



A letter from Monsignor Edmond J. Putrimas,
*Lithuanian Bishops' Conference (LBC) Delegate for the Apostolate
of Lithuanian Catholics Living Outside of Lithuania*
Christmas 2010

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,

When Jesus was born in Bethlehem of Judea, in the days of King Herod, behold, Magi from the east arrived in Jerusalem, saying, "Where is the newborn king of the Jews? We saw his star at its rising and have come to do him homage."

(Matt. 2:1-2)

As we read in the Gospel according to Matthew, the three Magi or Wisemen from the East travelled to far and distant lands in search of Jesus. Having found and recognized him as the Messiah, the Son of God, they worshipped him and offered gifts to honour him. God gave us the gift of His Son through His unending love for us and continues to shower us with the gift of grace. Today it is the task of every Christian and community to acknowledge and share these heavenly gifts, received through the gift of Baptism.

The history of Lithuanians in the diaspora includes many individuals, organizations and institutions that recognized the needs of our Lithuanian community members and offered gifts of charity and leadership to others. "As the objects of God's love, men and women become subjects of charity; they are called to make themselves instruments of grace, so as to pour forth God's charity and to weave a network of charity" (Benedict XVI Caritas in Veritate 5).



Servant of God, Maria Kaupas

One such individual was Mother Maria Kaupas. On July 1, 2010, Pope Benedict officially recognized Mother Maria Kaupas' charitable and "heroic virtues" in her strong desire to help the less fortunate, and declared her as the "Venerable Servant of God", destined for the process of sainthood. Her virtues are described by Gediminas

Mikelaitis, "... She understood that Christian heroes are recognized by nations and are brought forth by the needs of communities. First it is important to acknowledge that a person or a community may be spiritually famished. Then comes the realization that no person is alone but belongs to a family and a nation" ("Congregations and Culture", Draugas, 2010, #190 (35)).

Maria Kaupas emigrated to America in 1897 and fulfilled her vocation in religious life through the Convent and her missionary work; became a teaching religious to help Lithuanian Americans sustain their faith, their spiritual and cultural identity and values. In 1907 she established the Congregation of the Sisters of St. Casimir. Her congregation succeeded in establishing schools in Chicago, Illinois, Holland, Pennsylvania, and in Buenos Aires, Argentina. Holy Cross Hospital, built beside Maria High School and Nativity of the B.V.M. Parish, continue to serve the surrounding community, thanks to the work of the Sisters of St. Casimir.



Blessed Archbishop George Matulaitis

Blessed Archbishop Jurgis Matulaitis established the Congregation of the Sisters of the Immaculate Conception of the Blessed Virgin Mary in Marijampole, Lithuania. These sisters also took their mission to the United States and Canada, establishing a nursery school for preschool-aged children, a dormitory

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and school for young girls at their Motherhouse, a youth camp in Vermont in 1969, a nursing home in Putnam, Connecticut, and an active retreat centre (since 1944).

The Congregation of the Sisters of St. Francis of the Providence of God was established in Pittsburg, Pennsylvania, in 1922. Their work was centered on serving the Church through meeting the spiritual and educational needs of Lithuanian immigrants and their children. They continue to do this now in Lithuania and in Vila Zelina, Sao Paulo, Brazil near St. Joseph's Lithuanian Parish.

The Advent season – a time when we prepare ourselves to once again celebrate the birth of Christ – provides us with the opportunity to reflect on Jesus Christ's coming and his mission to share the spiritual gifts of God's love; the Catholic Church continues this mission. St. Paul wrote to the Romans, "For as in one body we have many parts, and all the parts do not have the same function, so we, though many, are one body in Christ and individually parts of one another. Since we have gifts that differ according to the grace given to us, let us exercise them: if prophecy, in proportion to the faith; if ministry, in ministering; if one is a teacher, in teaching; if one advises, in advising responsibly; if one contributes, in generosity; if one leads, with diligence; if one does acts of mercy, with cheerfulness" (Rm 12:4-8).



Some of the Lithuanian Catholic Priests and Religious, who work in Europe, met for a conference in October in Kaunas and Vilnius

Please remember in your prayers all of the Reverend Sisters and Priests who passed away during this past year and also those who continue to minister to our Lithuanian Catholic communities around the world.

I take this opportunity to thank you for your prayers, for your encouragement and for your financial support, which enable me to continue with my duties and responsibilities as the Lithuanian Bishops' Conference Delegate to the Apostolate of Lithuanian Catholics Abroad.

May the blessings of Christmas enter your heart and the hearts of all you hold dear. May the gift of Christ's birth bestow on you the courage to witness Christ in your parish and your community. Most importantly, as we celebrate Christmas 2010, let us remember the true meaning of the first Christmas gift given so long ago.

Faithfully yours in Christ,

Msgr. Edmond J. Putrimas

Lithuanian Bishops' Conference Delegate

to the Apostolate of Lithuanian Catholics Abroad



Members of the Lithuanian Roman Catholic Priests' League of America met this Fall at Putnam for their annual meeting and retreat

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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