



A letter from Monsignor Edmond J. Putrimas,
*Lithuanian Bishops' Conference (LBC) Delegate for the Apostolate
of Lithuanian Catholics Living Outside of Lithuania*
Christmas 2011

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.

Dearest brothers and sisters in Christ,



“So they hurried off and found Mary and Joseph and saw the baby lying in the manger ... The shepherds went back, singing praises to God for all they had Heard and seen; it had been just as the angel had told them” (Lk 2:16-17,20).

This Christmas morning excerpt from Luke’s Gospel reveals to us that the shepherds were guided by an angel to find and recognize the baby Jesus. The Good News of Christmas began humbly with ordinary shepherds who were determined to find the Christ Child and, after seeing him, they believed that he was truly our Lord, the Messiah. Imagine the joy and praise they gave to God as they returned home, feeling a living connection to their Lord.

The Gospels and Jesus’ lessons and parables teach us that Jesus is the one who waits patiently for us to find him. But what does he expect of us? Simply that we answer his call and live our Christian faith through an active participation in Church life – through our prayers, offerings, and in our daily interactions with others.

The Christmas Mystery invites us to search for the living Christ and, having found him, to accept him into our lives, our homes, our families, our parishes, our communities – not just as an idea or feeling but recognizing and praising his Godlike features and omnipotence. Blessed Jurgis Matulaitis wrote in his journal, *My Notes*, that “Christians worship God not just as His creations or servants but as His children...”

In February of 2011 I had the opportunity to visit with some Lithuanians who are presently jailed in Lima, Peru. Within the walls of this penitentiary they participated in the celebration of the sacraments of Reconciliation and the Holy Eucharist. It was inspiring that even in circumstances like these, the prisoners had not lost their faith in God but found Him present within those walls, believed in Him and found hope in Him. A person’s heart that find the mercy of God is then enabled to give the gift of mercy and forgiveness to others. This is the greatest gift that we can share with others – to show forgiveness and offer hope to those living in poverty, to those who are marginalized or suffering from misfortune or are sick. Jesus taught us that “happy are those who are merciful to others: God will be merciful to them” (Mt. 5: 7).

When Holy Mother Mary accepted the Grace of divine motherhood, she prayed in the Magnificat, “My soul praises the Lord: my soul is glad because of God my Saviour” (Lk 1:47). Let us search for Christ just as those shepherds did long ago and having found Him, like Mary, let us welcome Him into our Christmas celebrations by praising and worshipping Him.

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 hearts. May the gift of Christ’s birth bestow on you the courage to be merciful and forgiving.

Wishing you a blessed and happy Christmas!

Monsignor Edmond J. Putrimas

