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* **COVER: Sculpture of “VARGO MOKYKLA” - “School of Hardship”** by *Petras Rimša* representing the period of suppression of Lithuanian schools by Russians. Mothers, while working at their spinning wheels, taught their children the Lithuanian language and their prayers.

Editor’s Note: Realizing that he could not move the Lithuanians to accept the Cyrillic alphabet, Czar Nicholas II restored the right to use the Latin alphabet. The persistence and determination of the Lithuanian people should never be doubted. Throughout Lithuania’s long history, so much is owed to so many in the name of freedom.

The following are excerpts from “LITHUANIA 700 YEARS”

The Battle To Retain The Lithuanian Free Press And National Rebirth

1. The Successful Resistance to Cyrillic Alphabet

The Russian prohibition of the use of the Latin alphabet for the Lithuanian press, and in its stead the forced use of the Russian Cyrillic alphabet, was an unprecedented event in the history of Europe. Though this prohibition did not have a direct link with the revolt of 1863, it was nevertheless an outcome. The Russians saw very well how the Poles and Lithuanians (together with the White Russians) had led the uprising. The Russians began to observe the Lithuanians more closely-the Lithuanians were, to them, too much under the influence of the Poles. The Russian concern was to separate the

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Mothers to Many

By Ona Aleknavičienė

Those who are living fortunate and satiated lives probably will never really comprehend what a poor person experiences, especially when one has no money and daily hunger is gnawing at one's stomach. Quite often such a person is also embarrassed by his predicament and does not contact existing support organizations to ask for food and other assistance. According to an article in a Lithuanian newspaper, "Utenos Žinios" (No. 119, dated October 24, 2009), it is estimated that in the near future about 400,000 Lithuanians will be experiencing such hunger and want.



Lines of people registering for their food. They wait for hours even through rain, snow and sleet.

Utena was 38,876). In the beginning, the sisters were providing food for 50 needy individuals. Today they provide food for more than 300 needy families. These families include the elderly, invalids, and orphans. Some of the families are single-parent and some have numerous children. For some of the families this is the only help that sustains them from one month to the next. This

ance; to minister to both the physical and spiritual needs of the people; to provide Catholics and others the opportunity to meet and work with vowed religious women in their daily lives. The sisters now are involved in

assistance provides a measure of joy and happiness, especially to the children and the elderly, who know that they will not go hungry that month.

youth projects, religious instructions with children and their parents, and teaching religion classes in a local school. Additionally, the sisters are offering pastoral services at the 45-bed St. Clare Hospice. The sisters have created several projects and are seeking supporters to carry out their projects.

Food packages are prepared and given out once a month. The food packages basically consist of cooking oil, flour, various cereal grains, sugar, macaroni, cookies, and other items. The food packages vary monthly, based on local food prices. The Lithuanian Catholic Religious Aid



Seated is Sister Michele, registering a child and her grandmother while Sister Dolorita looks on.

Seventeen years ago, two nuns, Sr. Dolorita Butkus and Sr. Michele Garas, of the Sisters of St. Francis of the Providence of God, arrived from Pittsburgh, PA to Utena, Lithuania. Their goals were to offer the Lithuanian people support and guid-

years they have an on-going project to feed the hungry of Utena. Over the years the numbers of the hungry have been increasing. In October 2009, there were 3,651 workers unemployed and looking for work. (On January 01, 2006, the population of

For the past five



An elderly woman is grateful.

Continued from page 3 The Battle To Retain The Lithuanian Free Press And National Rebirth

Lithuanians, Poles, and White Russians. The tiny country of Lithuania within the giant Russian Empire seemed to the Russians to be unimportant, and to be easily Russified. Thus, the first implement in this program of Russification was to forbid the use of the "Polish" letters-that is, the Latin alphabet. Through the use of the Cyrillic alphabet, the ultimate aim was to Russify Lithuania through prohibition of the Latin alphabet.

The Russians thought that it would be relatively easy for the Lithuanians to adopt the Cyrillic alphabet. The first three books introduced into the country were a grammar, a prayer book, and a calendar. The Russian grammar books meant nothing to the people, who just read the old books. At first, even the prohibition of the free press did not touch the average citizen, for few were schooled in recognizing Russian characters; furthermore, the awakened spirit of anti-Russianism during the revolt helped in resisting this alphabet, which the Lithuanians came to abhor.

Religion, as had been the case in the past, played an important part in the lives of the people. This was especially evident concerning the new prayer books of Cyrillic alphabet. The Lithuanians refused to use

these missals, and naturally did not purchase them. There was no use or profit for the Russians to continue further publication; in fact, only fifty-four prayer books were published in forty years!

Meanwhile, Lithuanian books were published in Prussia; the first editions, printed in Konigsberg in 1866, were smuggled across the border into Lithuania by contrabandists who had engaged in similar black market activities since ancient times.

The first united resistance against the Cyrillic alphabet began with the peasants. At first, the relatively small educated class did not realize the imminent danger lying in the prohibition. Some even helped in preparing some texts for the new Russian printings. Bishop Valančius, held under arrest, was persuaded to give his imprimatur for the first religious writings in the Russian characters; however, he soon saw the danger and began to protest such publications. In 1866 he wrote to Kaunas' general-governor: "I believe it is impossible to publish the Samogitian Gospels as a Bible in Russian letters because it is my duty to see that such a book would not be ruined." A year later Valančius requested permission to publish a very popular prayer book, *Aukso Altorius*, in the Latin

Continued on page 19



A young mother and her child depend on the generosity of others.

(64-25 Perry Avenue, Masbeth NY 11378) has been supporting this project, but the sisters are asking your help to continue this project and also to increase the number of families to be supported.

**Director of the Association of St. Francis:
Ona Aleknavičienė**

<http://www.osfprov.org/lithuania.asp>

Editor's note: "Whatsoever you do to the least of my people, that you do unto me".

Matthew 25:40

I have held this article for several months because I wanted to print it for Mother's Day. These Sisters are mothers to so many people. They do all a mother does and even more. It's easy to love and help your own family. But the Sisters are helping strangers and these strangers are the downtrodden and those left behind in a world beset by a financial crisis.

For many years I have been writing about the work being done in Utena and the surrounding areas by Sister Dolorita and Sister Michele. The mission statement of their order can be found on the above link. Many of you have supported the Lithuanian Mission of the Sisters of St. Francis of the Providence of God. If you would like to help with the food pantry please send a check to:

**Sisters of St. Francis of the
Providence of God
3603 McRoberts Road
Pittsburgh, PA. 15234**

You must write Lithuanian Mission on your check.

The Tradition Of The Lithuanian Song Festivals – Dainų Šventės

Birutė Litvinienė

If nations were to be asked to open their heritage treasure chests, at the forefront of Lithuania's cultural treasury would be *dainos* – our songs. The word is as ancient as the Lithuanian language and, according to Indian linguist Professor Suniti Kuman Chattergi, comes from the old Indo-European word *dhaina*: “To think, to ponder, to give thought to.”

Historians and musicologists describe them as “immortal” *dainos* because they recount Lithuania's history, offering tangible relics of the ancient past as well as chronicling events of the present day. *Dainos* “give thought to” who Man is, and to his relationship with the events in his life and the country of his origin. A Lithuanian is enveloped by *dainos* from birth to death: there is a song for every experience, and he is equipped to reflect upon and narrate the story of his life through song. It is no surprise, therefore, that there are over 100,000 Lithuanian songs about weddings alone.

These *dainos*, from ancient folk songs to modern-day works by Lithuanian composers, will be the focus of the **IX Lithuanian Song Festival hosted in Toronto, Canada, on July 2-4, 2010**. Over 50 choirs with 1,000 singers of all ages, from Canada, the United States, England, Poland and Lithuania, will come together to be part of this celebration reflecting Lithuanian pride in the tradition of singing and to ensure that this unique living cultural treasure continues to be handed down from one generation to the next.

A song festival is a culmination of choirs' hard work, and a show of unity. The song festival tradition began in Lithuania in 1924 and still continues there, with last year's festival drawing 30,000 singers.

Even though there had already been unofficial Lithuanian song festivals in the United States, such as the gathering of 3,000 singers at the 1939 World Fair, the ALRK (American-Lithuanian Roman Catholic) Organists' Society endorsed the idea of organizing the



The youth choir Naujoji Intriga, one of the participants in the IX Song Festival in Toronto

first official Song Festival for Lithuanians living outside of then-occupied Lithuania. Because Chicago was centrally located and because it had a large Lithuanian community, it was chosen as the site of the first festival.

And so the first official Lithuanian Song Festival outside of Lithuania was held in 1956 in Chicago, Illinois, with 34 choirs with 1,200 singers. Since then there have been eight such events, all held in Chicago with one exception: The 1978 Festival was held in Toronto at Maple Leaf Gardens, with 51 choirs with 1,400 singers participating.

Toronto is very proud to again embrace the tradition and host this year's event. As with all the other festivals, the contributors – the organizers, various committee members, choir directors and singers – work tirelessly and without remuneration toward the objective: A successful song festival, a truly unique example of priceless cultural heritage that can be enjoyed by every member of the audience, even if he or she does not understand the language.

Robert Payne – novelist, poet, historian, anthropologist – writes:

One comes to them (dainos) almost unbelieving, surprised that such perfect songs should be permitted to survive. They have a beauty and pure splendor above anything I know in Western literature except the early songs of Greek islanders. They seem to have been written at the morning of the world, and the dew is still on them... in our desperate age, the dainos acquire a supreme importance for they speak of a time when joy still walked over the earth.

Birutė Litvinienė



Photo Album of Lithuanian Mothers

The photos used in this album were taken over many trips to Lithuania. Some were used in articles I wrote, but this is the first time they have been printed in color.

Jeanne Shalna Dorr

Calendar of Events for May, June and July/August 2010

Please verify all events as places & times are subject to change.

MAY

May 1, 2010 KOSCIUSKO FOUNDATION'S 600TH ANNIVERSARY

commemoration of the Battle of **Zalgiris** (Tannenberg) NY Lithuanian Choir & Annunciation Parish Choir & others will provide Lithuanian music under the direction of Gintare Bukauskas. United States Military Academy West Point, NY.

Mass at West Point, 9:45 am
Other activities will follow.

American Legion
Lithuanian Post 154,
Baltimore, MD
WILL BE PART OF THE
HONOR GUARD.

May 8, 2010

US - BALTIC FOUNDATION GALA
Mayflower Hotel
Washington, DC
Keynote Address
H.E. Andrius Kubilius
Prime Minister,
Republic of Lithuania
Weekend Events include:
Baltic Business Program,
VIP Reception, Silent Auction
& Dinner. All proceeds from
the events will benefit USBF
programs. For tickets please
visit www.usbaltic.org
Trevor Dane: 202-785-5056
TREVOR@USBALTIC.ORG

MAY 9, 2010, - 2:00 pm MOTHER'S DAY CELEBRATION

featuring a puppet play by a
Lithuanian artist Ona
Puckoriute-Zalensas from
Cleveland followed by a
pancake supper. Admission:
\$15 for dues paying members,
\$20 for everyone else.
Discount for seniors &
children under 16.
Fraternal Order of Eagles Hall
1151 S Galena Street
(just west of Mississippi & Havana)
Denver, CO 80247
Info:
www.coloradolithuanians.org

May 16, 2010 ANNUAL LAC, INC. SD CHAPTER PICNIC "Gegužinė"

Sunday - 12:00 pm
San Dieguito Park
1628 Lomas Santa Fe Drive
Del Mar, CA 92014
Info: <http://www.lithsd.org>
Sponsor: San Diego
Chapter of the LAC

May 22-23, 2010 -

11am-6pm,
38th Annual Lithuanian Festival
Cantonsville Armory
130 Mellor Ave.
Cantonsville, MD.
Voted "Best Little Ethnic
Festival in Maryland",
this year's theme is
"A Lithuanian Celebration of
Spring." Lithuanian folk
dancers, exhibits, vendors &

Lithuanian food. Admission-
\$4 per person. Children age
10 & under are free.
Info: Maria Patlaba at
410- 646- 0261.

JUNE

June 5, 2010 - 8am.2pm SPRING FLING

Featuring indoor & outdoor
activities, crafts, vendors,
flea market, food, raffles,
children's activities, bake
sale, book sale & much
more!
3603 Mc Roberts Road
Pittsburgh, PA.
For info. or to register
for space please visit
www.Osprov.org
call 412-885-7232.
Sponsor: Sisters of
St Francis of the
Providence of God.

June 5-6, 2010 TALKA WORK WEEKEND

Please plan to come help
prepare the Neringa
campsite for the summer
during the annual. Talka
work weekend. Kindly inform
regina@neringa.org
(or 978-582-5592) if you
plan to attend.

JUNE 26, 2010 - 1:00 pm JONINES IN THE ROCKY MOUNTAINS

with the Latvian Community
(If you want to travel to

Meadow Creek Reservoir
from Fraser together, we'll
be meeting at the Fraser
Safeway parking lot & will be
leaving at 12:30) Location:
Meadow Creek Reservoir
(the campsite's coordinates
are 40.056376,-105.752056)
Info: Romas Zableckas or
Gintautas Sutkus
970-531-25, Sponsor:
www.coloradolithuanians.org

JULY

July 2-4, 2010
IX LITHUANIAN SONG FESTIVAL
Toronto, Canada
www.lithuaniansongfest.org

July 2-4, 2010
We are offering the
possibility of a **BILINGUAL
INTRODUCTION TO NERINGA** camp
for families, to be facilitated
by Sr. Igne Marijosius.
Pending interest, families
who have always wondered
about Neringa will have a
chance to become acquainted
with her spirit, mission, &
beautiful landscape. Please
see www.neringa.org
if interested in this
possibility.

July 25, 2010
ANNUAL PUTNAM PICNIC & NERINGA
campers will perform as has
been the tradition in the
past. www.neringa.org

AUGUST

August 1-14, 2010:
CAMP NERINGA HERITAGE
Children's Camp in English
(7-16 yr-olds)
www.neringa.com

August 5-8, 2010:
Knights of Lithuania
97th National Convention
Binghamton, NY
Hosted by Council 72
www.knightsoflithuania.com

August 14-21, 2010:
CAMP NERINGA
CONTINUATION OF HERITAGE
Children's Camp in English
(for ages 13-16)
www.neringa.org

August 15-16, 2010
96th Consecutive "Lithuanian Days"
Food, dances, history, &
the celebration of all
things Lithuanian
Schuylkill Mall,
Frackville, PA
Sponsor: Knights of
Lithuania - Council 144

August 28, 2010:
EUROPEAN FESTIVAL 2010
Time: 10:00am - 10:00pm
Admission: Free
Location: Civic Green Park
9370 Ridgeline Blvd.,
Highlands Ranch CO 80129
www.coloradolithuanians.org

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