davenport, Iowa. We are in the process of developing an Executive Masters of Business Administration to be operated jointly with the International Business School of Vilnius University. A small group of us was invited to come to the celebration to make contact with influential

Lithuanian-Americans to gather support for our program. In this matter, Alexander Domanskis offered us his advice and counsel.

However, I had more personal reasons for attending. First and foremost, I wished to honor and celebrate the irrepressible spirit of the Lithuanian people in their steadfast quest for liberty in the face of seemingly impossible odds. I also wanted to tell my friends in Vilnius, Valdas, Vaiva, Sandy, and Daniel, about the celebration. I knew they would enjoy hearing about it. Oh, yeah, I also heard they would be serving Lithuanian beer! I had a great time and met many fine people. I sure hope I get invited back next year (hint).

How, in the first place, did you become interested in Lithuania?

I became interested in Lithuania when I received an invitation three years ago from Associate Professor Raimonda Balnienė, Deputy Director of the International Business School, to teach Business Ethics in their Masters of Business Administration program. I must admit that at the time I knew little about Lithuania except that it was one of the three Baltic States and that the people had heroically freed themselves from the Soviets in the early 1990's.

MARIJA REMIENĖ is the Chairperson of the Cultural Council of the Lithuanian-American Community, Inc.

You said that you were in Lithuania and that you were teaching at the University of Vilnius. How did this happen, and what were your impressions of Vilnius, Lithuania, and the University?

May of 2004 is my fourth consecutive year of being a Visiting Professor at the International Business School. Dr. Craig Shoemaker, one of my colleagues at St. Ambrose who had taught at the IBS, told me that they were looking for someone to teach Business Ethics and asked me if I would be interested. I corresponded with Dr. Balnienė and Dr. Jonas Kuncinas, the Director of IBS, and they agreed to try me out for a semester. Well, it was a perfect fit for them and me. My travels to and teaching in Vilnius have changed my life, enriching it in many unexpected ways. And I think if you would ask Raimonda and Jonas, they would say the same of me.

Vilnius has become my second home. Especially Old Town Vilnius where I live and spend almost all of my time when I am there. I have been completely captivated by the city, its people, their energy, intelligence, and warmth. I now live in a kind of duality – here and there.

I am often homesick for Vilnius when I return to the States. I miss my friends and Old Town. I love to walk in Old Town and spend many hours a week just wandering around with no purpose in mind other than just wandering around its beautiful streets. Some of my favorite spots are The Collegium, an Internet Cafe on Pilies Street owned by my dear friend Valdas Stambrauskas; Skonis Ir Kvapas for tea and lunch; the statue of Gediminas; and the Iron Wolf in Cathedral Square to which I make a daily pilgrimage and the Neris River path where I spend many hours walking and running.

Valdas has taken me outside of Vilnius into the countryside to see many historical and cultural sights. My former student, Daiva Matukienė, and her husband Egidijus have taken my wife and me into the Ignalina region; Julius

Dabkus drove us to see Trakai in the moonlight. I have not yet been to the sea but hope to this year. The pine and birch forests, the deep blue lakes, and the gentle rolling hills remind me of Wisconsin,

My work at IBS has been a source of satisfaction and growth for me. (I hope my students would say the same!) Dr. Balnienė and Dr. Jonas Kuncinas have been not just marvelous people to work for, but they also have become friends as well. They have made me feel a part of the important [work] they are doing at the school, educating the new generation of business and government leaders for Lithuania.

I am pleased to play even a very small part of that effort. The students at IBS have responded with enthusiasm, dedication to the intellectual challenge, genuine appreciation for my efforts and in some cases friendship. I find it difficult not to be overly sentimental about what has happened to me as a result of living and working in Vilnius.

I asked you, and you graciously consented to organize a seminar in your own St. Ambrose University on the topic of 100 years of Freedom of the Press in Lithuania. What were your motives in doing such a favor for us, Lithuanians?

I think it should be obvious from what I have said above that I hold the people of Lithuania in high regard. I have been deeply impressed by their courage, energy, warmth, and decency. I have gained so much from my associations in Lithuania that I am looking for ways to repay the kindness and welcome that has been extended to me. So when you told me about this program, I immediately volunteered to oversee the promotion of this event in the Quad Cities. I am trying to help others understand the admirable character of the Lithuanian people. It is a small effort at giving something back. ♦

From the Auksučiai Foundation

Auksučiai farm teachings are adopted by Lithuanian farmers



The widely publicized Auksučiai Farm Project, between Kuršėnai and Gruzdžiai in northwest Lithuania, is supported by Lithuanian-Americans and others. The non-profit project is for the benefit of small-scale farmers, where they can observe newly introduced crops, fruits, and vegetables. These observations started to bear fruit.

In the summer of 2002, a Lithuanian agricultural student, Lina, arrived in the U. S. to learn more about American farming and to participate in several “hands-on” operations. Her training took place in California through the sponsorship of the Auksučiai Foundation (USA). Upon return home in 2003, she worked as a Research Assistant at the Auksučiai Farm applying her learned techniques and taking care of new crops. One such new vegetable, successfully introduced at the Farm, was edible asparagus.

We have just learned that this fine young lady and her brother rented a plot of farm on which they will plant and grow asparagus as a commercial undertaking. This venture by two young people, with agricultural backgrounds, proves that enterprising small-scale farmers are adopting ideas acquired at the Farm. Many more adventurous and hard working individuals will follow their example.

Invitation to the Auksučiai Farm Day and Seminar

This summer, July 13-15, 2004, another Field Demonstration Day is being planned in conjunction with a Seminar/Workshop. It will be presented by a group of multinational agricultural-

ists - volunteer scientists from the Univ. of California, Davis (UCD), and from several Scandinavian countries.

On the Lithuanian side, there will be participants from the Lithuanian Agricultural University (LZUU) in Kaunas, the University of Šiauliai, the Lithuanian Ministry of Agriculture,

THE AUKSUČIAI FOUNDATION helps small scale Lithuanian farmers become more self-sufficient and competitive in a free market economy and to sponsor and organize agricultural education exchanges for young farmers and students.

several private agricultural undertakings, and many local farmers.

Principal organizers of the Field Day and Seminar are two scientists from UCD: Prof. Calvin Qualset and Lawrence Clement. In 2002 Mr. Clement took a nine-month sabbatical leave and voluntarily worked at the Farm. Results of his accomplishments were published in a multi-colored booklet. Last May, Prof. C. Qualset participated in a Seminar at LZUU in Kaunas. His presentation was titled "Developing New Paradigm for Agricultural Development - a Case Study of the Auksučiai Project". Later, in November, Prof. C. Qualset made the same presentation during the Annual Society of American Agronomists Conference in Denver, Colorado.

Volunteers from UCD are making a major contribution to the success of the Auksučiai Farm Project. Prof. C. Qualset, a world-renowned grain geneticist and one of the founding Auksučiai Foundation Board members, was recently honored by UCD during the annual recognition of their most outstanding scientists cere-

mony.

In order to arrange such a major Conference/Workshop, it will require great effort and money. Contributors from the Auksučiai Foundation, UCD, Lithuanian Ministry of Agriculture and others will carry the brunt of the burden. However, in order to defray travel expenses of many volunteer scientists from the U.S. and from Scandinavia, private donations will be needed. If you wish to be one of such contributors, please send your tax-deductible gift to:

*The Auksučiai Foundation
2907 Frontera Way
Burlingame, CA 94010 USA
Website: www.aukfoundation.org*

If you are also interested to see this Farm in action, you are all invited to come to the Auksučiai Farm during the July 13 to the 15 and see the accomplishments for yourselves. ♦



Lithuanian language course for the summer

The 19th annual Lithuanian language course at Camp Dainava, Manchester, Michigan will take place August 8 to 15, 2004.

This one-week intensive course, operating under the auspices of the Lithuanian Educational Council of the USA, is designed for beginners, intermediate, and advanced students, or those just wishing to refresh their Lithuanian. Experienced instructors in vacation-like surroundings and atmosphere teach the course.

There are no limitations regarding age or formal education.

For more information please contact Vytautas Jonaitis, 1546 Quarry N.W., Grand Rapids, MI 49504; phone 616 - 458 - 6378; E-mail: vjonaitis@juno.com, or search the Internet for Dainava language course. ♦

– Vytautas Jonaitis

An Outline of Lithuanian History

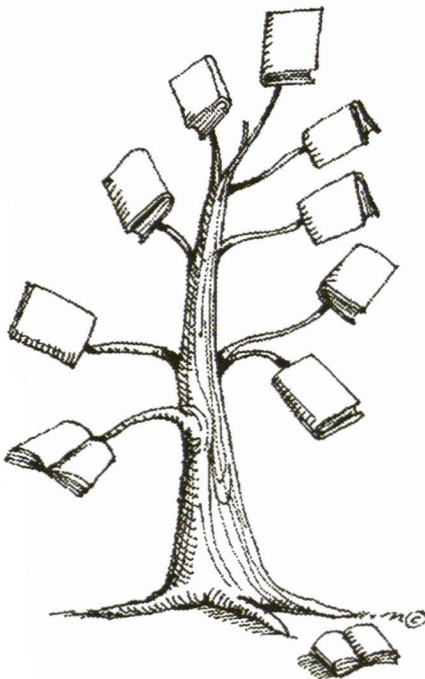
by Stasys Samalavicius

Loretta Kuliawat
Denhart
Reviewer

For many who write about Eastern European and Soviet history, Lithuania occupies a place as a tiny Baltic country that only within the past decade and a half was able to shake off the burden of Soviet occupation. In this book, Stasys Samalavicius removes Lithuania from its role as a footnote within the vast Soviet Empire, and brings it into focus as a central and star player following its own trajectory.

The figures in this version of Lithuanian history are as grand and full of intrigue as their contemporaries, the Hapsburgs and the deMedicis of Western Europe. This book puts into context Lithuania's quest for territorial expansion into Russia, resisting invasions from the Teutonic order, the negotiation and dissolution of alliances with Poland, and later, Russian territorial annexation and enduring the weight of German and Soviet occupation and oppression.

Within the space of 160 short pages, Samalavicius covers twelve centuries. He begins with a brief nod to archeological artifacts predating Christ and picks up the main thread of the story starting around the ninth century.



Samalavicius's narrative introduces us to the cultural gods and goddesses of the agricultural pagan religions and Lithuania's transition to Christianity, as well as placing familiar Lithuanian icons, like Vytautas the Great and Gediminas, within an historical context.

The majority of text tracks the country's political and economic activities as they crescendoed to the 15th and 16th century social renaissance when Lithuania established its place as a powerful state in Eastern Europe. Samalavicius describes the richness of a culture that hosted architects, sculptors, and painters from Italy, fostered advances in science and literature, and managed to be a multicultural crossroad of religions (the Catholic majority along with Russian Orthodox, Protestants, Jews, and Muslims) and ethnicities.

The last third of the book covers the Napoleonic wars and Lithuania's eventual fall into Russian hands and, later, German occupation. The book finishes with a brief description of Lithuania's struggles to preserve cultural autonomy and reassert political autonomy with the interim fragile success and relapses culminating on March 11, 1990 when Lithuania de-

clared itself an independent country.

Stasys Samalavičius' book could be called the "Cliff Notes" of Lithuanian history for the uninitiated. As the book's foreword tells us, the text is pieced together from a radio broadcast lecture series where Dr. Samalavičius attempted to give an updated English version of Lithuanian history that is not influenced by the ideological and political distortions of occupation.

Given the book's diminutive size and ambitious scope, it is no surprise that the writing is dense and jam-packed with dates, events, and trends in political, cultural and social develop-

ment. Nonetheless, there is a feeling of getting the story in broad brush-strokes more in the style of a timeline with little embellishment, rather than a grand epic. I would not recommend this as an afternoon's entertaining read. Rather, it is an excellent reference work, a great starting point to delve deeper, and placeholder to help organize what you find.

An Outline of Lithuanian History by Stasys Samalavičius may be purchased from the Lithuanian Educational Council of USA, 1501 Valecroft Ave., Westlake, CA 91361. E-mail: jpolikaitis@aol.com. Price: \$7.00 + shipping and handling. ♦

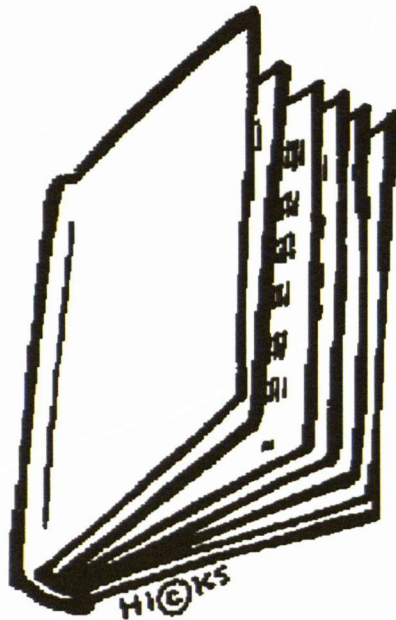
Blessed George Matulaitis' Journal

Sr. Ona Mikaila
Reviewer

Someone's diary naturally stirs our curiosity – the need to sneak a peek usually wins out over any sense of propriety. The chance to read a person's secret thoughts is not something we can easily pass up.

But what about a saint's diary? Would that seem too boring? After all, saints are human beings. Some have written diaries or journals; others have left autobiographies. Published after their deaths, these reveal their inner lives and bring them closer to us.

Blessed George Matulaitis' Journal, trans-



lated from the original Lithuanian and published in 2003, spans a fifteen-year period, almost a third of his entire life, from 1910 to 1925. When he first began to keep a *Journal* in St. Petersburg, Russia in the fall of 1910, his intention was to do this as a spiritual exercise, and he entitled his notebook, "Thoughts, Enlightenment, Inspirations, and Resolutions". The second

half of this recently published *Journal* contains notes taken while he was preparing to be consecrated bishop and continues with his ex-

periences as Bishop of Vilnius.

Here is an excerpt from the entry for April 28, 1919 written in Vilnius.

April 28

I have not written anything down in this notebook for a whole month because I had taken my notes out of the house and hidden them. I was afraid that if the Bolsheviks searched my house, they would be found and used for evil purposes. In general, I had given various papers and documents to certain trustworthy persons so they would take them away and hide them.

Now I can only jot down some of the more important things as I recall them...

On March 30th at 5:30 n the morning, I heard the doorbell ring. The young brothers and Father Joseph were praying in the chapel, while I was in my room getting ready to go say Mass and give a sermon at the Charity Chapel at the request of the Worshippers of the Blessed Sacrament. I went down and answered the door myself.

In the doorway I encountered the same Bolshevik who had once come to the house and demanded that I move out of my apartment. He now announced that the commissar who was supposed to occupy my quarters had returned from Moscow and was at the train station. He would soon be coming here with his friends – seven persons in two cars. I must make room for him immediately.

I replied that the former Bolshevik order directing me to give up my living quarters in favor of the commissar had now been revoked by the housing agency. He replied that since today was a holiday, the man in charge of the housing agency, Comrade Abramov, would not be there. Consequently, for the time being at least, I must admit those who have come from Moscow until they can find suitable accommodations. This Bolshevik had already moved into my yard with an automobile full of gasoline canisters and other things.

The commissar himself arrived soon after-

ward. I showed him the notice that the former Bolshevik decision had been revoked and that he had been given other accommodations. He said that he could ignore the notice and asked that I would allow him to come into the house temporarily.

I warned him that forcing themselves into the bishop's house would not go down well with the people and that riots might result. I said, "Sirs, you have the authority to do whatever you want. I cannot do anything about it. You are forcing me out of my residence and I shall leave the house entirely, but I do not advise you to stay here. I know the Catholic people, and they will not tolerate this. There will be a disturbance."

When I came back after Mass at about 11:30, I found the stairs and the entrance hall filled with people. Both the Poles and the Lithuanians had rushed in to defend the bishop's residence, sensing that the Bolsheviks were trying to seize it.

Rev. Shawn O'Connor, MIC, PhD, wrote his impressions of the *Journal*. He stated, "The careful reading of the journal allows us to see the work of God in the heart and the life of Blessed George. His life inspired and affected many, many others. As he witnessed to Christ, and Him Crucified, he led others to a deeper life in Christ... Blessed George is, as Pope John Paul II said after his beatification (in 1987), 'a gift to Lithuania and the Church.'"

Blessed George Matulaitis' Journal is available in hard cover (\$15.00) and paperback (\$10.00). Translated from the Lithuanian by Sr. Ona Mikaila, published by the Marian Fathers in Poland. It may be ordered at: Immaculate Conception Convent, Putnam CT 06260. Call to order at 860-928-7955. ♦

Dalia Anysas

2000 Dancers to Perform at XII Lithuanian Folk Dance Festival

Approximately 2000 dancers, ages seven to seventy years old, will gather this July 3, 2:00 p.m., at the Allstate Arena (6920 N. Mannheim Road, Rosemont) for a colorful and vibrant spectacle featuring about 45 Lithuanian folk dance groups. These groups will perform simultaneously to the beat of lively folk music creating a kaleidoscopic effect of moving patterns reminiscent of the woven patterns of their traditional folk costumes.

Eight Lithuanian folk dance groups from Illinois have already registered for the event: *Lētūnas* and *Čikago's Lituanistinė Mokykla* of Chicago, and *Gija*, *Grandis*, *Klumpė*, *Lietuvos Vyčiai*, *Spindulys*, and *Gedimino Lituanistinė Mokykla* of the surrounding region, with a total of over 450 dancers from this area. More groups are coming from other places in the United States: Arizona, California, Colorado, Connecticut, Delaware, Florida, Kansas, Maine, Maryland, Michigan, Minnesota, Nebraska, New Jersey, Ohio, Pennsylvania, Washington, and Wisconsin, as well as from Brazil, Canada, Sweden, and Lithuania.

The first Lithuanian Folk Dance Festival

held outside of Lithuania took place in 1957 at the Chicago International Amphitheater. Similar festivals continued to be held approximately every four years at different locations. The public is invited to attend this XII Lithuanian Folk Dance Festival, presented by the Lithuanian-American and Canadian Communities, together with the Lithuanian Folk Dance Institute.

“Dance is a celebration of the human spirit, an art that transcends the boundaries of language, age and culture. Folk dancing is a form of social dancing that has become part of the customs and traditions of a people. Most folk dances were originally created among people in villages and were passed on from generation to generation in a particular region. Today, dance groups perform in their national costumes and so help preserve their heritage and traditions,” explained Vida Brazaitytė, *Grandis* group teacher and dancer.

“We want to keep the ethnic Lithuanian folk dancing tradition alive. Generations have come together to dance at these festivals – children, parents and grandparents – and new friendships have been fostered through this

DALIA ANYSAS is the press contact person for the XII Lithuanian Folk Dance Festival.

event, which engages dancers and viewers alike, “says Mrs. Audronė Tamulis, President of this year’s event.

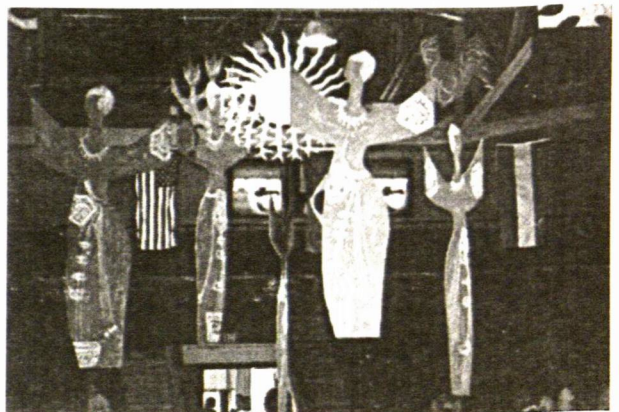
The festival begins with the Welcoming Ceremonies Program, which will be held on June 30, at 12:00 noon, during the Lithuanian Day Fair at Daley Plaza. The program will include performances by several Lithuanian folk dance and music groups. Lithuanian food, arts, and crafts will be presented and sold at several stands on the plaza.

For tickets to this event, please contact: Ticketmaster – 312.559.1212, Allstate Arena – 847.635.6601, or visit www.javlb.org/ssvente04. Ticket costs: \$35 for upper tier seating and \$25 for lower tier seating.

Additional Free Programs:

- The Eighth Chicago Summer Dance, presented by the Chicago Department of Cultural Affairs and the Chicago Office of Tourism, will host a Lithuanian Night at the Spirit of Music Garden in Grant Park at 601 S. Michigan Avenue on Thursday, June 24, from 6:00 pm — 9:30 pm. This will be an opportunity for all to learn some Lithuanian folk dance steps and to practice them at the sound of music provided by Lithuanian folk music group “Sodžius”.
- Folk Art Exhibit and Fair at the Hyatt Regency O’Hare, 9300 West Bryn Mawr Avenue, Rosemont, on July 2 and 3, 9:00 am - 5:00 pm. ♦

Scenes of practice time before the XIIIth Lithuanian Folk Dance Festival Of 2000



Laurynas (Larry) R. Misevičius

Arvydas Sabonis...

The Most Valuable Player of the 2003-2004 Season

On the occasion of the first “Žalgiris” home game of the Top 16, the CEO of the Euroleague, Jordi Bertomeu, visited Kaunas, Lithuania in early March for the purpose of presenting Arvydas Sabonis with the “Most Valuable Player” (MVP) award for the 2003-04 regular season.

Some are called sports legends for how they play, others for who they are. In the case of Sabonis, the Euroleague regular season MVP, either reason is legitimate, and together they explain why he is adored throughout Lithuania.

In a small, basketball-mad country with plenty of fine players, Sabonis is king not only because he can drop a hook shot. Few athletes impact their sport in their countries in as many ways as Sabonis does basketball in Lithuania. Besides rejecting millions to keep a promise to play for and direct his original club, “Žalgiris” Kaunas, Sabonis this year marks the 10th anniversary of his own basketball academy, which enrolls 658 kids. And just as he makes things happen in between the baskets, he is making them happen in his city.

Sabonis has recently acquired two playing facilities – one for his school, another for “Žalgiris” – at the same time that he is pushing plans for the construction of a modern 10,000-seat arena in Kaunas. The rest of Europe may

see him as a superstar with a basketball in his hands, but Lithuanians know that he is an MVP off the court, too.

A Davis Cup qualifying tournament early this year was probably the last major event at the Orange Tennis Center in Kaunas – at least in the sport of its name. Sabonis recently acquired the up-to-date indoor tennis facility, opened just two years ago. Although the Lithuanian giant enjoys rushing to the net for a smash or two during pick-up tennis matches with his friends, that wasn't why he bought the arena. Rather, he was thinking of his basketball academy.

Established in 1994, the Arvydas Sabonis Basketball School is one of fourteen such schools in Lithuania and, according to official ratings that ranked it first for several years, probably the best one. Alumni from the Sabonis School can be found playing basketball all over the world. Two are teammates of Sabonis on “Žalgiris”, Giedrius Gustas and Paulius Jankūnas, while teenager Rolandas Alijevas plays for another Euroleague team, “Adecco Asvel” in France. Among several Sabonis School graduates playing in Italy, Valdas Dabkus joined ULEB Cup challenger “Metis” from Varese in Italy midseason; while a dozen more play on various Lithuanian League pro teams. Another twenty alumni are on teams at various

LAURYNAS (LARRY) R. MISEVIČIUS is the vice-president for Sports for The Lithuanian-American Community, National Executive Committee.

U.S. universities.

When the idea for the school was born a decade ago, Sabas said he was just thinking about his childhood years. "I do not want these kids to go through the same experience I went through as a young player: worn-out sneakers, poor equipment, unheated arenas...."

Today, the 658 kids attending School can only guess what Sabas was referring to: they are dressed by manufacturers well-known in the basketball world and are coached by eleven of Lithuania's best youth coaches using advanced techniques Sabonis brought from his career abroad.

Not all is roses and flowers, though. For 29 groups of kids covering eleven age brackets, the school has only one court of its own. It rents eleven others scattered across the town, which creates a lot of logistical problems. Kids who join the school from outside Kaunas

need accommodation that often requires inefficient expenditure. To prepare the kids for future challenges on and off the court, Sabonis wants the curriculum augmented with such courses as basketball-oriented English, general culture, psychology, ethics, and computer science. With the acquisition of the Orange Tennis Center, many of these problems should be solved.

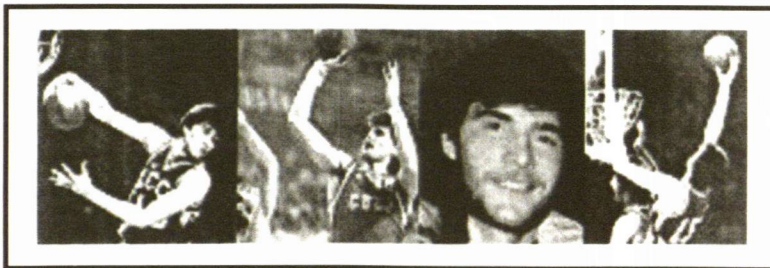
This summer, the center's four tennis courts of the arena will be adapted for basketball, and the squash court turned into a fitness center. Other facilities, including a planned extension of the present building, will be used for six additional locker rooms, classrooms to host three-hour daily lessons for every age group, and administrative offices. The new home for his school is just part of €2 million in investments Sabonis has made recently in facilities for both the school and "Žalgiris".

In addition to the tennis arena, he has also

purchased the "Kausta" Arena in Kaunas, which "Žalgiris" rented for practices with its Euroleague team and as a game venue for its second team. Plans for the arena's reconstruction include the addition of a small, twenty-person hotel for out-of-town students attending the Sabonis School, modern facilities with telescopic stands for practices and games, team offices, a fitness center, a medical center, saunas, and more.

Sabonis is less a man of word than of deed. For two decades, there have been discussions concerning construction for "Žalgiris" of a new modern basketball arena that would replace the famous Sporto Hale, built in 1939. Upon returning to Kaunas, Sabonis learned of future Euroleague seating-capacity requirements,

rolled up his sleeves, and pushed a proposal to construct a modern, 10,000-seat arena with a €25 million budget.



Today, the finished project is already on his desk, and Sabonis has made his own funds available to see it through. Sabonis expects the go-ahead for construction to be given as soon as the final decision on the arena location is made, sooner rather than later, he hopes, as procrastination makes him nervous.

The first question non-Lithuanian media often ask Sabonis these days is why he has rejected NBA millions to play for his relatively modest team from Kaunas, which has a population of approximately 475,000. His answer: "Because I love 'Žalgiris', and I keep my promises." He might also add that he loves his native country Lithuania, his native town Kaunas, and of course, the sport of basketball. Because all this is true, and everybody in Lithuania knows it, Sabonis does not like to speak much, even less to boast of his accomplishments. He prefers action to talking, but his off-court deeds are eloquent, indeed. ♦

R E F L E C T I O N S

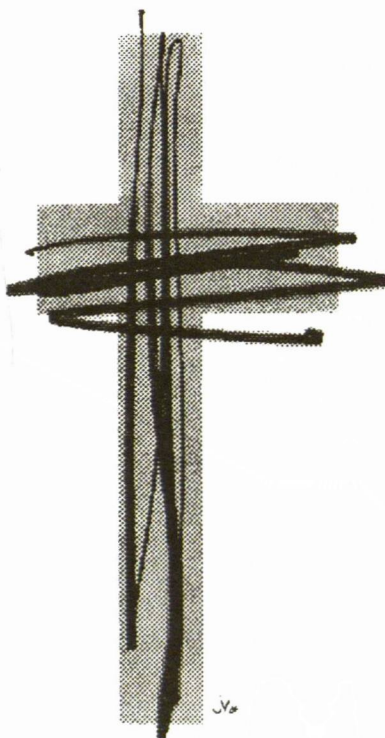
Sr. Margarita Bareikaitė

Lent — The Time of Reconciliation

The purpose of Lent is to purify us for the celebration of the feast of Easter. We arrive at the end by denying ourselves and by performing good works. Our life has to be formed according to the Christian ideal. As Adam fell into sin, so Christ has lifted all of us from sin by self-denial.

We should follow Christ as He leads the way in penance, fasting, and reconciliation to God and with one another. St. Paul summed up the whole program for Lent in these words; “In these days we conduct ourselves as the servants of God, in much patience, in fasting, in doing charity...”

We have to exercise patience with ourselves, with our weaknesses, and with our fellow men. We may recall when St. Paul gives a graphic description of brotherly and sisterly love, which we ought to learn by heart and often repeat to ourselves when we come to deal with our fellow men, by telling us: “charity is patient, is kind, charity envieth not, not ambitious, seeketh not her own, beareth all things, believeth all things, endureth all things.” Finally St. Paul says that charity differs from all other vir-



tues — it remains forever. Faith will give place to the vision of God, hope will give way to the possession of God, but charity will remain even in heaven.

If there is anything in our lives that needs to be renewed, it is charity. This ought to be the chief work of Lent. If we shall make only this one resolution for Lent, then all will be well. Let us improve our relations with all of our fellow men, the members of our family, our neighbors, our friends, fellow workers, and our enemies. Let us grow in charity to the poor, lonely, sick, little children. There should be a desire to advance in brotherly love, since Lent is not only the time for reconciliation, but also is the time also of grace.

Lent is also a symbol of life. It speaks of our being zealous for good works. Christian life entails at all times and especially in Lent not only a consciousness of sin and warfare against evil, but also the positive work of sowing the seed of grace in our souls. It is more concerned with the life of grace. At Easter time this life must pulse anew in the Church, in the newly baptized, and in all Christians. ♦

*SR. MARGARITA BAREIKAITĖ belongs to the order of the Sisters of the Immaculate Conception of the Blessed Virgin Mary, a Lithuanian order in Putnam, CT. and is a regular contributor to **Bridges**.*

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