



**A letter from Monsignor Edmond J. Putrimas,
Lithuanian Bishops' Conference (LBC) Delegate for the Apostolate
of Lithuanian Catholics Living Outside of Lithuania**

2009 - Year for Priests - 2010 Pope Benedict XVI

2009

Mission Statement:

The pastoral mission of the Delegate of the Lithuanian Bishops Conference is to promote and facilitate the spiritual growth of Lithuanian Catholics abroad in their parishes, missions and communities; to coordinate and support youth ministry for the continuity of religious traditions in the Lithuanian diaspora.

Dear Brothers and Sisters in Christ,

Pope Benedict XVI has proclaimed 2009 the Year of the Priest. Reflecting on the history of the migration of Lithuanians, many dedicated priests and religious women and men with missionary zeal ventured to far-off countries and continents to serve Lithuanian Catholics. This is a year to remember and appreciate the efforts of the clergy who helped build our parishes, monasteries, convents, schools, establishing newspapers, youth organizations, sports clubs and summer camps. We remember the heroic efforts of Fr. Montvila who was a passenger on the ill-fated Titanic and spent the last moments of his life administering the Sacrament of Reconciliation, as the ship was sinking into the cold waters of the Atlantic. We also remember the untimely death by drowning of Fr. Repsys of the Divine Providence Parish in Southfield, Michigan and pray for his eternal peace.

This year it was an honour to attend the Lithuanian Priests' League of America 100th anniversary celebrations (the oldest Priests' League in America) at the late Fr John



III Pastoral Conference in Boston - participants

Richteraitis' St Andrew's parish in New Britain, CT in the United States.

2009 commemorates Lithuania's Millenium and the martyrdom of St Bruno of Querfurt, the first missionary mentioned in history who sought to bring Christianity to Lithuania. The Millenium celebrations in Vilnius were well attended by the various cultural ensembles, Lithuanian community members and clergy from various countries around the world. I appreciated the invitation to take part in the Millenium celebrations in Montevideo, Uruguay during the XIII South American Lithuanian Youth Congress, as well as in Reykjavik, Iceland, in Seinai, Poland, Pelesa and Gerveciai, in Belarus, and this fall in Chicago with Cardinal George, OMI, and Archbishop Tamkevicius, SJ. The Lithuanian Catholic Centre in Toronto took the initiative to organize a commemoration to mark the occasion of the Millenium of the Evangelization of Lithuania.

I also thank all those who helped organize the Multi Faith reflection on being persecuted for one's faith at the University of Toronto, with speakers representing the Jewish,



Multi-faith Symposium "Being Persecuted for One's Faith": from left Msgr. Edmond J. Putrimas, Rabbi Aaron Katchen, Raheel Raza, Archbishop Sigitas Tamkevicius, SJ, Fr. Raymond de Souza, Peter Baltutis

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Muslim and Christian faith traditions. Many in the Canadian community had the opportunity to listen to the personal experiences of persecution shared by former political prisoner Archbishop Sigitas Tamkevičius, SJ, now Ordinary of Kaunas and the President of the Lithuanian Catholic Conference of Bishops.



"Kretinga" Camp 2009

Many of us, especially those in Lithuania, are feeling the effects of the economic crisis due to unemployment and loss of personal investments. Lithuanian communities, especially in Europe, are receiving a larger influx of new immigrants seeking employment and greater financial stability. This is the source of a great pastoral challenge with so few clergy to outreach and support the

growing communities. As discussed at the III Lithuanian Catholic Priests Conference in Europe, the III Lithuanian American Pastoral Conference in Boston and during the Vatican's VI International Pastoral Conference of Migrants and Refugees, we are challenged to pray for and encourage new vocations but also to promote the role of the laity as the Church's future in the life of the Church.



Participants in the 2009 South American Youth Association Congress

May the Spirit of this Holy Christmas revive our commitments to continue our Christian work. May "the heart see where love is needed and act accordingly" (Pope Benedict XVI, *Deus Caritas Est*, 31b).

I sincerely thank all of you for your prayers, donations and support for my work in the Lithuanian Catholic Apostolate and send you my heartfelt Christmas greetings, as I participate in the World Lithuanian Youth Congress which is taking place in Argentina, Uruguay and Brazil.

Wishing you a blessed Christmas,

Msgr. Edmond J. Putrimas

Donations are an important means of support for the apostolic work of the Lithuanian Bishops Conference Delegate. Your generous financial assistance will enable Msgr. E. J. Putrimas to continue his responsibilities to meet the pastoral needs of all Lithuanian Catholic brothers and sisters living abroad.

- Giedra Paulionis, Advisory Council Chair

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