



A letter from Monsignor Edmond J. Putrimas,

*Lithuanian Bishops' Conference (LBC) Delegate for the Apostolate
of Lithuanian Catholics Living Outside of Lithuania*

Christmas 2015

Dear Brothers and Sisters in Christ,

“... the Mighty One has done great things for me, and holy is his name. His mercy is for those who fear him from generation to generation” (Lk 1:47-55 Mary’s Song of Praise).

In one medieval Persian poem Heaven is said to have eight doors. Occasionally some of those doors open, while others close. However, one set of doors – like God’s arms – are always open. These are the doors of mercy.

This year on Dec. 8 the Holy Doors of St. Peter’s Basilica in the Vatican will be unsealed by Pope Francis to proclaim the beginning of the Extraordinary Jubilee of Mercy. According to the Holy Father, “on that day, the Holy Doors will become Doors of Mercy through which anyone who enters will experience the love of God who consoles, pardons, and instills hope.” Just as God is merciful, so we are called to be merciful to each other. By forgiving one another’s hurts, mistakes and offences, may mercy and grace fill our world.

It is an honour, for which we thank the Lord, that the Year of Mercy also includes Lithuania. The original image of Divine Mercy is located in Vilnius. It was painted in 1934, according to the vision experienced by St. Sr. Faustina. This painting, as well as the Devotion to the Divine Mercy (Its foundation is the attitude of trust in God and mercy toward one’s neighbours), were very special to Saint Pope John Paul II, who is credited with the spreading of the devotion of Divine Mercy worldwide and bringing the name of Lithuania to the forefront.

In wishing each and every one of you a happy and holy Christmas, I pray that you will have the strength of will to enter through the Doors of Mercy. May you open doors of forgiveness for one another; knock on doors of those you have shunned or forgotten; and close forever doors that do not lead to God’s mercy.

Wishing you blessings for a Merry Christmas and a fulfilling 2016 year.

Msgr. Edmond J. Putrimas

A REVIEW OF PASTORAL ACTIVITIES IN 2015

✦ I attended the 18th South American Lithuanian Youth Congress in Montevideo, Uruguay. It is rewarding to see that these congresses, initiated by me in 1997, have continued to take place and provide an opportunity for the youth to learn more about their cultural heritage and identity. I am thankful that for many years students from the Lithuanian Canadian Youth Association have helped as mentors.

✦ While in South America I take the opportunity to visit with the Lithuanian communities, their parishes and cultural centres in Argentina, Uruguay and Brazil.

✦ One of my most challenging duties includes visiting Lithuanians who have been imprisoned in Lima, Peru and Sao Paulo, Brazil. These prisoners are caught in the world-wide human trade that is associated with smuggling of narcotics. I am thankful that I am allowed to meet with them to offer hope, to celebrate Mass and the Sacrament of Reconciliation. These visits are part of Lithuania’s action, known as ‘St. Martha’s Group’ against human trafficking and are coordinated by the Church, National Police, Consular Offices and other NG Organizations.

✦ This was the 3rd year that “Prayers for the World’s Lithuanians” took place. The Lithuanian Catholic Bishops’ Conference (LCBC) accepted my suggestion that the 1st Sunday of March annually be dedicated to prayers for Lithuanians living in their homeland and abroad. This year I celebrated Mass for this intention in Chicago at Nativity of the BVM church. The Mass was broadcast in actual time by Maria Radio in Lithuania.

✦ What a blessing it is to confer the Sacrament of Confirmation on our youth. This year I participated in this special event at Blessed J. Matulaitis Mission in Lemont, USA, in Dublin, IRELAND, at Vasario 16 High School in GERMANY and in Oslo, NORWAY.

✦ I welcome the newly assigned Lithuanian chaplains who will pastorally serve the Lithuanian communities in Birmingham, United Kingdom and Reykjavik, Iceland. As well, I attended a jubilant celebration of the Lithuanian Catholic Mission in Dublin, Ireland. This mission was established 10 years ago.

✦ Throughout the year I attend the plenary meetings of the LCBC in Lithuania and present to its members the pastoral needs of Lithuanian Catholic communities around the world. My pastoral work is coordinated with the Lithuanian Catholic Bishops’ Conference.

✦ I continue to be a member of: the World Lithuanian Community Board; Republic of Lithuania Parliament and World Lithuanian National Executive Commission of the Diaspora; the Toronto Archdiocese Council of Priests; the American and Canadian Lithuanian Priests’ Leagues and the European Bishops’ Conference Council on Migration – this year I helped organize the Migration Conference in Vilnius, which was attended by representatives from every European country.

✦ I chair the Board of Directors of the Lithuanian Catholic Religious Aid. This organization is responsible for distributing nearly a million dollars every year to support Catholic projects in Lithuania and abroad.

✦ I continue my duties on the Board of the North American ‘Ateitis’ organization and also chair the Board of Directors of the Spiritual Aid to Youth Centre, which I established in Klaipeda, Lithuania more than 20 years ago.

✦ For 33 years I have happily spent my summers as chaplain at Camp Kretinga in Canada; throughout the year I continue to participate in the pastoral work of Resurrection parish in Toronto.

✦ My sincere thanks is extended to all the parishes and missions that invited me to attend their special events.

May God bless all priests and those who belong to religious orders who, with selfless dedication, fulfill their work to meet the spiritual needs of all Lithuanian Catholics. It is always a pleasure to work with you.

