



George Matulaitis-Matulewicz

JOURNAL

GEORGE MATULAITIS-MATULEWICZ

# JOURNAL

Translated and Edited by

SISTER ANN MIKAILA, MVS  
of the Sisters of the Immaculate Conception of the  
Blessed Virgin Mary of the Poor

Stockbridge 2003

Original Lithuanian *Journal* of George Matulaitis  
copyright © 1998 by the Marian Fathers,  
St. George Province in Lithuania

Copyright © 2003 for the English Edition  
by the Marians of the Immaculate Conception,  
St. Stanislaus Kostka Province.  
All rights reserved

NIHIL OBSTAT  
Concurs with original  
*Valdemaras M. Cukuras, STD*  
Censor

IMPRIMATUR  
*Paulius A. Baltakis, OFM, DD*  
Bishop for Lithuanian Catholics  
outside Lithuania  
Brooklyn, New York  
December 8, 1992

Library of Congress Catalog Card Number 2002112872  
ISBN 0-944203-78-7

Project Coordinators  
*Andrew R. Mączyński, MIC*  
*Shaun P. O'Connor, MIC*

Collaboration with the final editing:  
*Jan Bukowicz, MIC*  
*Tadeusz Górski, MIC*  
*P. Shaun O'Connor, MIC*  
*Andrew R. Mączyński, MIC*

Editing and proofreading for English edition:  
*Richard J. Drabik, MIC*  
*Mark T. Garrow, MIC*  
*Steve LaChance*  
*Mary Ellen MacDonald*

Typesetting  
*Patricia Menatti*

PRINTED IN POLAND

# CONTENTS

Preface to the Journal of George Matulaitis .....	7
Preface from the General Postulator of the Marian Fathers .....	10
Spiritual Themes and Context of The Journal of Blessed George.....	13
A Gift for the Church.....	17
Notes on the Journal.....	19
Chronology.....	23
THOUGHTS, ENLIGHTENMENTS, INSPIRATION AND RESOLUTIONS 1910-1914 .....	29
RECORD OF A TRIP TO ROME 1911 .....	95
CONTINUATION OF THOUGHTS, ENLIGHTENMENTS, INSPIRATION AND RESOLUTIONS 1912-1914.....	123
MARIJAMPOLE JOURNAL 1918 .....	141
VILNIUS JOURNAL 1919-1921.....	165
NOTES FROM MOVE TO ROME 1925 .....	329
Reproduction of two pages from Blessed George Matulaitis’ personal notebook. ....	335
Appendixes.....	339
Index of Names .....	355



## **PREFACE TO GEORGE MATULAITIS-MATULEWICZ JOURNAL**

**by Joseph Cardinal Bernardin  
Archbishop of Chicago**

Recently, I rededicated St. Anthony Church in Cicero, Illinois, after extensive renovation on the building. Bishop George Matulaitis had dedicated the original church in 1926 when he visited Chicago and attended the XXVIII Eucharistic Congress here.

His life and mine have intersected before. When I first came to Chicago, I learned about the cause for his beatification as I visited Lithuanian-American parishes in the Archdiocese. In 1987, I had the honor of being present at his beatification in Rome and the privilege of celebrating a Mass of Thanksgiving and giving the homily in the Basilica of St. Mary Major. In late summer of 1990, I made a pastoral visit to Lithuania which included some very special days in his diocese of Vilnius, where his memory is very much alive.

As I read his *Journal*, I discovered many other points of convergence between his life and mine. Our ministries have been in turbulent times of transition — his when the boundaries of Europe were constantly shifting, mine in the post-conciliar era. I can identify with his struggles to build unity in a local church that is marked by ethnic, cultural, and religious diversity. Also, a bishop is often pulled in several directions at one time by special interest groups or individuals with personal agendas. When a Church leader takes a stand or makes a decision, he cannot expect to please everyone, and at times, resistance and criticism come from one's closest friends and colleagues. At times, one seems to stand quite alone.

What struck me most about his *Journal*, however, is his conviction about the importance of prayer, especially for Church leaders who struggle to balance faith with the challenges they face daily. As a bishop, he faced many difficult pastoral challenges, but he was sustained by personal prayer, by communion with God.

Blessed George had learned early in his priestly career the importance of the spiritual life. As he wrote in his *Journal*: *Sometimes the person allows himself to become so involved in this whirlwind of good works that he has no time left for himself. Living in this frantic activity, the spirit gradually diminishes and dries up, becomes weak and dissipated. When our spirit has cooled, nothing is left to fire our zeal, and then even our good works lose their vitality. That is why our spiritual life should always come first.*

His fundamental spirituality was, as he noted in his *Journal*, *...to seek God in all things, to do all for the greater glory of God... May God and his glory be the center of my life, the axis of all my thoughts, feelings, desires, and works.*

The acid test of the quality of his spirituality came in 1918, when he was informed that Pope Benedict XV had appointed him Bishop of Vilnius. He had just refused the invitation to become the rector of the seminary in Sejny because he was convinced that his sole mission was to revive the Marian Congregation. He was told that, if he tried to resign his episcopal office, the Holy Father would not accept his resignation. He later wrote in his *Journal*: *That night I could not sleep. I felt the full weight of the burden that had fallen upon me. It was a difficult time, but I had to make my peace with God's will.*

Several years ago, when I was the Archbishop of Cincinnati, I made a very important spiritual decision. I had come to realize that, while I often urged people to pray daily in order to develop an intimacy with the Lord, I myself seldom found adequate time in my busy schedule for personal prayer.

One evening I shared this inconsistency with some priest friends. Instead of simply agreeing that they understood the difficulty I was facing, they challenged me to do something about it. More specifically, they told me that I should give first priority to my own spiritual life. So, I resolved to devote the first hour of each day to the Lord, and this quickly became a very special time for me in my spiritual growth.

Later, when I read Blessed George's *Journal*, the words alluded to above rang so true: *When our spirit has cooled, nothing is left to fire our zeal, and then even our good works lose their vitality.* For me, that first hour keeps me connected with the Lord throughout the day. In ways I never experienced

before, I sense His close presence throughout the day. That kind of intimacy gives me the zeal and the courage to face the inevitable challenges that arise; it gives meaning to all I do, no matter how insignificant or seemingly irrelevant. That first hour stokes the furnace that keeps the fire aglow. That was a lesson that Blessed George Matulaitis learned many years ago — a lesson that made him the extraordinary person he was.

All of us owe a debt of gratitude to those who have gone before us and have become models of the Christian life. All who read *George Matulaitis-Matulewicz Journal* will find in him a reliable spiritual mentor.

September 14, 1994

Feast of the Triumph of the Cross



## **PREFACE FROM THE GENERAL POSTULATOR OF THE MARIAN FATHERS**

In the introduction to the first Polish edition of the Blessed George's *Spiritual Journal*, Provincial Witold Nieciecki, MIC, of Poland, wrote:

*While it is not an autobiography, the Journal is a wonderful self-portrait by the artist, made on a spur of the moment, without careful posturing or some later touching-up. It is the testimony of a soul seeking God in everything. It is an unpretentious, engagingly simple and sincere declaration of love for God and for Christ's Church. It is, as well, about the Church's needs, which are understood and are taken up personally as the most important needs of all.*

These few sentences can help us – before we begin reading – to meet its author, beatified 15 years ago. He is specially honored in both Lithuania and Poland, where he lived and left behind the mark of his earthly pilgrimage. However, it should be noted, that these words can only bring us a little closer to his holy life, which escapes any precise description inasmuch as it is a reflection of Christ's life.

The *Journal*, without doubt, is more than just a collection of reflections and considerations. Nor is it just a record of spiritual inspirations. It is a kind of narrow opening through which we can look directly into the heart of Blessed George and see there the fire of his love, his awareness of his own weaknesses, and read about his joy and sadness, his convictions and quests. To make this “wonderful self-portrait by the artist himself” even more understandable, we need a few more details from Blessed George's life, to create a sort of a panoramic background for his thoughts.

George Matulewicz was born on April 13, 1871, in the village of Lugine, near Marijampole, in the district of Suwałki. He was the eighth child in a family of Lithuanian farmers. At age 3, he lost his father, and a few years later – his beloved mother. Financial problems in the family caused him to interrupt his schooling.

George later developed tuberculosis of the bone, incurable in those days. He suffered the burden of this illness throughout his entire life. Every attempt to alleviate it resulted in only temporary improvements of his health. In 1889, his cousin, a professor of classical languages, took him to Kielce and helped him to get his middle school certificate.

In Kielce, the idea of becoming a priest matured in George. In 1891, he entered the Kielce seminary. When it was closed down, he transferred to the Warsaw seminary. George was one of the best students there, and so was sent to the Spiritual Academy [Theologate] in St. Petersburg, Russia, to continue his studies. In 1898, he was ordained a priest, and a year later defended his Master's thesis, about the question of the universality of the Church. He then returned to his home diocese of Kielce. After a short time in parish work, he was forced by his recurring illness to seek medical treatment in Germany. He then continued his studies at the University of Fribourg (Switzerland), which he completed in 1902, with a doctoral degree in theology. During the following two years he worked as a teacher of Canon Law and Latin at the Kielce Seminary.

After he moved to Warsaw, George became very involved in social and religious movements. Beginning in 1907, he was both a professor and the Vice-Rector of the St. Petersburg Academy. About the same time, he began the renewal and reform of the Marian religious order, which was dying out as a result of repressive measures of the Russian Czar's government. Keeping in mind the new Code of Canon Law, as well as the changing social needs of his time, George adapted the inner life of the community and its apostolic service to the demands of the modern world. Its main goal, he wrote in its revised Constitutions, was a broad range of apostolic work: all to be chosen in light of the Church's immediate needs and carried out using the best available means.

In 1911, George was elected Superior General of the new Congregation. He founded a religious house in Chicago (U.S.A.), and later participated in establishing of a parish church and a religious house at Bielany, in Warsaw. He also founded at Bielany a Marian novitiate and an orphanage for 200 children. As time passed, this orphanage became a large educational facility. In 1918, he went to Marijampole, where he re-established the deserted Marian religious house. In Marijampole, he also founded the Sisters of the

Poor of the Immaculate Conception; and a few years later, in Druja, Belarus, he founded another women's Congregation – the Sister Handmaids of Jesus in Eucharist. For the seven years after 1918, he served as Bishop of Vilnius. The trials and difficulties he experienced as the bishop of Vilnius, notably the animosity of some Polish politicians towards him personally, led him to resign from the office. He went to Rome where he planned to totally dedicate himself to the work of the renewed Congregation of Marians. However, he left Rome shortly after his arrival, because the Pope named him archbishop and Apostolic Visitor to Lithuania. His difficult mission was to mend the rift between the Church and the government in Lithuania. After numerous negotiations with the new Lithuanian government, George prepared a draft of a Concordat. He sent it to Rome in early 1927. The Concordat was signed, however, after Archbishop George's unexpected death on January 27, 1927.

George was considered a saintly man. Even those who tried to remove him from Vilnius acknowledged his irreproachable behavior. On June 28, 1987, John Paul II beatified Archbishop George.

The *Journal's* entries cover the period from 1910 through his episcopal service in Vilnius. They were made in St. Petersburg, Rome and Fribourg, during his years of intense work to renew the Congregation of Marians, and in Vilnius during the trials of his years as bishop. His *Journal* reveals the heart of a man of faith, of a priest deeply loving Christ and the Church. Of all his writings, the *Journal* shows most clearly the spirituality of Blessed George and provides a window on his soul. It allows us to know this man of God, whose eyes were fixed on God. He was both a servant of the Church enkindled with an apostolic zeal, and a sensitive pastor, who with a caring eye saw the needs of his people, particularly the poor. But foremost, we discover in the *Journal* a man consecrated to God, a religious who wished to spell out a road to holiness, both for himself and his confreres.

Thus anyone, religious or lay, wishing to learn more about Blessed George, and more importantly, discover a spiritual director, will undoubtedly reach this goal through reading his *Journal*. Blessed George's journal notes can rightfully be called a short textbook for those striving for holiness.

*Rev. Wojciech Skóra, MIC*

## **SPIRITUAL THEMES AND CONTEXT OF THE JOURNAL OF BLESSED GEORGE**

*Truly, truly, I say to you, unless a grain of wheat falls into the earth and dies, it remains alone; but if it dies, it bears much fruit.* John 12:24 RSV

Across the years covered by the journal of Blessed George — the beginning of the renewal of the Marians (1910) through the close of his time as bishop of Vilnius (1925) — the imagery of death and resurrection repeats itself.

The story of the grain dying in the earth only to spring up anew was a familiar one to George, the son of a poor farmer. It is a particularly rich theme that sheds light upon the life of Blessed George, and upon the diary of notes and spiritual insights he kept.

### I.

*And other seeds fell into good soil and brought forth grain, growing up and increasing and yielding thirty fold and sixty fold and a hundredfold.*

(Mark 4:8 RSV)

The soil of George's life was tilled and made fertile — it became the 'good soil' of the parable. The White Marians of Marijampole baptized George and instructed him in the Catholic faith. His parents' hard work and genuine faith gave both good example and firm support to the work of God in his heart. His poor health kept him humble yet inquisitive. What he lacked in physical agility, he more than made up for in intellectual wonder.

George's priest-uncle led him to the world of education and of spiritual development. His seminary studies in Warsaw and St. Petersburg, along with his ever deepening spiritual life, prepared him for the graces of his ordination and stirred in him a hunger to serve his Lord after the example of the great apostle Paul.

The familiar scriptural passages about the dying grain became all the more familiar and meaningful in the context of George's own lived experience. After his return from doctoral studies in Fribourg, Switzerland, his health problems — always a part of his life's trials — became even more serious. It appeared that this was the moment of death.

He went to Transfiguration Hospital (the name is perhaps significant) in Warsaw's Praga district. Without financial resources, he suffered alone and without a doctor's care in the general ward. He wrote to his spiritual direc-

tor (Blessed) Honorat Koźminski, ofm cap, that this time taught him “what affliction is.”

At death’s door, he surrendered himself to God through Mary’s hands. His life, it seemed certain, was at its end. . . .

And then, in what he was convinced was the action of Providence, George was brought back from death to life. The Countess Cecilia Plater-Zyberg had heard of his plight, brought him to her family estate, and paid for a doctor’s care. The connections made through the Countess and her girls’ academy helped to open the doors of the next stage of George’s life, the abundant harvest which began to be reaped with the renewal of the Marian Order.

## II.

***As for what was sown on good soil, this is he who hears the word and understands it; he indeed bears fruit, and yields, in one case a hundred-fold, in another sixty, and in another thirty.*** (Matthew 13:23 RSV)

Failed attempts to continue an underground association of priests, established by Blessed Honorat, led George to another, just as risky, undertaking: renewing the Marian community.

The first part of the journal reflects these efforts, reflections and the prayers of George as he quietly goes about the work of bringing the Marian community back to life. If we keep the chronology of events from George’s life alongside the diary entries, we see the Marian community as if it were in the tomb waiting the moment of resurrection and new life. This is clear to George, reflected in the seemingly obscure reference to the grain dying, as he quotes John 12:24 on November 17, 1910. (This is a theme he will later develop at length in the 1924 circular letter on the revision of the community’s Constitution.)

Likewise, the journal of his years as bishop of Vilnius reflects George’s ever more mature spiritual life. The Pauline motto of his episcopacy – “Overcome evil with good” (Romans 12:21 RSV) shows the “new life” he had personally received, being put into action. Freed from death – George had already come face to face with death years before in Transfiguration hospital — there was nothing left to fear — George was now free to live completely for Christ.

Or as Paul put it, “I have been crucified with Christ; it is no longer I who live, but Christ who lives in me.” (Galatians 2:20 RSV)

The full meaning of this portion of the journal can't be appreciated without the chronology of events and surrounding story. Here the footnotes and additional material of this edition are particularly valuable.

The journal for these years in Vilnius makes clear that George is fully aware of those who are vilifying him. And yet, knowing what he knows, George relates to them with all the concern and charity he has, as if he didn't know their misdeeds. It becomes clear that George lives by a strength, and with a charity, that is not the result of human effort. He has heard the Word and understood it; he indeed bears fruit a hundred- and sixty- and thirty-fold.

### III.

***Therefore, if any one is in Christ, he is a new creation; the old has passed away, behold, the new has come.*** (2 Corinthians 5:17 RSV)

The careful reading of the journal allows us to see the work of God in the heart and in the life of Blessed George. His life inspired and affected many, many others. As he witnessed to Christ, and Him Crucified, he led others to a deeper life in Christ. This deep communion with God, that other Marians learned from George, led them, to the complete gift of self for Christ and the Church. The Marian martyrs of Rosica are but one example of the enduring legacy of holiness left to the Marian community and the Church by Blessed George. Blessed George is, as Pope John Paul II said after his beatification, "a gift to Lithuania and the Church."

*Rev. Shaun O'Connor; MIC, Ph.D.*



## A GIFT FOR THE CHURCH

*An excerpt from the homily given by Pope John Paul II on June 28, 1987, on the occasion of the celebration of 600 years of Christianity in Lithuania and the beatification of Archbishop George Matulaitis.*

Today we wish to give thanks for *all those who for six centuries became servants and ministers of the mysteries of God among your forebears.*

At the same time we give thanks that the Baptism of Lithuania continues to produce its saving fruits in our own century. A shining expression of this is *the figure of Your Blessed fellow Countryman* whom precisely today I have the joy of raising to the honors of the altar.

Archbishop George Matulaitis-Matulewicz, whose life and merits have just been recounted, is a particular gift for the Church and the Lithuanian Nation in the present setting of the jubilee.

A true “servant and apostle of Jesus Christ” (2 Pet 1:1), zealous and indefatigable in his ministry, in his native land, in Poland, in Rome, and elsewhere, he was a pastor of courage and initiative, capable of facing, with prudence and a spirit of sacrifice, situations of difficulty for the Church, being concerned exclusively for the salvation of the souls entrusted to him.

The fact that he successfully overcame every trial and enjoyed widespread esteem was due to his virtues, which he practiced in an extraordinary way. This is testified to by the wide variety of fields in which his pastoral work was rich in results: from the zealous accomplishment of his priestly mission to the carrying out of delicate missions entrusted to him by the Holy See; from teaching to the promotion of Catholic culture and social justice to a constant personal commitment to the service of the poorest and most needy. I would like to make special mention of the zeal with which he practiced and promoted the religious life, reforming the Congregation of Marian Clerics and founding the Congregations of the Sisters of the Immaculate Conception and the Servants of Jesus in the Eucharist. His spiritual sons and daughters, represented in great numbers here today, have received from him a precious inheritance of holiness and of dedication to the Church and the brethren. All this blossoming of results sprang from an



intense interior life which kept him constantly united to God.

The new Beatus is in a special way a *splendid model of a bishop*, one who in a heroic manner made himself “all things to all people,” a person deeply conscious of his own pastoral mission, a true apostle of unity, totally dedicated to the proclamation of the Gospel and the work of the sanctification of souls.

In today’s Gospel we hear the words of Christ the Lord: “He who does not take his cross and follow me is not worthy of me. He who finds his life will lose it, and he who loses his life for my sake will find it (Mt 10:38-39).

This is the most accurate *summing-up of the life and vocation of Archbishop George*. For fifty-six years he sought to be worthy of Christ. For this reason he took up his cross—many were the crosses which in those decisive times it was his lot to carry—*thus he took up these crosses and followed Christ*. He was prepared in different ways to “lose his own life for Christ.” He did not seek himself; he did not wish “to find his own life.” He was ready to “lose it” many times. Precisely *for that reason he found himself in the fullness of life* which is given to man to experience in Christ. By following Christ, he led others too along the path of the Gospel, along the path which is the result and consequence of Baptism “in Christ.”

Today the Church addresses to you, dear Lithuanian brothers and sisters, the words of Christ in the Gospel: *Receive a prophet as a prophet. Receive a righteous man as a righteous man* (cf. Mt 10:41). This is the message of this Beatification for the Jubilee of your Baptism. The Saints are to be welcomed with the heart and with faith, so that they can show us the way—that way whose beginning consists of “immersion in Christ” through Baptism.

Therefore, together with the new Beatus who presents himself to you side by side with Saint Casimir, Patron of Lithuania, we pray that *you will not cease to be »worthy of Christ«*. “He who takes up his cross and follows me is worthy of me.” This is what he says.

So many times, in the course of your history, you have shown your desire to be worthy of Christ—often too in a heroic way.

What more can we wish you today, in this Jubilee year and for the future?

*Our wish for you is that you will always be worthy of Christ! that you will be the People of God* in the country God gave to your ancestors... and that the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ will always be your God (cf. Ez 36:28).

Amen.

## NOTES ON THE JOURNAL

### *Origins of the Journal*

The *Journal* of George (Jurgis) Matulaitis spans a fifteen-year period, almost a third of his life. It was written intermittently from the fall of 1910 to the summer of 1925.

When he began to keep a *Journal* in St. Petersburg, Russia, in 1910, his intention was to do this as a spiritual exercise rather than simply to write a diary. He started to write in a small notebook which he kept with him. He titled it thus: *Thoughts, Enlightenments, Inspirations, and Resolutions*.

Having recently made his religious profession as a Marian, a step he took after 11 years of priesthood, he was also in the process of renewing the dying Marian Congregation. From 1910 to 1914 the *Journal* reflects his own spiritual concerns and those of his religious community. His main preoccupation was this: what is the most effective way to lead a truly spiritual and apostolic life in the turbulent modern world, a world becoming ever more hostile to religious faith and to the Church. He regarded the Catholic Church as the kingdom of God on earth, but also as a persecuted pilgrim Church. His main aim was to learn to “walk in the footsteps of Christ” and to serve the Church wholeheartedly.

Matulaitis’s own spiritual struggles and joys are evident in the *Journal*, especially in his resolutions made on the occasion of monthly and annual retreats. The special graces he received are also noted. Later on he was to recommend a similar exercise to his spiritual brethren as a way of gaining greater insight into the workings of God in the soul and as a means of drawing strength in times of aridity and inner trials.

The *Journal* was written in various places where Matulaitis lived and worked. It was begun in St. Petersburg in 1910, then continued in Fribourg, Switzerland, from 1911 to 1914. His own Chronicle (*Relatio*) of a trip to Rome in the fall of 1911 has been inserted into the *Journal* to give a fuller picture of what was going on in his life. The Chronicle records a spiritual crisis that took place in Rome and was to have important consequences for Matulaitis’s own life and for the revived Marian Congregation.

There are no entries in the *Journal* from the summer of 1914 to the spring of 1918. In the summer of 1913, there was a brief visit to the United States. Matulaitis was in Poland when World War I broke out. He

could not return to Switzerland and spent the war years in Poland. In March of 1918, he returned to Lithuania, to Marijampole, where he wanted to restore the Marian monastery. At this point he resumes his *Journal*. However, from this point on, the character of the *Journal* changes. It becomes more a chronicle of events than a spiritual diary. He comments upon events and prays about them.

The latter part of the *Journal* contains an account of Matulaitis's consecration and installation as Bishop of Vilnius. It also records his life and work as Bishop during the years of 1918 (the final month), 1919, and 1921. The record is fragmentary, but valuable as a firsthand account of significant personal and historical events.

The final section, written in 1925 in Rome after his resignation from the Diocese of Vilnius, is very short. However, it gives the reader an inside view of the author's thoughts and feelings after the seven years of a very difficult episcopate.

This second part of the *Journal* complements the first. It reveals the actual life-situation in which Matulaitis attained sanctity. His heroic Christian virtues are evident in the actual circumstances in which he lived.

### ***Publishing History***

This present edition of the *Journal* is the first complete *English* edition. Portions of the *Journal* have been published earlier: in 1953, the Marians in London published the first part in Lithuanian; in 1963, Msgr. Vincenzo Cusumano published the first part in Italian, along with a biographical sketch, in *Innamorato Della Chiesa* (Ancora Milano, 1963); in 1974, the Marians in Chicago published an English translation of the diary's first section along with Cusumano's biographical sketch; in 1973, the Marians published a Polish edition, *Dziennik Duchowy*, that contained the first section of the diary and appended a section from the 1911 visit to Rome; in 1991, a Lithuanian edition including the complete texts of the diary was published in Putnam, CT; in 1998, a second full Lithuanian edition was published by the Marians in Vilnius, Lithuania as volume 4 of the "Institutum Historicum Marianorum" series. The first Lithuanian edition relied on typewritten transcriptions of the diary in the Marian Archives in Rome; the second used Matulaitis' handwritten notes for the Vilnius section of the diary.

### ***Notes on this Edition***

This present edition is a new English translation, based on the Lithuanian text. The extant Lithuanian manuscript is a typewritten tran-

scription of the original handwritten *Journal*. It was transcribed by Marian seminarians, and several copies were circulated privately. One of these found its way to Rome after World War II. It became part of the extensive archive of materials on Matulaitis at the Marian Generalate in Rome.

In preparing this translation, I am indebted to Dr. Saulius Suziedelis. I have used his translation as a guide and reference. The notes on various people have been gleaned from a variety of sources. Rev. Tadeusz Górski, MIC was kind enough to allow the use of some of the informative notes contained in the Polish translation of the first part of the *Journal* and the *Relatio* (Rome, 1973). Father Joseph Vaišnora, Postulator General for the beatification of Archbishop Matulaitis, was also very helpful as a consultant and source of information for some of the notes. He had worked in preparing various documents for the beatification process for twenty years and hence was a fount of information. Unfortunately, he did not live to see the beatification in 1987 or the first full Lithuanian edition of the *Journal* in 1991. This new English translation was read and corrected by Sister Jane Silk, R.S.M., with painstaking meticulousness.

The original *Journal* is dotted with Latin Scriptural quotations and paraphrases. These have been rendered in English according to the English Jerusalem Bible with appropriate references. Other Latin quotations have been translated and inserted into the text, while the originals are footnoted. Unfortunately, all the sources of these quotations have not been found.

Since the original text of the *Journal* is entirely in Lithuanian, there was a problem with last names that had been written in their Lithuanian form. These have been reconstructed as close as possible to the language or preferred nationality of the persons concerned. Polish, Belorussian, Russian, as well as Lithuanian names occur in the *Journal*.

Three appendices have been added to the text: Matulaitis's installation sermon and two of his pastoral letters. The first is mentioned in the *Journal* itself, while the 1923 letter helps fill in the gap in the *Journal* from 1921 to 1925. It is also valuable because it shows Matulaitis's mature vision of the Church.

This English translation contains addenda furnished by the translator: explanatory forwards, footnotes and short biographical details, and an index of names. As editor and translator my aim has been to make the *Journal* accessible to the ordinary reader and also understandable for those of different national backgrounds.

*Sister Ann Mikaila, MVS*



# CHRONOLOGY



- 1871 Born April 13 in the village of Luginė southern Lithuania. Youngest of eight children.  
Baptized and given name of George (Jurgis) in the family parish church in Marijampole
- 1879 Attends grammar school in Marijampole
- 1882 Tutored at home to qualify for secondary school entrance examinations. Attends secondary school in Marijampole
- 1886 Drops out of school because of illness—the beginnings of tuberculosis of the bone. Works on the family farm, reads, and prays in the fields.
- 1889 Taken to Poland by his cousin, a teacher in Kielce, who tutors him and prepares him for the Seminary.
- 1891 Enters the Seminary in Kielce.
- 1893 Seminary in Kielce raided and closed by agents of the Russian Czarist government. Third year seminarians transferred to Warsaw Seminary.
- 1895 Sent to study at the Theological Academy of St. Petersburg; completes four years of study with a master's degree in theology with highest honors.
- 1898 Ordained in the chapel at the academy.
- 1899 After a brief period of work in the diocese of Kielce, Poland as an associate pastor he travels to Austria and Italy. He settles in Fribourg Switzerland where at the Catholic University he studies philosophy and theology
- 1900 Undergoes treatment for tuberculosis of the bone.
- 1902 Awarded doctorate of theology.
- 1904 He goes to Warsaw in order to take care of his health. After remaining a few weeks in the hospital, he settles at the school run by Cecilia Plater-Zyberk.
- 1905 Begins pastoral and social ministry among workers of Warsaw; with Fr. M. Godlewski and others organizes a popular Christian Workers' Union. Heads a small community of priest and also helps the Capuchin Fr. Honoratus Koźmiński direct various secret religious communities.
- 1907 Receives an invitation to take a position of professor of sociology at the Theological Academy in St. Petersburg. After two years he



takes over the department of dogmatic theology and soon after he is named the vice-president.

- 1908 During summer vacation visits Marijampole with Francis Bučys. Consults Fr. Vincent Senkus about reviving the Marians.
- 1909 Lectures at a 3 day seminar on social problems in Kaunas, Lithuania. Makes his first trip to Rome for permission to revive the Marian Congregation and to be professed. Has an audience with Pope Pius X. Makes religious vows before Bishop K. Ruskiewicz in the presence of Fr. V. Sękowski in Warsaw. Fr. Francis Bučys at the same time is received into the novitiate.
- 1910 Completes new Constitutions, which are approved by Rome. Directs secret novitiate at the Theological Academy in St. Petersburg, teaches theology, and is spiritual director to the students. Begins to write his *Journal*. Appointed vice-rector of the Academy.
- 1911 Fr. V. Sękowski dies, and the three new Marians hold a Chapter in Lithuania, where Matulaitis is elected Superior General. They decide to transfer the novitiate to Switzerland for security. Matulaitis travels to Rome to obtain approval for this and to conduct other business of the Community and the Academy. That summer the novitiate is transferred to and installed near the University of Fribourg. Eventually, a Marian house of studies is set up in a rented house.
- 1913 Travels to the USA with two Marian priests to found a house in Chicago.
- 1914 During the summer vacation directs retreats for priests in Kaunas. War breaks out, so is unable to return to Switzerland.
- 1915 Is given permission to take over an old Camaldolese monastery in Bielany, a suburb of Warsaw to house the community and novitiate of the Polish Marians. The Marians use one of the buildings for an orphanage that eventually becomes a school.
- 1918 Travels to Marijampole through Vilnius and Kaunas. Learns that he is a candidate for bishop of Vilnius. Revives the Marian monastery and establishes a novitiate in Marijampole. Finds the Sisters of the Immaculate Conception of the Poor. Appointed bishop of Vilnius; consecrated in Kaunas December 1; installed in Vilnius, December 8.

- 1919 Polish “Samoobrona” (Self Defense) attempt to take Vilnius, but are unsuccessful. Red Army invades the city and a Communist government stays in power four months. Difficult relations between civil and church authorities. In April, Polish Army takes over Vilnius. Matulaitis goes to Warsaw to consult with Msgr. Ratti.
- 1920 Archbishop Ratti, nuncio to Poland and apostolic visitor to the Baltic States, makes an official visit to Vilnius, accompanied by Marshal Piłsudski. Bishop Matulaitis continues visiting the parishes of his farflung diocese. In October, the Polish army under General Żeligowski occupies Vilnius, which remains under Polish rule until 1939.
- 1922 Canon Joseph Kukta is forced to leave Vilnius; Matulaitis appoints him administrator of that part of the diocese that lies within the borders of Lithuania. Attends a bishops’ conference in Częstochowa.
- 1923 Consecrates Michalkiewicz as auxiliary bishop. In June makes his *ad limina* visit to Rome. The Marian General Chapter convenes in Danzig; Matulaitis reelected superior general. Marian delegates from Lithuania, Latvia, Poland, and the USA participate in this Chapter.
- 1924 A Marian mission had already been founded in Druja, a Byelorussian district within the diocese of Vilnius. Then Bishop Matulaitis also establishes a religious community for women, the Servants of Jesus in the Eucharist.
- 1925 Submits his resignation to Pope Pius XI in June; receives confirmation from Rome July 14. On the 3rd of August he hands over the administration of the diocese of Vilnius to the Chapter and leaves for Rome. Received by the Pope in a special audience August 13th. Appointed titular archbishop of Adulia on September 1 and on December 7, apostolic visitator to Lithuania. Returns to live in Kaunas.
- 1926 Completes project for the establishment of the ecclesiastical province of Lithuania and in March submits it to the Pope. The province is officially established by the papal bull “Lituanorum gente” on April 4, Easter Sunday. The following day the Pope appoints bishops for the five new dioceses. They are consecrated in the Kaunas cathedral in April and May. Archbishop Matulaitis

arrives in New York June 7 and goes on to Chicago to attend the Eucharistic Congress. Remains in the USA until September 1, visiting 92 immigrant parishes. Stops in London on the way home. Upon returning to Kaunas, begins working on the preliminary draft of the Lithuanian Concordat with Rome by which normal diplomatic relations would be established.

- 1927 In January falls ill with acute appendicitis; taken to Hagenthorn's clinic in Kaunas, dies after an operation on January 27. Funeral held on January 29 in the Kaunas cathedral with all the Lithuanian bishops present as well as Msgr. Faidutti, the Vatican delegate. The body is interred in the cathedral crypt.
- 1934 Matulaitis' remains are transferred to the Church of St. Michael in Marijampole, where a granite sarcophagus is erected.
- 1953 Beatification process begun by the Marians in Rome; postulator is Fr. Casimir Reklaitis. Upon his death, Fr. Joseph Vaišnora continues the work to its completion.
- 1987 Matulaitis declared Blessed by Pope John Paul II in Rome on June 28 on the occasion of the 600th anniversary of Christianity in Lithuania.

THOUGHTS, ENLIGHTENMENTS,  
INSPIRATIONS, AND RESOLUTIONS  
1910-1914



# 1910

*At the Theological Academy of St. Petersburg<sup>1</sup> the fall semester has begun, and Father George Matulaitis, who studied here some fifteen years ago and is now a professor, is keeping a Journal of his thoughts, inspirations, and resolutions. Last summer he made his religious vows to follow Christ more perfectly and is now determined to revive the Marianas, a dying religious community that had only a single member left in his native Lithuania. With Rome's permission, he has become a member of this Congregation and has revised and modernized its Constitutions. He is also novice master of a secret novitiate,<sup>2</sup> which is housed in the Academy with one novice and two candidates. Matulaitis's main concern is to discern the will of God for himself and his fledgling community. The key question is this: what are they to do to become worthy instruments in the service of Jesus Christ and of His Church in these troubled times? In his Journal he tries to answer it.*

## **October 14**

My motto shall be: to seek God in all things, to do all things for the greater glory of God, to bring the Spirit of God into all things so that all may be filled with it. May God and His glory be the center of my whole life, the axis about which all my thoughts, feelings, desires, and actions continually turn.

The glory of God and the salvation of souls. Can any other goal be greater or more sublime than this? Compared to this goal, everything else seems trivial. Of what value are even the best and noblest human ideals beside it? And so, is it not right and just for us to devote our whole lives and all that we have—our possessions, talents, even life itself to attain this goal?

---

1 After Czar Nicholas I closed the University of Vilnius in 1842, its Department of Theology was transferred to St. Petersburg. In 1866 the Theological Academy of Warsaw was closed as well. Thus, the Academy in St. Petersburg became the only Catholic School of Theology allowed to function in the lands ruled by the Russian czars. Gifted seminarians were sent here to continue their studies.

2 In 1864, Catholic religious Communities were severely restricted by the Russian government and were not allowed to accept candidates.

## *October 15*

With all their might the saints struggled to reach perfection, keeping in mind the noble words of Christ: “You must therefore be perfect just as your heavenly Father is perfect” (Mt 5:48). The saints tried to achieve this incredibly lofty goal by continually striving to become more and more like Jesus Christ. Therefore, if I really want to follow in the footsteps of the saints, I too must make the goal of Christ’s life my own. And the instruments and means that He used must become mine as well.

What did Jesus want most of all?—To bring the Kingdom of God into this world, i.e., our holy Church. What way did He follow to achieve this? The way of complete self-sacrifice—of hard work, humiliation, hardship, persecution, and suffering. He followed this road up to the point of laying down His life, of being nailed to a cross. What follows, then? — That each of us must freely and with complete self-denial devote and consecrate himself entirely to the Church.<sup>1</sup>

It is in this that I see the core and essence of our vocation: to renounce the self freely and willingly—one’s desires, inclinations, comforts, and pleasures; to give up the world—its riches, goods, and vainglory and to devote and give our whole selves—all our gifts and talents both natural and supernatural—to the welfare of the Church—her defense and preservation, her propagation and growth. Please God that I may never forget this.

What would be the best means to attain this goal? It seems to me that a defensive tactic is less effective than an offensive one—outreaching, aggressive, conquering. Animated by the Spirit of Christ, we must try to gather together and organize people of good will—to train and prepare them to work, and then, together with them and through them to bring Christ everywhere, to restore and renew all things in Christ, to encompass all for Christ, to win all for Christ, to attract all to Christ. Lord Jesus, enkindle our hearts with the fire of this zeal. That I shall ask you for.

---

<sup>1</sup> Underlined by the author.

## *October 17*

Our task must be to seek perfection: to perfect ourselves and to help perfect other people and their works. We deepen our spiritual lives by selecting those spiritual exercises that best help us live the supernatural life with greater awareness: as, for example, a pure, supernatural intention (this should become a daily habit), the general and particular examinations of conscience, meditation, spiritual reading, a good and conscientious confession, and a monthly account of our spiritual progress given to our director in all candor and sincerity. In all other areas let us seek perfection by using our time as productively as possible by acquiring some special skill in addition to our general education, and by giving our superior a complete account of our external life and work.

As we ourselves make progress, we must also try to help others move forward. In serving others and contributing to their greater perfection, we rise higher as well and become more perfect.

## *October 18*

Although we have joined an old Congregation,<sup>1</sup> we must rebuild and recreate everything all over again. We have to draw up rules and regulations for ourselves.<sup>2</sup> What would be the best way of doing this? First of all, of course, we must seek guidance in prayer, but we also have to do whatever we can ourselves. It seems to me that the best method would be the following.

a. First, we should find out what others have attained in those areas that concern us; investigate where their experience has led them, what their studies and life itself have shown so that we would not waste time duplicating what has already been done.

b. Then we must try to adapt the insights, directives, and instructions of our predecessors to the circumstances in which we now happen to live and work. In short, we must set up regulations drawn from the material we have gathered.

---

<sup>1</sup> The Congregation of Marians under the title of the Immaculate Conception of the Most Blessed Virgin Mary was founded in Poland by Stanislaw Papczynski in 1673. Matulaitis is the Renovator of the Congregation.

<sup>2</sup> The new Constitutions drawn up by Matulaitis had been sent to Rome in May of 1910 and were approved by Pope Pius X on November 28, 1910. The regulations spoken of here are the Directory, rewritten to fit modern times.



c. After that we have to try to observe these directives with all our hearts. Even the best and wisest rules are useless unless they are built into the foundation of our lives. It is better to have fewer rules and regulations, but to keep them. And we must be careful to set up and retain only those that are in harmony with our purpose—those that are practical and observable.

While these newly made rules are put into practice, it would be a good idea for each of us to jot down our comments about how successful we have been in keeping them, what obstacles or difficulties we experienced, what benefit we have reaped or loss we have sustained—and, in general what could be improved or changed, etc. The same procedure could be followed with our old directives, if, in the course of time, it should become apparent that changes are needed. These matters should be the superiors' special concern.

d. Furthermore, after the directives have been tested sufficiently, the members of the Community should come together to discuss their observations and experiences, or else the collected material could be sent to a special committee which would systematize it and make use of it to implement the needed changes.

e. Finally, the corrected and tested regulations should again be given out to be observed. Then, they can be included in our book of experience as fairly stable rules.

The same method could be used not only with our directives but also with rules and regulations applicable to our work, institutions, etc., even to the entire Congregation in certain situations. For not only every member, but the Congregation itself must seek perfection and make constant progress... I shall try to put this into practice.

## *October 22*

As the foundation of all our actions and plans we must always lay the stone of a holy life. Only then will our work have a secure base on which to stand. We should never begrudge either time or effort to seek spiritual perfection. This, the most important task of all, requires our

wholehearted dedication. What good is it if a person gains the whole world, but allows his soul to suffer the slightest damage or harm?<sup>1</sup> Lord, help me to keep this always in mind.

### *October 23*

Taking into due consideration individual talent, the needs of the Church, the work at hand, and the institutions we have, we must educate and train our members, regardless of cost and effort. Progress and perfection must be the principle not only of our spiritual life but of our work as well.

Our Congregation should never begrudge funds, effort, or personnel when the problem at hand is the spiritual training of our members or of their preparation to work for the good of the Church and the glory of God. We must educate capable people for ourselves. The Congregation always needs to be concerned with its own progress, with the development of its inner organization, order, and discipline, with nurturing its spirit. These should not only be maintained, but continually improved.

Just as each individual, so too the entire Congregation must constantly seek greater perfection and growth in the spiritual training and formation of its members, in their education and preparation for work for the good of the Church, and also in the progress of its apostolate and its institutions so that as a living organism its internal organization and development constantly improve. If the Congregation is willing to devote people, funds, and effort for all kinds of institutions, it should not begrudge the effort or the money for its own improvement so that like an organism it may nurture its spirit, discipline, order, and structure. Nothing should be spared to achieve a sound internal ordering of the Congregation, for in this lies our strength.

With this purpose in mind, why not visit other institutions and observe their way of life, their structure and organization, their work? And then, why not adopt the good things that others have achieved in long years of experience and prayer, guided by God's special graces and

---

<sup>1</sup> Cf., Mt 16:26.

inspirations? Why not learn all we can from others? We can appropriate something useful from practically everyone. Why not study their Constitutions, Rules, Directives, etc.? What experience, what spirit, what supernatural light can we not find there?

Let us take note of how lay people create and develop their institutions. They not only travel all around Europe, but often tour the United States as well in order to study how similar institutions are set up and operated. If they happen to see something useful in another country, they immediately try to adapt the idea at home, taking into account local circumstances and conditions. Why not follow their example, as we try to improve the internal organization, structure and order of our own Community?

Our Congregation, then, should never hold back, but devote the best, the most devout, wisest, most talented, and capable people to foster and perfect it as a living organism. The most suitable people should be selected to teach the novices and to direct young religious, etc. And so, I think it is a good idea to visit other Communities, to examine their life, to discuss what we ourselves can emulate in order to avoid all kinds of difficulties and problems.

For this reason we should not burden novice masters and house superiors with incidental, peripheral duties so that they would be able to devote themselves solely to the service of the Community. After that comes our concern about our work and the institutions operated by the Congregation. Here too the principle of continual progress and perfection should be applied so that in our work we would not be inferior to secular people, but, wherever possible, might even surpass them and serve as good examples for them.

### ***October 24***

It is important to begin a thing at the right point: we need to grasp the essence of what we hope to accomplish. That is why we must first look at our goal, at the heart of the the matter, and then, after due consideration decide whether this goal is good and desirable. After that we can worry about eliminating obstacles and finding the best means to achieve what we want.

A person often tends to defer attaining spiritual perfection or even neglects it altogether when faced with an opportunity of doing something

good for others. Sometimes the person allows himself to become so involved in this whirlwind of good works that he has no time left for himself. Living in this frantic activity, the spirit gradually diminishes and dries up, becomes weak and dissipated. When our spirit has cooled, nothing is left to fire our zeal and then even our good works lose their vitality. That is why our spiritual life should always come first.

Just as easily as we neglect our spiritual life in favor of all kinds of peripheral activities, so can these become the occasion for us to relegate the needs of our own Community to second, third, or even last place. But that can never be a good thing either for our Community, for us or even for those same activities in which we have become negligent. The Community supports us and our work; it is the foundation of our life. The better our Community is organized and directed, the more the Spirit of God can work in it; then we too will grow and develop spiritually and even our work will be more successful, fruitful and will rest on a firm foundation.

No institution can grow and develop as it should unless it has people who are devoted to it. Similarly, our Congregation will not grow and develop unless there are enough members willing to dedicate themselves to it. The larger it gets and the more difficult become the conditions under which it has to live, the more of its members must be willing to serve it wholeheartedly.

These totally dedicated people need the cooperation of all the others: their good example, initiative, moral support, good ideas, and best efforts in maintaining the spirit and discipline of the Community. The more effort the members of a Community put forth to help build, adorn, furnish, and order their little spiritual home, the more pleasant will it be for all to live there. The greater their love of God and one another, the more fervent will each one be to bear that fire which enkindles others.

To sum up: it seems to me, that it would be best if we would order our life in the following way:

I. (1) God must be the center of our life: His greater glory must be everything to us. (2) The object of our concern, our work, and our best efforts must be the Church, the Kingdom of God here on earth, and all her

needs. The Church must be given priority over all earthly possessions, goods, ideals, and goals—even the best of them.

II. Each one of us in his personal life should, it seems to me, (1) put his spiritual development, his personal holiness in first place. (2) After that he should sincerely try to do his share in maintaining the discipline, order, and spirit of the Community.

III. The Congregation should hold to the following: (1) not sparing any effort, it should first of all be concerned with the spiritual development of each member; (2) it should educate and train each member not only to perform his duties well, but also to be an example and a living sermon to people in the world.

It often happens that we become preoccupied with the difficulties we see in our way or even with those that may occur sometime in the future, if at all. We complain that we do not immediately have at hand the means we need, etc. Then we start worrying about how to overcome all these difficulties and how to obtain all the things we need. And that is how it all ends: we do not even approach our goal.

We should go about it differently. If what we mean to do is both good and useful and if it is likely to bring greater glory to God and good to the Church, then we must boldly set to work to accomplish it. Insofar as we have truly renounced ourselves and abandoned ourselves to God, we will find a way to eliminate the difficulties or at least to get around them, and our plans will be realized. Only let us not be afraid to suffer for the glory of God and the good of the Church; let us not be fearful of taking a risk. After all, the future is veiled from our earthly sight, and besides, life often demands that we take risks. We can afford to take a chance all the more, since we need not fear the outcome. Even if our work or plan proves to be unsuccessful, God will accept our good will, our initiative, and our efforts. In God's sight we have lost nothing, only gained. And what about human opinion? What is there to lose and why should we be so afraid? If we have really given up the self and abandoned all to God, what can people do to us? They cannot take God away from us; they cannot close the gates of heaven against us or force us into hell if we do not want to go there. They cannot even push us off the earth. No matter where we are sent, we will find people for whose salvation we can work. Finally, God is everywhere and the way to heaven is everywhere the same.

Lord, grant me the grace to cut all ties that bind me to this world, to give up all earthly trifles, to become free of all worldly longings and desires, all earthly plans and pursuits so that I could boldly say: there is nothing that I fear in this world but You, my Lord, my God and Creator—I am afraid of pleasing You less than I am able, of doing less for Your glory than it is in my power, aided by Your grace, to accomplish.

But I have wandered away from the thought I meant to write down—one based on my own and on other people's experience. It is this: very often a person feels the need to begin living a more spiritual life, to join with others by becoming part of a religious community. This person would gladly do so, but all kinds of obstacles loom before his eyes: his debts, his friends and relations, all sorts of unfinished business. So many things tie a person down. If he begins by trying to free himself of all these difficulties and then resolves to make his decision about entering the religious community once he is free, it is unlikely that he will ever take the step. He will become so entangled and bogged down by all those difficulties that he will be paralyzed by them.

The thing to do is to utter that most powerful word which will stir your whole being: I want to enter this religious community, and I shall do so. Then, if you can, make some kind of commitment to the community in question. After that you can go about resolving the difficulties as quickly as possible. For if you have a genuinely strong desire, you will find a way to settle your debts, to take leave of your relatives, to ignore the gossip of your friends and acquaintances, to stop worrying about the fate of the projects you have begun and left unfinished.

It is even worse if we start imagining all kinds of probable and improbable difficulties. What monster does our imagination not create and fashion for us! What will happen if I get sick? What will happen if one of my relatives or my parents get sick? What will happen if I am found out by the authorities? What if I am imprisoned or exiled, and so on? Here too you must say to yourself: do I want to be a good religious or not? Then boldly follow the path that God is showing you and after that see what you can do about eliminating or getting around the obstacles. After all, if God allows misfortune to befall us, He will also help us endure it or show us how to overcome it. Whoever wishes

to insure his life against all misfortune and hardship is not a suitable candidate for us.

Each member of our Congregation must be prepared for the eventuality that sooner or later the authorities will find and punish him, that he may have to spend time in prison or be exiled. The postulant must be prepared for this even before he enters the novitiate and afterward he must remind himself of this possibility so that falling into the clutches of the government will not be an unexpected event. That is why each member should learn to provide himself with the necessities of life: he should be able to earn his living either by manual work or some professional skill so that, no matter where he is sent, he can stand on his own two feet and manage by himself until some of the brothers can reach him and come to his aid.

Of course, we must be prudent and, as far as possible, be careful to protect ourselves against such a calamity, but with moderation, lest we become panic-stricken and negligent in our work for the glory of God and the good of the Church. A person may find himself in a worse prison or exile when he has become paralyzed with fear like a worm retreats into its hole, not doing anything at all. He is afraid that someone else will shut him up in prison or exile him, not realizing that he has already created a worse prison for himself—a prison of inactivity, apathy, and darkness that will eventually ruin and corrupt him. He has imprisoned himself because he has cut himself off from the ranks of the genuine, active workers in the Church. What good is such a life? Is it not much better to be exiled and imprisoned for Christ than shamefully to drag around the chains that you have fashioned with your own hands, those chains with which your own fear has imprisoned you?

And what is even sadder is that a person living in such a prison for any time will be ruined because he will be living there without God and often against God's will. While, on the other hand, if you should be imprisoned or exiled because of the work that you are doing for the glory of God, the good of the Church, and the salvation of souls, you will have the joy and consolation that our Lord God is there with you. If you are imprisoned for God and because of God, will not your cell become a haven of rest and your exile—a paradise?

And after all, why should we be so afraid of the civil authorities? We mean them no harm. We have no intention of overthrowing the government; we have no wish to join any national or political party or

to support one faction against another; we are determined to avoid all national and political feuds. We have no intention of undermining the social structure. All we want is to become more perfect, to live a better, more Godfearing life according to the spirit of the Gospel. We only wish and desire, and are willing to devote everything to achieve this goal, that the name of our Lord God be glorified everywhere and that our holy Mother Church grow and flourish. This can be only for the greater good of society and of the state.

People often want to insure their future against any unforeseen calamity; they want to protect themselves against any mishap, to defend themselves from all misfortune. But can this be done without God? One tiny little slip can destroy your dream castle—a careless word, a serious illness, an evil person can ruin everything that you have built up with so much care. And what about the threat of death? Is not a person more peaceful, does he not face the future with greater confidence when he has abandoned himself without reserve to God’s Providence? Not even a hair of our head falls unless God wills it, not even the tiniest bird dies without God’s knowledge.<sup>1</sup>

As we work to reach our goal, we must do everything we can to avoid difficulties and dangers, to stay out of the traps that have been laid for us. But then again, it is never permissible to renounce our vocation, to sacrifice our noble aims, or to allow for the possibility that less may be done for the greater glory of God and the good of the Church or even that nothing at all be done. We should avoid danger prudently, but, if need be, we should have the courage to look danger squarely in the face. Let us be humble, prudent, and resourceful as we try to do whatever we can, but let us also have courage, boldly seeking to attain our goal, firmly believing that the hand of Providence guides and carries us. As a little child sleeps peacefully in its mother’s arms, so let us undertake each task with even greater peace, knowing that we are in the arms of God. “Be cunning as serpents and yet as harmless as doves” (Mt 10:16). “Unless you change and become like little children you will never enter the kingdom of heaven” (Mt 18:3).<sup>2</sup>

---

1 Cf., Mt 10: 29-30.

2 In the original, Scripture quotations are usually given in Latin, followed by a loose translation. Here we have substituted quotations from the Jerusalem Bible. Ed.



## *October 25*

The children of this world are more astute in the way they conduct their business than the children of light<sup>1</sup> are in their efforts. How often does it happen that the children of this world surpass us in diligence, zeal, boldness, and daring as they work to achieve success in their pursuits.

Faced with such resourcefulness, what should we not try to do for God? Is it not our duty to go wherever we can gain more for God, where we can save more souls, that is, where godlessness, immorality, lack of faith, and indifference toward the Church abound? Should we not try to get in, even to force ourselves into any place where it is possible to gain something for Christ and for His Church? If we find one road blocked, let us look for another. If one door is closed to us, let us make another; if one window is nailed down tight, let us break open another to let the light in.

How should we, who call ourselves the followers of Christ and also His soldiers, blush with shame when we look at what people are willing to do to make more money. They leave their country, relatives and friends, even their wives and children to sail across the seas to foreign lands; braving heat and cold, they burrow under the earth, risking their life and health. . . and for what? For the sake of such a trivial thing as a few dollars. Should we not, then, do our best to find our way into any place, get in somehow, wherever there is any hope of gaining something for Christ and for His Church: into all kinds of associations and institutions, into every land and nation—and especially into the cities where there are universities and young people to bring Christ to? Just as these places have become the sources of misleading philosophies, they could become springs of the true teaching of Christ; into workers unions and organizations so that these become strongholds of the Christian faith defending and upholding the Church rather than hotbeds of sedition used to promote the causes of all sorts of revolutionaries; and into any other place where the greater glory of God demands that we go.

Under the present conditions it is difficult for us to get organized and to continue our spiritual formation, so why not look for a better and more suitable spot somewhere else? If we are not able to make our novitiate

---

<sup>1</sup> Cf., Lk 16: 8.

properly here in Russia, who is to stop us from going to another country? If only we are really determined, we can find ourselves a spot somewhere—in Switzerland or America, for instance. If one road is blocked, why not look for another; if we cannot get in by one route, why not try a different one? If one door is locked, we can make ourselves another one. If one window is nailed shut, we can break open another one to let the light in. If they throw us out of one door, we can get back in by another one, even, by the back door if the greater glory of Christ and the good of His Church requires it. If they push us out of one window, we can climb back in through another one, if only we can let more light in and win everything for Christ and for His holy Church.

### *October 26*

If all sorts of pernicious organizations that anarchists, revolutionaries, and terrorists belong to manage to conceal themselves so well and continue to thrive and operate in secret, surely for the good of the Church and even for the good of that very same society from which we are forced to hide, we can find ourselves some secret nook and conceal ourselves from prying eyes? Surely we should be able to keep still about our plans and activities.

The early Christians had to spend many years hiding underground in the catacombs, concealing themselves as best they could, and yet they continued to live and thrive, to work and organize their community—and very successfully and fruitfully. Are we not their children’s children? When the need arises, can we not follow in the footsteps of our holy forebears? They will help us with their prayers, their intercession, and protection. If only we had their courageous spirit! We need that spirit so badly today!

In our day and age the Church is persecuted everywhere or, at the very least, her freedom to grow and minister to the faithful is sadly restricted. Many countries will not admit certain religious orders while others have expelled them<sup>1</sup> or will not allow them to receive candidates or to work in peace. What should we do, then? Should we renounce our vocation? Should we abandon the path God has shown us?

---

<sup>1</sup> During the 19th century, most European countries had expelled the Jesuits at least once and some several times. Russia had protected them under Catherine II, but Alexander I drove them out in 1820. After the Polish-Lithuanian uprising in 1863, Alexander II cracked down on all religious communities in the Catholic countries under his rule.

Should we do nothing at all, continually bowing and scraping before all kinds of unjust laws and demands perpetrated by the enemies of the Church? Must we surrender our most precious ideals and rot somewhere, quaking with fear? If we behave thus, eventually we will see the day when we will be forbidden even to remain Catholics. No, absolutely not! We must press forward toward our goal boldly and courageously, following the path God has shown us and going wherever the Spirit of God leads us, undeterred by difficulties and refusing to be intimidated.

If we are filled with the Spirit of God, we are bound to triumph in the long run. No one can bind the Spirit, restrain it within prison walls, or confine it in exile. The Spirit will break out of every confinement, it will surge up everywhere. Enkindle our hearts, Lord, with the fire of Your love! Give us Your Holy Spirit so that, having truly renounced all things, we may dedicate ourselves fully to Your glory and to that of Your Church.

Various destructive organizations have spread throughout the world and, having burrowed underground to the very foundations of the Church and of society, do their pernicious work in secret. Are we going to stand by helplessly and passively watch it happen? No! In place of these evil organizations and their destructive activities we must build up our Catholic organizations and continue to do the work of the Church. May the early Christians be our guides and examples. O you heroes of the Christian faith and holy warriors who, with the help of Christ, shed your blood so that the Church would grow, intercede for us that we may be given the courage and daring to follow in your footsteps!

### ***October 27***

Once we have left the world and entered religious life, what should be our badge of distinction?—That we do not seek ourselves but only Jesus Christ.<sup>1</sup> We are not here for our own advantage—to use the community to fulfill our own will or to achieve some personal or national goal or to see that some pet project or dream of ours be realized; our sole concern must be how to please God more, what we

---

<sup>1</sup> “Non quae sua sunt, sed quae Jesu Christi, quaerant.” The original is in Latin and may be a quotation.

must do for His greater glory, how we must serve our holy Mother Church more effectively.

“Set your hearts on his kingdom first, and on his righteousness, and all these other things will be given you as well” (Mt 6:33). By seeking God with all our hearts and serving the Church with all our strength, we will also be doing what will best promote the welfare of humanity, of society, and of all nations, since salvation is to be found in none other, but only in our Lord Jesus Christ.<sup>1</sup>

Each of us must be inspired by this one great idea: truly to seek God in all things and, from among the means available to us, even the very best, to choose especially those that most effectively promote the glory of God; to look for opportunities to bring God into all kinds of organizations, associations, and societies, particularly those that have forgotten Him and to do our utmost to restore and renew all in the Spirit of Christ.

O holy Catholic Church, true kingdom of Christ on earth, my greatest love! If I forget you, may my right hand wither! May I never speak again, if I forget you; if I cease to count you, my dearest Mother, the greatest of all my joys!<sup>2</sup> May these words echo continually within my heart.

Grant, O Lord, that we may be ruled by this one great thought: to work, to toil, and to suffer for the Church; that the Church’s sufferings, trials, and wounds may become the sufferings and wounds of our own hearts. May we burn with this one great desire: to devote our lives to God and to His Church, not seeking or expecting any earthly reward or anything this world has to offer; to be used up and to burn out in struggle, suffering, and combat for the sake of the Church. Oh, that we would have such great courage as to remain undaunted in the face of any obstacle created by the world or by the powers that be, never giving in to fear, but rather boldly moving forward to work and to do battle for the Church wherever the need is greatest, wherever the civil authorities are persecuting the Church and interfering with the life of its religious orders, organizations, and institutions. We should fear one thing only: to die without having suffered, struggled, and toiled for the Church, for the salvation of souls, for the glory of God. May all our thoughts, desires, and

---

<sup>1</sup> “Non est data in aliquo alio salus, nisi in Jesu Christo.” Cf., Acts 4:12.

<sup>2</sup> The author has paraphrased vv. 5-6 of Psalm 137 to express his thought. In translation, the wording of the Jerusalem Bible is used.

longings be directed toward that one goal: to bring Christ everywhere, to restore all things in His Spirit, to glorify the name of the Catholic Church in every place.

In order to achieve this, we should make use of any lawful and worthy means available to us: the cassock of the priest or the habit of the religious or, if need be, the clothes of the layman; we can use every trade, profession, every field of learning or labor—and even our own blood—everything that is good and created by God can be used, if need be, for the greater glory of God and for the good of the Church. “... For you belong to Christ and Christ belongs to God” (1 Cor 3:23). Each and every field of work can thus be useful, but especially the priestly ministry which is concerned with educating and organizing people—this field has enormous possibilities—keeping in mind and selecting that which will result in the greater glory of God and best meet the needs of the Church.

What is to be our mark of distinction, then? Our self-denial and our wholehearted dedication to God and to His Church; our inner, spiritual life and, on the other hand, our work with and among people, gathering about us people of good will; also a fearless zeal that knows no vacillation or faintheartedness, ready for anything (willing to risk anything) that might be needed for the greater glory of God, for the good of the Church, for the salvation of souls; a spirit of initiative, disciplined and ordered within the bonds of perfect obedience.

Each one of us ought to try to become skilled in some field for the benefit of the rest of the Community. But here too there must be order and discipline so that each individual would not go off on his own, but that all pull together. We should live together in the closest unity, joined by the bonds of brotherly love, ready to give our lives for each other—one for all and all for one.

One of the most pressing needs of our times is, it seems to me, to involve larger groups of people from every segment of society in a more active apostolate for the faith and the growth and defense of the Church. Just as at the present time good Catholics are involved in charitable institutions, they could also become active for the propagation of the faith and in making the Church better known and loved. Lay men and women could do so much good here, once they have been instructed and educated in matters of faith and better informed about the needs of the Church; fired with holy zeal, they could then be organized

into groups and actively involved in the task of spreading the faith. They could bring Christ into those places where we priests do not have access. We should gather such people of good will around us and prepare them for such an apostolate, which would certainly result in the greater glory of God and promote the welfare of the Church. As for us, a special characteristic of our work among the people should be our ability to organize, unite, and direct them toward the task of spreading the faith and defending the Church.

### ***November 14***

I am going to be careful not to neglect my work for prayer, nor to be lax in my prayer because of work. *Ora et labora*—Pray and work.<sup>1</sup>

Unless constantly nourished by prayer, the soul wilts and withers. Our energy burns out, our spirit is dissipated, and our work turns incredibly sterile. On the other hand, let us not forget that we worship and serve God not only by praying, but also by working for His glory.

In our active life it is absolutely necessary to acquire the habit of living the interior life, of praying constantly. We must learn to keep close to Jesus in our heart, bringing ourselves and all we do into His presence.

It is important to get into the habit of devoting little intervals of free time to prayer; for example, as we pass from one task to another or even when we are out walking—continually turning our attention inward, away from the people we may be with and from the work we may be doing. Without constant prayer, without continually lifting up our minds to God, we will not persevere in the active life for very long.

But then again, work that is continually refreshed by prayer, sanctified by frequent short aspirations to God, lifts up our mind and heart to Him and is very effective in helping us reach perfection and a closer union with God.

---

<sup>1</sup> One of the author's favorite sayings, attributed to St. Benedict, but not found in any of his writings.

## *November 15*

What is the good of having the best Instructions if we do not keep them? It is much better to have fewer rules and regulations than to have a great many and not live up to them.

Religious life, however, must be properly ordered. It is never permissible to allow community life to flow along at random like a river. It must always be guided by the Constitutions, Directives, and by the instructions of superiors. It must be ruled and directed in an orderly manner. Whenever a brother is sent out on a mission, it is advisable to provide him with written instructions so that he would know exactly what to do. “He who lives for the Rule, lives for God.”<sup>1</sup>

Each religious, however, must be given enough leeway in his field of work so that he could freely use his abilities to work for the greater glory of God according to his superior’s instructions. But he should not be permitted to become lax or to lead an undisciplined life. He is required to order his life in such a way that every hour be purposeful and productive.

## *November 17*

On all sides we hear complaints about the lack of people for the work at hand. There is so much to do, but so very few to do it—practically no one. That is true. But whose fault is that, if not our own? In His providence the good God finds people whenever He needs them and calls them to do His work, gifting them with His grace, light, inspiration, love, faith, and the power of holiness. “God chose what is foolish by human reckoning; those whom the world thinks common and contemptible are the ones that God has chosen” (1 Cor 1: 27b-28). The Spirit blows wherever it pleases (cf., Jn 3:8).

Usually, however, God rules us through each other; He saves us with one another’s help. Ordinarily, God simply enlightens us to understand what the needs of the Church are, then we ourselves must try with His help to meet those needs. We need people—then let us make an effort to form and train suitable people. That is the point from which we must, it seems to me, begin all our work of restoring all things in Christ.<sup>2</sup>

---

1 This seems to be a quotation; it is given in Latin in the original: *Qui ordini vivit, Deo vivit*. It may be from St. Benedict, whom the author has been studying, since he quotes a Benedictine saying in the previous entry. The first sentence of St. Benedict’s Rule speaks of obedience. Benedict viewed religious life as the service of God by obedience to the monastic Rule.

2 “*Omnia instaurare in Christo*” — Eph 1:10. This was one of the guiding principles of Pius X’s pontificate as expressed in his first encyclical “*E Supremi Apostolatus*,” proclaimed on Oct. 4, 1903. It is a key idea in all of Matulaitis’s thought on evangelization.

The human mind is the source of all kinds of ideas which eventually reach the masses and spread throughout the world. The human will is a power which either draws people to itself, lifts them up, inclines, and directs them toward a positive goal or, on the other hand, drags them down—moves them toward happiness or misery. The human heart, burning with emotion, can be a powerful source of energy that warms, enkindles, and energizes others—like steam or electricity—inspiring people to do good, or it can be an evil and destructive force.

This is why the formation of the human spirit is so important: we must train the mind to receive the light of truth; the will—to accept and be guided by the will of God as expressed through the commandments, counsels, duties, vocation, inspirations, and circumstances of our lives and also to be docile to the graces generously given by God through the Church and the sacraments that strengthen it. Finally, we must enkindle the heart with an ardent love of God and man.

Our Congregation, therefore, should take special pains to educate and train the people needed by the Church. On the one hand, we should carefully consider what the needs of the Church are in every nation. We should study and understand them well, beginning with the most important and pressing ones. And on the other hand, we should try to find suitable people and then train, educate, and prepare them to work effectively to meet those needs.

Our first care, of course, must be for each person's interior, spiritual life; to form each one so that he becomes a person according to the heart of God—"Homo secundum cor Dei"<sup>1</sup>—a person able to be a source of spiritual life and rebirth for others. Then we must train him in other fields—of learning, manual labor, or social action so that he would be skilled in some field and, thus, of greater use to the Church and society. In that way he would be able to use his natural gifts and talents, exercised through his own hard work in the service of God and man. Having perfected these natural gifts by education and training so that a person would not be inferior to non-believers or even to believers who have not especially dedicated themselves to God, but

---

<sup>1</sup> Cf., 1 Kings 13, 14, according to the Vulgate and translations that correspond to it.



would even surpass them in making use of these gifts as effectively as possible, he could then attract others to God and to the Church.

Therefore, we should never begrudge either the time, personnel, or funds to train and educate those whom Providence may send us so that they will be well prepared for useful work in the Church and society. For the time being, it is better to let some fields lie fallow here and there than to send out unprepared and insufficiently trained people. It is better to have fewer workers, but true and good ones, who will do the work properly so that it need not be done over again. In this respect superiors must have enough wisdom and patience when they see vast fields lying barren and untilled, when they contemplate how much there is to do and how few workers there are, not to send out untrained and unprepared workers prematurely. They must be patient and wait until their charges are fully mature and ready for the task. There will never be a lack of work: vast fields still lie uncultivated, and even those that are being tilled are full of weeds and brambles. And even the necessary funds will not be hard to raise—God provides for those who truly serve Him—if only we have good, capable people. And so, we must make every effort to form, teach, and train the people we need. Then, when they have been assigned to their mission, we must see that they have time to continue both their spiritual and their professional development.

The principle of perfection should be the universal principle of our life. It not only applies to our personal and to our spiritual life and its development, but also to our professional and apostolic life, to everything we do to serve the Church. May Christ Himself be our example, for He did all things well (cf., Mk 7:37). We should be careful not to jump into any task too soon, but once we have undertaken something, let us try to do it as well as we can.

Grant, Lord, that having renounced myself completely, I may become totally immersed in You and Your holy will. I feel strongly that a person can attain the true freedom of the children of God only when he has discarded the old skin of self-love and covered himself with the garment of the Spirit of Christ and of His grace. When a person has truly renounced himself, the world, and the evil spirit, then can he begin to enter into and immerse himself in God. When in spirit he has discarded his own corrupt body and his tiny earthly abode, then can he rise up to

live in God's own dwelling place. How clear his mind becomes then, how free his spirit, how open and expansive his heart!

That is when you truly begin to feel that all men are brothers and that the human race is one large family. Then with a burning heart you long to embrace them all most tenderly. If you could, you would give all your blood, drop by drop, to bring your brothers, this family of God back to Him, back to unity with Christ and with His Church. When God's love enters your heart, it opens up so wide that all people, regardless of class or nationality, find room in it.

When a person's soul, transported by the Holy Spirit, rises up and soars to those heights where the Holy Trinity radiates its eternal, ineffable, inexpressible, and infinite glory—and when from those lofty heights you survey this world, how small and pitiful it appears. Looking at the world from the heights of eternity, you learn the true value of each thing upon this earth and you put it in its proper place. You learn how to use earthly things as instruments for the greater glory of God. What use is this for eternal life? How can it serve the greater glory of God, the good of the Church, my own spiritual progress?<sup>1</sup>

O God, grant me the grace to regard all things from the heights of eternity and to weigh all things on eternal scales. All things should be seen in the light of eternity.<sup>2</sup>

We should conscientiously seek God in all things and try to please Him. But the Lord God is so kind and good that He takes the first step to look for us. His grace awakens us and raises us up from spiritual sleep. He constantly urges and encourages us to work for His greater glory; He leads and draws us to greater perfection and to do all kinds of good works for the salvation of souls and for the welfare of the Church. Only let us not hinder or impede the influence of God's grace; let us not obstruct His work in our soul. On the contrary, we must make every effort to remove all obstacles and to yield to God's grace. Fearlessly and ruthlessly we must sever, one by one, all those strings and ties, all those shackles, that bind our souls to self-love, to the pleasures of the body, to our self-will, to our limited human reasoning and that do not let us rise. We must break and destroy all those chains that bind us

---

<sup>1</sup> "Quid hoc ad aeternitatem? Quid ad maiorem Dei gloriam, prosperitatem Ecclesiae, salutem animarum, propriam perfectionem."

<sup>2</sup> "Sub specie aeternitatis omnia respicere oportet." The sources of these quotations are unknown.

to the things of this world, to its trinkets and trifles, to vain dreams of worldly glory. We must shake off the heavy and useless burden of human respect that weighs down our shoulders and oppresses us like some debilitating disease. We must boldly clear away all obstacles from our path and destroy all those spectres which the fear of crosses and hardships often presents to the eye of our imagination. In a word, we should not be afraid to die like the grain of wheat in the Gospel. “Unless the grain of wheat falls on the ground and dies, it remains only a single grain; but if it dies, it yields a rich harvest” (Jn 12:24).

Only when a person truly dies to himself and to the world, can he rise again and be reborn in God, thus bearing much fruit. Whoever loses his soul in God and for God, will regain it—renewed, radiant and holy—and he will save it and many others as well. But if a person stubbornly clings to the bonds of self-love and remains overly concerned about his own soul, he will be left all alone, dried up and sterile, like that little grain. “Anyone who loves his life, loses it; anyone who hates his life in this world, will keep it for the eternal life” (Jn 12:25).

If, on the one hand, we truly seek God, and on the other, surrender ourselves totally to God’s will, then there is no doubt that God himself will lead us to all things. Not all the saints achieved a high degree of holiness in a single leap. Many were able to reach a higher stage of sanctity only gradually, after many long years of toil and struggle. But they did reach it because they refused to bargain with God. They did not resist His will, nor did they obstruct the workings of His grace, but freely, willingly, and without hesitation they abandoned everything, gave up anything that God required of them and were not afraid to offer Him all they had. As a result, God led them to attain all things: to perfection and to many good and useful achievements for the Church and for souls.

### ***November 18***

“For their sake I consecrate myself so that they too may be consecrated in truth” (Jn 17:19).<sup>1</sup> As we try to reach perfection ourselves, as we ourselves make an effort to become holier, we must

---

<sup>1</sup> The author has in mind the sense of the original Latin: “Sanctifico meipsum, ut et ipsi sanctificati sint.” The older translations have “sanctify” or “make holy,” while the modern ones use “consecrate” or “dedicate.”

not forget the sanctification of others; we must try to attract others to God and to exert a good influence on them. We should first begin at home, among those closest to us, those with whom we live, then go out to others outside our immediate circle.

Each one of us should be vitally concerned not only with our own progress in holiness, but also that we become a support for others in their spiritual life, a beacon of light to those struggling to become more perfect. Not only should we see to it that our own community be well-organized and well-ordered, but we should make an effort to gather and unite others around us to work together for the good of the Church and of souls.

### *November 20*

An idea came to me about the best means to adopt in order to revive the flagging spirit of a religious community. Having noticed that one thing or another is not quite as it should be in a community, how should one go about correcting it and setting things right?

In such cases the following phenomenon can usually be detected: everything and everyone is criticized; the entire fault is attributed to superiors, to the rules, or to all kinds of circumstances. Complaints and accusations go on incessantly. Often the so-called zealous and exemplary religious have become the bitterest critics and fault-finders. What good is that? The spirit becomes even more negative; factions form, fostering hate and rivalry. Hate, like any other passion, clouds the mind and embitters the heart. “Non in commotione Spiritus Dei”<sup>1</sup>—the Spirit of God is not found in commotion and restlessness. Such a course of action will hardly lead to anything positive.

How, then, should we go about restoring the life of the community or at least correcting abuses? It seems to me that the following method would be most effective: the member who discovered and became aware of the sad state of affairs should first of all turn to God, seeking divine light, true wisdom, and strength of will. He ought to reflect on the matter in the presence of God and become so absorbed in it that it would fill his whole mind, will, and heart. Next, he himself must begin to lead a more perfect life, to observe the rules that have been neglected, to avoid the abuses that have crept into the

---

<sup>1</sup> This is another of the author’s favorite sayings and seems to be a Scriptural quotation, the Latin rendering of 1 Kings 19:11.

community—in a word, to live according to the true spirit of the Congregation and its Constitutions.

When he feels that he is truly trying to live and behave properly, then can he look around for a friend who would also be willing to direct his life according to the Spirit of God, who would consent to join him in working toward the same goal. The former should try to inspire his friend with a love for the same ideal, with similar insight into the situation, and with the same ardent desire to do the will of God in these circumstances. When they are both walking in the path of the Lord and seeking the will of God in all things, they can attempt to draw a third and fourth and yet more like-minded friends. In this way a whole new movement will be created, which will gradually permeate the entire community with a new spirit. This should, of course, normally be done with the knowledge, blessing, and assistance of the superiors.

The work of renewing all things in Christ can never begin by finding fault with and criticizing others, but by entering into oneself and examining one's own life and behavior, by denying oneself, and by seriously attempting with all one's strength to live a better life according to God's will. We ourselves must first walk in the ways of the Lord and only then can we hope to influence others to follow our example.

This method of seeking renewal not only in religious communities, but also in other areas of life may, perhaps, be effective in achieving the desired results.

### ***November 24***

Whenever our spirit is troubled by thoughts arising from our imperfect nature or from the evil spirit, we should spend more time in prayer so that our will, strengthened by prayer, would be better able to resist temptation. But when temptations have diminished or have almost disappeared, when good and holy desires, longings, and aspirations have taken their place, when we no longer have such a pressing need to combat our enemy, then may we devote less time to prayer. Of course, generally speaking, we must pray constantly. But that can be done everywhere and at all times, not only when we are on our knees in chapel.

We should try to get into the habit of a constant spirit of prayer: while walking, during working hours, especially if what we are doing does not tax the mind too much—or whenever we have a free moment, while passing from one job to another or even while conversing with people—in a word, everywhere and at all times. Such brief aspirations, such momentary elevations of the spirit toward heaven, such stirrings of love for God and man, such quick glances at all things in the light of eternity do not require that we set aside any special time and do not interfere with our work but, on the contrary, are a source of refreshment. We ought to acquire this habit of constant prayer.

In our active life it is absolutely necessary that we acquire this habit of prayer. We must seize those moments which can so easily slip away and elude us, those freer moments, and turn them into prayer. When a person has practiced this for some time, almost before he knows it, his spirit seems to rise up to God spontaneously, it rushes heavenward almost effortlessly. And then what light it receives, what holy desires it experiences, what strength fills the will.

If we do not learn to convert those fleeting moments into prayer, they will flash by like lightning. And what is worse, we will lose those free moments completely. The mind is constantly at work, and our thoughts are always busy about something or other. If they do not rise toward God, if we do not direct them toward holy things, they will rove about somewhere else, often aimlessly—chasing the wind, as it were. Then we tend to ponder some unpleasant incident, think about ourselves, and feed our self-love. As a result, we become more fatigued than if the mind were concentrating on some intellectual task, the nerves are agitated, and our inner peace is disturbed. Happy is the person who learns to take these short breaks from his work to rise up to God and rest in Him.

Since our way of life does not allow us to devote long hours to prayer, we need to acquire this habit of interior prayer, of constantly lifting up mind and heart to God. How much time is lost in useless and empty thoughts! A person is aware that he is thinking about something, but he hardly knows about what. The mind continues to work and even becomes weary, but there is no productive result, only wool-gathering. Would it not be more worthwhile in every respect to direct our mind and our spirit toward God and toward holy things? Let us learn to remain and to walk

in the presence of God, always prepared to do whatever is most pleasing to Him, and our soul will be immersed in prayer. In this way, no matter how busy we are, we will always have time for prayer.

A much higher degree of holiness is required to be able to live in union with God everywhere, at all times and in all circumstances; to keep Him in our heart, no matter what we are doing or whom we may be with; to long for Him and to love Him all the time, not only when we are on our knees in chapel saying our prayers. Happy is the person who is able to rest in the Lord and to remain in union with Him, no matter how hard he is working for the greater glory of God. “Anyone who is joined to the Lord is one spirit with him” (1 Cor 6:17).

### ***November 27***

It is worthwhile to become acquainted with various methods of meditation so that we would be able to practice it as well as possible: the method of St. Ignatius is a good one to learn and to follow. However, it would be best to allow each person the freedom to choose what is most suitable for him. One may prefer one method, while another may like a different one; some may use one method at one time, then switch to something else—it depends on the person’s state of soul and spiritual needs. In this matter, as in others, it is not so much the form that is important, but that we seek God. That method and that meditation will prove best in which God grants us the most grace and gives Himself to us. Here too the best procedure to follow is to surrender ourselves completely to God and to seek Him alone; God knows perfectly well what we need and what is most useful for us, and He will direct us toward the right path. But, of course, we ought to make an effort to find the right way ourselves with God’s help, until we come upon something suitable. How often, being little blind creatures, do we grope about in darkness, feeling our way in the gloom. We must ask God, our loving Father, to show us the right way.

We must not mistake the means for the end, nor become slaves of some particular method of prayer, but choose freely and make use of any method, enjoying the liberty of the children of God (cf., Rom 8:21) to seek God, our Creator, in all things, to lift up our minds to Him, and to desire the fulfillment of His holy will. We can make use of various means, climbing higher up the stairway toward an ever

closer union with God, toward an ever deeper immersion in His holy will, toward a more intimate relationship with Him.

### ***November 29***

To make our body a more pliable instrument in the hands of God, we must learn to deal with it prudently. When the body rebels against the mind illumined by the light of faith, we should discipline and mortify it, making use of harsher measures if necessary. But when a person would truly rather die than offend his God by the smallest sin and when he no longer experiences any particular temptations from the evil spirit or from the corrupt world or his own disordered sensuality, then may he regard his body as the property of his Lord and God to whom he will have to give an account of its management and use.

We must be careful not to let our health deteriorate. When a person becomes too weak, he is not able to do his work properly. Mortification should make the body a more efficient instrument of the soul, but not weaken or destroy it unnecessarily. When our body is obedient to the spirit and to our reason illumined by faith, when it helps us to perform our duties, then it is both our friend and ally. The soul needs the body to be able to work for the glory of God. We should, therefore, love our body properly and maintain its health, but in such a way that we do not become overly indulgent or overly anxious about the preservation of our health. But whenever the body rebels against the spirit and makes war against it, then is it wise to mortify and discipline it, especially by intense and continual work. “A sound mind in a sound body is the best way a person is able to serve God and to work for the salvation of souls.”<sup>1</sup> Consequently, when the body becomes ill, we must do everything we can to regain our health so that we would be able to serve God and to work for His greater glory with all our strength.

### ***November 30***

I have made my monthly day of recollection. Thank you, Lord, for the light that you have given me.

---

<sup>1</sup> “Anima sana in corpore sano, ut hoc modo homo sit melius dispositus ad serviendum Deo et laborandum pro salute animarum.”



My resolutions for the coming month are as follows: 1. to live in closer union with God and to remain always in His presence as far as I can; 2. to become more adept at self-conquest by following my daily schedule more exactly, by using my time more productively, and by denying myself one thing or another at meals; 3. to finish reading the directives for women's religious communities; 4. to write an article about spiritual direction for *Vadovas*.<sup>1</sup>

The superior should be careful not to restrict, inhibit, or destroy the sound initiative shown by his subjects, but rather, support and foster it, directing it reasonably along the proper channels so that it would be in harmony with the other duties of his subjects, with the tasks in which that particular house is engaged, and with the efforts and goals of the entire Congregation. Naturally, some projects and suggestions may come up that would require a person to devote his whole time to them and be released from every other duty. And so, while we should be careful not to stifle the spirit of our subjects, to let them grow and work as productively as possible, yet we should never allow the reins to slip from our hands nor relinquish proper supervision. Some projects may be too impractical or unreasonable, and the superior cannot approve of them.

The superior general should see to it that his subjects not so much fear as love him. When he is visiting his subjects, he should encourage them, lift up their spirits, and cheer them up. He should show that he cares about each individual, about his work and his concerns and about the field of work in which that particular house is engaged. If it is necessary to make some changes, he should not be impatient or irritable. If possible, he ought to support whatever the local superior has decided and if new rules or regulations are required, it is better for the local superiors to introduce them into their own houses after the superior general has gone. If something needs immediate attention, however, he must make the change himself, but if there is no such pressing need, then it is better to leave the matter to the local superiors so as not to diminish their authority.

---

<sup>1</sup> *Vadovas* (The Guide) was a Catholic monthly magazine published in the city of Sejny in Lithuania from 1908 to 1914. Matulaitis contributed articles to it.

# 1911

*There are no entries for about six weeks, during which a new year has begun. During Christmas vacation Fr. Matulaitis was in Warsaw, where he gave retreats and did other pastoral work. He was also directing one or more secret religious communities for women. When he got back to the Theological Academy, he discovered that, without his consent, he had been appointed vice-rector.<sup>1</sup> He was not very happy with this, since it took up time that he would gladly have reserved for his novices and for the task of writing a book of Instructions. The new Constitutions had already been completed and approved by Rome in November of 1910. At this time Matulaitis had decided to give up his lectures on sociology and teach instead dogmatic theology, for which he felt better qualified.*

## **January 13**

I have not written anything for a long time, but have experienced and endured much. Praise God for everything; may His holy will be done in all things. I kiss the hand of Providence; I surrender myself completely to Your guidance—lead me, Lord. Heavenly Father, do whatever You wish with me.

It has pleased You to lead me along wondrous paths, Lord. But who can understand Your ways or anticipate Your thoughts? I am your servant, Lord; send me wherever You will. Like a little child I fall into Your arms. Carry me! You have been pleased to lead me along a road filled with obstacles, difficulties, and hardships. For this I thank You, for this I am deeply grateful. As I travel this road, I trust that here I will not lose my way so easily because this is the road that my beloved Savior Jesus Christ has taken.

Lord, how I love You! Grant that I may love You more and more and never stop loving You. My heart is aflame! I would pour out my

---

<sup>1</sup> The vice-rector or inspector of the Academy was responsible for maintaining order and discipline among the students. It was considered a promising position, leading to greater things.

blood for You, down to the last drop; give up everything and anything, even life itself so that Your glory would increase and Your Church grow and prosper. Show me what to do, Lord!

You have given me so many graces, O Lord. What can I give You in return? Everything that I have—but I have nothing of myself, only Your grace makes me rich. Still, all I have is Yours!

If I may ask, Lord, let me be but a dishrag in your Church, a rag used to wipe up messes and then thrown away into some dark and dirty corner. I want to be used up and worn out in the same way so that your house may be a little cleaner and brighter. And afterwards, let me be thrown away like a dirty, worn-out dishrag.

My God, let me be used in Your vineyard, in Your field as manure, as fertilizer, so that Your harvest would be richer and the fruit more abundant. Let me be despised, used up, and worn out so that Your glory may increase and so that I may be of some use to the growth of Your Church. Fool that I am, I do not know what to ask for! O God, grant that Your will be done in all things. Here I am, take me and do with me what You will; let me be a docile instrument in Your hands. May Your glory increase, may Your Kingdom grow, may Your will be done! Grant, that as I renounce myself more and more, I may love You more and more.

Jesus, I love You and I desire to love You more. Let me grow in Your love. O Jesus, give me the strength and the courage never to give in to any hardship or adversity, never to give up the struggle so that Your name may be praised, so that Your Church may flourish. Grant that I may boldly venture into any place, get in everywhere, so long as there is a chance for me to work and to suffer for You. Fill me with Your Spirit so that I may do my best to carry it everywhere.

I thank You, Lord, for having given me such extraordinary feelings of love for the Immaculate Conception of the Blessed Virgin Mary. In the past I found this prayer difficult. But now, how sweet it is to fall at her feet and to immerse myself in prayer! Overwhelmed by these feelings of incomparable sweetness, my soul swoons and my body is filled with wondrous, incomprehensible, and inexpressible tremors. It is like the feeling I had when I pressed the holy cross to my heart.

Thank You, Lord, for everything! O my God, my God, how I love You and long to love You! Only let me work and suffer for You and for Your holy Church and for its visible head, the Holy Father. May

prayer, work for God, and hardships with suffering for the Church be woven into the very fabric of my life. May Christ himself be my model.

We must be an all-encompassing, all-conquering force that enters in everywhere, pushes through every obstacle to gain its object, not merely remaining on the defensive. We must learn to adapt ourselves to all kinds of conditions, even the most demanding, and to go, first of all, where it is most difficult. That is where we must get to work—to settle down and to begin to gather people around us.

Although we intend to work in our own country, among people of our own nationality, we must not limit ourselves to our own nation. Wherever the Church needs us, that is where we must go. I trust that we shall never be short of dedicated people willing to serve God and to work in foreign lands if the greater glory of God and the welfare of the Church demands it. We should even make a special resolution to go wherever the Church is persecuted, religious are expelled, and the life and freedom of the Church are restricted, even if we must give up our native land to do so. Among other priorities, the need to foster religious life in those places where it is persecuted, repressed, or even forbidden, must be one of our concerns.

Among other tasks, it would also be fitting for us to offer ourselves to the bishops to let us take on those parishes, if possible, where scandals have occurred and to work there for a time until all is restored. Before taking on such a parish, those assigned to it should make a fervent long retreat. They should also undertake special penances to atone for the scandal. Then, following the example of the apostles and taking great care to be faithful to all the commandments and counsels of Jesus Christ, in a spirit of self-denial, they may begin this spiritual task without looking for any reward. “Ego ero merces tua magna nimis”—I myself will be your great reward.<sup>1</sup> We should be prepared to go wherever all seems lost and try to restore and reclaim all for God and for the Church.

---

<sup>1</sup> This seems to be a Scriptural quotation—cf., Gn 15:1. The Jerusalem Bible renders God’s words to Abraham thus: “Have no fear, Abram, I am your shield; your reward will be very great” (Gn 15:1a).

*January 16*

It would be a good thing for us to become better educated and to make progress in some field of learning. However, in our Congregation learning is not to become our primary objective. We must make an effort to acquire it, but it is only one of many means that can be used for the greater glory of God, for the welfare of the Church, and for the salvation of souls.

Our main task is to work and to fight for the salvation of souls and the good of the Church especially in those places where conditions are most difficult, where it seems that all is lost, where the Church is persecuted and repressed, where scandals have arisen and spread, where errors and immorality have become deeply rooted. Zeal for souls, for the Church and the glory of God must rule our lives and direct all our efforts toward that one goal.

Every available means—both natural and supernatural must be used to increase God’s glory, to save more souls, to promote the welfare of the Church. “*Omnia vestra, vos Christi, Christus autem Dei*”—All is yours, you are Christ’s, and Christ God’s (cf., 1 Cor 3:22-23). We should endeavor to make use of everything for God’s glory: human talent and all sorts of gifts, the arts and sciences, trades and professions, all kinds of societies and associations, the press and so on. But in making use of all these things, we must not forget that they are the means and not an end in themselves. They are but opportunities in which we can more effectively draw people to Christ. Our primary goal shall always be to lead people to salvation along the way of true repentance, authentic faith, real love of God and man.

In making use of these means, both supernatural and natural, as, for example, schools, various organizations, the press, and so on, we must not become so immersed in them that we forget our primary aim—we must not make them our goal. Through the body and its needs, through creatures and external things, we must try to reach the depths of the human spirit and there awaken the love of God and man, there to bring the Spirit of Christ.

## *January 17*

We need to gather together people of good will, those who love God and the Church, and organize them to combat the spirit of immorality and godlessness. We must preach Christ not only to them, but also through and with them. We must make an effort to form groups and societies of good, devout people—gather small groups of pious people, centers of intense Catholic life. However, our work should not end there. We must never stop being concerned with those who are steeped in sin, those who have lost their faith or, never having known it, are wandering about in darkness, far away from Christ and His Church. We must never forget them, but try to do everything possible to bring them into Christ's fold.

Naturally, it is much more pleasant to work among and for the devout and much more difficult to reach those who are prejudiced against the Church, who hate it, and even rise up in hostility against it. We need to bring the teaching of Christ to these people and to try to save their souls. The good laborer in Christ's vineyard cannot afford to leave a large portion of his field unattended to. He must be willing to sprinkle it with his sweat and even with his blood, if need be, so that the Kingdom of Christ would grow and prosper.

Let us be like that good and compassionate father in the Gospel who stands in the doorway waiting for the return of his prodigal son. He catches sight of him while he is still a long way off and runs out to meet him, embraces and kisses him, brings him home, dresses him in the finest garments and spreads out a feast for him (cf., Lk 15: 20 ff.). Even more fervently let us imitate the Good Shepherd of the Gospel (cf., Lk 15:3-7) who quietly leaves his ninety-nine sheep grazing and goes out into the forests, the valleys, and hills in search of the one lost sheep. Having found it, he carries it on his shoulders back to the other good sheep. May our zeal always be directed to those who do not know Christ or who do not know Him sufficiently. Like good soldiers of Christ we must be prepared to go wherever He is attacked so that we may join in battle and give our lives for Him.

## *January 23*

We are willing to admit laymen into our Community as well as priests. Lay brothers can work in schools, conduct orphanages, and staff various other institutions. But let us not forget that they too must first of all be committed to proclaim Christ by word and example, to work, and to do battle for the glory of God, the salvation of souls, and the good of the Church. In some places priests may find it difficult or even impossible to exercise their ministry. Lay brothers, however, may be able to find their way in more easily, to reach out, and to bring the Spirit of Christ into those places. In their war against the Church, the atheists have already influenced considerable numbers of people to avoid priests. Now they tend to regard the priestly cassock with suspicion, are full of hostility toward the clergy, and will not listen to anything a priest has to say.

Because of this situation, wherever and whenever possible, priests must change their clerical attire for secular clothes so that they may go and preach Christ among those who are suspicious of clerical garb. But even here, the priest must be careful because this may not always be a good thing to do. In that case, a lay brother can take the place of the priest. That is why the lay brothers should be properly trained and prepared for such an apostolate.

Lay brothers are expected not only to acquire some skill or trade or become proficient in some field of learning, but they should also excel in their work so that they would be respected by people in similar fields who have not dedicated themselves to God. Our lay brothers ought to be better educated than the average workers, artisans, or people of other occupations from that particular country. Only then will their words make an impression on people since they themselves will be looked up to. People will be more ready to listen to them than to all sorts of agitators and enemies of the Church.

Our lay brothers ought to be especially well versed in Christian doctrine so that they might become apologists, true defenders and preachers of the faith among people of their own class. Neither time nor money should be spared to provide them with this necessary understanding of their faith. I have not yet mentioned the lay brothers' spiritual life or their personal holiness, but it is obvious that

a holy life, deep interior intimacy with God, purity of spirit, and zeal should be the foundation of their apostolate.

The thought keeps occurring to me whether up until now we religious have properly appreciated the importance of the parish in the life of the Church. After all, that complex organism which is the Church is made up of tiny cells—the parishes. The function of the parish as an active unit within the social structure has not yet been properly understood and appreciated. Why could the parish not be the source of spiritual renewal and rebirth? By contributing to the better organization and leadership of parishes, would we not effectively promote the welfare of the Church? Perhaps even better than in any other way! We should consider this matter carefully and experiment in this direction.

Up to now, religious have usually pursued their apostolate outside the parishes, above and beyond them, leaving the actual parish work to the diocesan clergy. Suppose we joined them in the work of conducting parishes, taking special pains to do it well? Who can tell what great gains for the Church we might be able to achieve in this field? Each parish church with its rectory could become a small religious house, occupied by several priests and two or three lay brothers to assist them. What an excellent religious house that would be! What a beautiful center of spiritual life! We should seriously think this matter over. The priests could exercise their priestly ministry, while the lay brothers would serve as sacristans and organists, thus assisting the priests. Lay brothers could also teach the parish children.

I have been reading how St. Francis Borgia,<sup>1</sup> superior general of the Jesuits, was able to coordinate his work with constant prayer. His example is worth imitating. He could not spend as much time as he wished in prayer, although he loved to pray and would find the time to do so in the midst of his arduous duties. But, then again, he would never neglect his work for prayer. He led a remarkably active life.

Here is how this saint made his work a continual prayer. He would offer each hour of his day to God by making a separate intention for it. He would even jot down these intentions in his notebook. While he worked, he would constantly remind himself of the intention for that particular hour. Every day he would record his intentions—sometimes there were 24, at other times 12, or seven, or only four.

---

<sup>1</sup> Third Superior General of the Society of Jesus (1510-1572), an active and zealous promoter of the Jesuit apostolate, especially in mission fields. Matulaitis was reading about him in the Latin history of the Society: *Monumenta Historica Societatis Iesu*, vol. V, Madrid, 1911.



Besides this, every hour he would think of some mystery of the life of Jesus, or of one of the attributes of God or of some saint, and so on. He would pray for each province or house of the Society, for the conversion of sinners, pagans, and heretics, for the needs of the Church, and for the special problems of his day, and so on. He used to jot down the important events of his life in his notebook and celebrate them by offering them up to God in some way. By these means St. Francis nurtured his spiritual life and remained in constant union with God, with the result that his very active life became a continual prayer.

Lord, grant that through the intercession of this great saint, I may learn to pray always, even while I am working; to remain in Your Presence, to be ever in accord with Your holy will, continually attentive to Your beloved Son, Jesus—who gives Himself to me daily in the sacrifice of the Mass and who lives in my heart—to stay there with Him as in a chapel—to rejoice, to suffer, and to work in union with Him.

### *January 24*

In the event that someday we are divided into provinces, it would be a good idea to refer to the system used by the Jesuits.

The elected delegates from the different houses of each province could assemble to discuss the problems of their province, to make various suggestions, to express their desires, and so forth. All these matters, however, must be submitted to the Superior General and his Council for confirmation or to the general Chapter. The Chapter would consist of the provincial superiors and delegates—two from each province.

The general Council should be made up of elected representatives of the different nations by turn. For very grave reasons, and after consultation with the Sacred Congregation<sup>1</sup>, the members of the general Council should have the right to convoke a general Chapter. In this case the authority of the Superior General would be suspended. There is not much danger of such a thing in our Congregation because superiors do not remain in office for life as with the Jesuits, but only for a term of a few years.

---

<sup>1</sup> Sacred Congregation for Religious.

As for our field of work, we should, in my opinion, avoid narrowing it down too much. It would hardly benefit us if, after opening up one or two fields of apostolic endeavor, we were to limit all of our members to those few areas. When selecting our fields of work, their location and methods, we need not limit ourselves in any way, regarding only the greater glory of God, the good of the Church, and the salvation of souls. On the other hand, we should consider the gifts and qualifications of our members, allowing them to work toward the attainment of our primary objective in any way that allows them to do more for the greater glory of God and, if possible, directing them to places where there is a more urgent need for workers, where the mission field has been mostly neglected, where there is the greatest danger, and so on. Ordinarily, we should not refuse any type of work whatever.

### *January 25*

We are prepared to work and to do battle for the sake of the salvation of souls first of all in our respective countries and among our own countrymen. Everywhere the harvest is great and the laborers are few (cf., Mt 9:37). There was a time when those words would evoke thoughts of mission fields in pagan lands among the faithful who heard them. But nowadays, we must apply those words to many Catholic countries. Consequently, that is where we intend to begin. Yet, it seems to me that it would not be right for us to limit ourselves to our own countries or to discourage any of our members from working anywhere else but in his own nation and among his own people.

Our concern is with all people and with the needs of the universal Church. We should be willing to go any place where there is an opportunity to do something for the greater glory of God. I trust that the members of our Congregation will always consider the needs of the entire Church; that they will always be capable of the self-sacrifice required to leave their homeland and their own people to go wherever the greater glory of God may best be served.

In a special way we must direct our attention toward the vast territories of Russia and Siberia, where so many souls have strayed from the fold because there is no one to guide them; toward America

with its noisy life, where it is so easy for people to forget their spiritual needs, and toward all other countries. If the true spirit of the gospel prevails among us, I am certain that there will be no lack of volunteers in our Community willing to go out and work among the pagans and heretics.

It is true that in the Constitutions we have specified that, whenever possible, superiors should try to assign each religious to his own country, but it seems to me that this should be taken to mean that one nation will not try to exploit another, will not use its numerical advantage in the Community to stifle a less well-represented nationality. Instead, the brothers of one nation should help another nation, especially when it does not yet have any members in the Community; otherwise, we would not be able to spread out everywhere, if such were God's will.

We must learn to rise above national quarrels and prejudices to serve everyone equally and to be willing, first of all, to go wherever we can do most for the greater glory of God. This paragraph of our Constitutions often distresses and worries me, lest we restrict ourselves to our own nation when we should be prepared to go to other lands and other countries where the greater glory of God and the good of the Church requires it. I would be happy if we would consider ourselves primarily dedicated to the service of God and of His Church and detached from everything else. Although our main objective is not missionary work among the pagans but work within the Church itself, we don't mean to give up the idea of going to the missions. It is right for us to send our members to work in their own countries, but let us not forget the needs of the entire Church.

Let us foster a spirit which would inspire a greater number of us gladly to volunteer for work among the people of other countries, not only among our own countrymen. Here too, we should walk in the footsteps of the Good Shepherd, who was concerned about bringing into the fold those other sheep that did not yet belong to it: "And there will be only one flock and one shepherd" (Jn 10:16b). We must ardently pray that a true Catholic spirit would flourish among us so that we would be willing to give up everything and go to work, to do battle wherever we may be needed, and to give our lives, if necessary. In this respect may St. Paul, St. Ignatius Loyola, and many

other saints be our models. Give us, Lord, an apostolic spirit, true zeal which embraces all souls!

What kind of people do we need, then; what sort of people does our vocation demand? People who are dead to the world and the world to them<sup>1</sup>—people who have renounced everything and dedicated themselves to God alone; people who have stripped away and divested themselves of the skin of our corrupt nature and have put on Christ,<sup>2</sup> His grace and His Spirit; people who are well aware that Christ died for all so that all “should no longer live for themselves, but for Him who died and was raised to life for them” (2 Cor 5:15).

“We do nothing that people might object to, so as not to bring discredit on our function as God’s servants. Instead, we prove we are servants of God by great fortitude in times of suffering; in times of hardship and distress; when we are flogged, or sent to prison, or mobbed; laboring, sleepless, starving. We prove we are God’s servants by our purity, knowledge, patience, and kindness; by a spirit of holiness, by a love free from affectation; by the word of truth and by the power of God; by being armed with the weapons of righteousness in the right hand and in the left, prepared for honor or disgrace, for blame or praise; taken for impostors, while we are genuine; obscure yet famous; said to be dying, and here we are alive; rumored to be executed before we are sentenced; thought most miserable, and yet we are always rejoicing; taken for paupers, though we make others rich; for people having nothing, though we have everything” (2 Cor 6:3-10).

Let us make sure that we walk along this road shown us by St. Paul, taking long strides to reach our heavenly home more quickly and drawing others to walk along the same path, helping them in whatever way we can, always mindful of the greater glory of God. If only we could, we would take the whole world up to heaven with us! We would place it at the feet of our Lord as a gift for Him. O Lord, help us to become such people, always on fire with holy zeal.

---

1 Cf., Gal 6:14 — “... the world is crucified to me, and I to the world.”

2 Here and elsewhere this image of putting on a new skin, as it were, of putting on Christ in place of our corrupt nature echoes the Pauline image of Gal 3:27: “baptized in Christ, you have all clothed yourselves in Christ” (also Rm 13:14, Col 3:10, Eph 4:24).

We do not intend to differ from other people either by our clothes or in other externals.<sup>1</sup> Our priests will wear the same clothing as that worn by serious, pious priests in whatever country we happen to live and work. Occasions may arise when it is advisable for our priests to wear secular clothes so that they may work more effectively for the glory of God. Similarly, lay brothers would dress much the same as good Catholics of the same class and occupation as they are engaged in.

The reason for this is to be able to reach all kinds of people more easily and to bring the Spirit of Christ to all classes and social strata. By not setting ourselves apart from others in our outward appearance, we may be able to come closer to all types of people and give them an example of genuine Catholic life as far as we can. Those of us who are priests should also be models of the priestly life.

Let us try to stand out not in some external manner, but rather spiritually, in our holiness of life, in our sound and authentic Catholic doctrine, in our resourcefulness at work, in our truly conscientious fulfillment of our duties, in our love of God and neighbor, our industry, firmness of faith, and zeal.

In seeking various methods of, and approaches to our work, we should consider not so much whether or not they have already been used, but whether they are effective and how effective they would be in our work for the greater glory of God and for the salvation of souls.

One important problem is how we are to reconcile individual initiative and obedience. Our way of life demands that people be able to act independently and appropriately according to the occasion; but, on the other hand, that people be conscious of their religious commitment—able to unite initiative and independence with humble, perfect obedience and flexible enough to adapt themselves to the rest of the Community.

Little good can result from a situation in which a superior wants to do everything himself, does not trust other people, but tries to make decisions about every tiny detail. A superior should have enough modesty and humility to delegate various tasks to others. Once he has selected capable people, he should allow them to act

---

<sup>1</sup> Matulaitis's reforms required the Marians to discard the traditional white habit for less conspicuous clerical clothes.

freely within the framework of their delegated authority. The Superior General should even require local superiors to show initiative and a certain independence of action.

The proper task of the Superior General is to supervise and coordinate everything and everyone; he should try to encourage and help everyone, to advise them if necessary, to make sure that each person and task is moving along the right track. He should direct and coordinate everything in such a way that it may lead to the greater glory of God and serve the needs of the Church and the salvation of souls. We will have to deliberate again and again, with the the help of our Lord, how best to reconcile personal initiative and independence of action with humility, docility, and obedience.

The most important attribute of a good superior should be his intimate union with God not only in prayer, but also in the performance of his duties as he goes about his work. Only when he is able to rise above the here and now and look at everything from the perspective of eternity will he learn to evaluate all things properly and weigh and decide matters impartially in the light of God's greater glory. Only then will he be capable of governing others according to the will of God, because he will desire nothing other than the fulfillment of God's will in all things.

The superior should himself be the model of all the virtues. He should be the first to do whatever he tells or commands others to do. His words will carry weight only when they are backed by good example. His subjects will listen to him only when they see him practicing in his own life what he preaches for the edification of others. An ardent love for the Congregation and for all its members, for our Mother the holy Catholic Church, and for all people should occupy first place among the various virtues required of a superior. He should try to be all things to all men and to be prepared, if need be, to give his life for the Church and for his Community. He should mortify and control his passions so that they would not influence him or cloud his mind; he should maintain a tranquility of spirit in all things and never make decisions until he has regained his inner peace. "Non in commotione spiritus Dei" 3 Reg. 19, 11: The Spirit of God cannot be felt in commotion and restlessness. He should unite kindness and amiability with energy and the necessary strictness and firmness of spirit. He should not permit anything to divert him from whatever he thinks will promote the greater glory of God and please Him most.

Let him advance toward our common goal with patience and perseverance without succumbing to any fear of danger or becoming disheartened in the face of obstacles and difficulties.

### *February 3*

Today we were finally able to make our monthly day of recollection. We just could not find the time. This past month was full of distractions—so many things to attend to and so many worries.

I sincerely thank God for everything. May His holy will be done in all things and may everything be for His greater glory. After all, if I accept graces so willingly from His fatherly hands, why should I not accept crosses and cares as well?

My resolution for this month remains the same: to deny myself more and more so that I may unite myself with the Lord God more completely.

### *February 5*

A superior should be very careful not to yield to the wishes and requests of influential people when there is no real need to do so. One person may wish to direct a certain house or the whole Congregation one way, while another may steer it in another direction. One may suggest, or want to impose, a certain field of work, while another may press for taking up something else. One may request a religious for a certain task, while another wants someone else, and so on. If a superior should give in too easily when there is no real need, very soon outsiders with the best of intentions can cause chaos in a house and involve it in work that has not been decided upon and may prove too burdensome. He should be able, therefore, to hold his own and to keep to his own course of action. There will always be plenty to do, and we will never lack work, if only we have suitable people to do it.

In choosing our work and assignments we should keep in mind not so much what various people have requested as what will bring more glory to God and meet the needs of the Church and of souls. We must also keep in mind the gifts and qualifications of our members. Whenever it is evident that a religious is doing well in some field of work and that his

efforts are successful, we should be in no hurry to remove him, no matter how insistently someone may ask for him, unless the greater glory of God requires us to heed their wishes.

While reading the life of St. Ignatius, I found some good advice in the counsel he gave to two of his brothers when he sent them out among the people: “With all kinds of people, but especially with your equals and inferiors, I advise you to speak little and then only after having considered what to say; to listen carefully to the very end, until the person has said what is on his mind. Then give him a clear and concise reply, but in such a way as to avoid future confusion or contradiction. Your parting words should be brief, but courteous.”

When speaking with people we should try to be all things to all men.<sup>1</sup> As much as we can, we must try to adapt ourselves to their ways and habits: with those who are more spontaneous, we ought to be lively; with those who are quiet and serious, we should be more subdued. In our conversation we should take care to plant some good idea or suggestion, to direct people toward something good, toward some good work or to turn their heart toward spiritual things—toward the Church, toward God. Let us not forget that everything we say, every word can be made public. We ought to keep this in mind especially when we are trying to make peace between people who have quarreled.

We should not avoid contact with people. On the contrary, we must reach out to them, try to get closer to them so that later we may be able to draw them to God and involve them in work for the Church. But we must also be careful how and with whom we become acquainted and intimate. We cannot proceed blindly in this matter, but we should reflect on it beforehand and discuss it with our fellow religious, if possible. In a word, we need to be prepared. We cannot turn away from people, but we must be careful not to lose ourselves among them. Here too our views must be governed by consideration for the needs of the Church and the glory of God. Let us seek God and His greater glory, the welfare and good of the Church in everything that we do. When we are among people, we should be concerned with their spiritual needs; when we are at home among ourselves, we should care for our own spiritual life and try to make greater progress in it. When we stop being concerned about our

---

<sup>1</sup> Cf., 1 Cor 9:9-22.



own soul and its spiritual life, then we will no longer properly minister to the spiritual needs of others, nor will we care about the welfare of the Church or the greater glory of God; we will be seeking only ourselves, our own comfort and vainglory. As we ourselves sink downward, our plans and our work will crumble as well, and then all our efforts will come to naught.

We are determined to work for the Church with the help of people of good will who are organized for this purpose. To be more effective, we must learn to moderate meetings and to speak in public. We have to learn to listen to what people are saying and to grasp their line of thought, discern their intentions, and deduce their aims. We should listen calmly and with composure, without betraying emotion or irritation—not even obvious pleasure so that no one would be able to read our thoughts and opinions in our facial expression. We should be careful not to repeat in different words what others have already said. Our speech should be brief and to the point. In evaluating a suggestion, we should offer arguments for and against, indicating the worth of each, so that we do not appear biased.

We must never deviate from Catholic doctrine and principles. If it becomes clear that we cannot defend our Catholic convictions publicly because this may arouse bad feeling and make matters worse, then it is wiser to remain silent and in spirit to pray to God to repair the damage. But, wherever we can and as much as we can, we should not miss the opportunities to proclaim what is Catholic, to defend Catholic teaching and the life and organization of the Church.

While speaking, we should be very careful not to attack or offend anyone; we must remain very courteous. We should maintain our own convictions, but at the same time display the greatest charity toward people of opposing views. We will be able to draw others to God and to the truth only by the sincerity of our convictions, the strength of our faith, and the ardor of our love, not by quarrelling, arguing, or insulting others. Particularly in discussions raised over a difference of opinion let us be careful to keep in mind by what spirit we should be governed. Is it not the Spirit of Christ? Then we must be careful not to merit Christ's censure: "You do not know what spirit you are made of."<sup>1</sup>

---

<sup>1</sup> Cf., Lk 9:55. The quotation is an addition now omitted in most of the newer translations.

When preparing for meetings, it is a good thing to have the agenda ready ahead of time, including the major proposals and matters for discussion so that everything be conducted in an orderly manner and the meetings do not become long, drawn-out affairs that tire the participants and waste their time.

On visits, even brief ones, the brothers should take advantage of every opportunity to be of use to people, to help and encourage them in doing good, to raise their minds to God. We should look for occasions to be of service to others. Priests should willingly hear confessions, preach the word of God, teach religion to children and adults, give retreats, and so on. Lay brothers too should be useful in whatever way they can to draw people to God.

In the confessional priests should keep in mind that whatever they may whisper into the ear of their penitents may later be made public and revealed to everyone. Confessors must be careful to attract penitents not to themselves but rather to God. Charity and sincere compassion ought to fill the hearts of confessors and take precedence over all other feelings. Their greatest desire should be to bring people closer to God. When possible, they should not only give their penitents absolution, but also be willing to give spiritual direction.

Religious ought to shun vainglory like fire because pride and ambition have a way of creeping into the monastery concealed under the guise of good works and good intentions. That is why we have made a special promise<sup>1</sup> to God to avoid high office and honors. The evil spirit, disguising his evil purpose under the veil of goodness, sometimes offers us high positions, stressing their untold advantages for doing good. He even unsettles our conscience by trying to persuade us that in refusing this position we will cause great harm to the Church and to souls. We must be careful not to permit the evil spirit to deceive us. Are high positions the only places where we can work? We can do much more good by following Christ, by observing our Rule, and by obeying our superiors.

If we were to accept all these honorable and influential positions, our Congregation would quickly disintegrate. One would assume this

---

<sup>1</sup> Matulaitis added such a promise to the formula for religious profession. This promise was included in the 1918 version of religious profession of the Sisters of the Immaculate Conception of the Poor.

position, another would take that one, and so on. Before we realized it, no one would be left to work in the Congregation or to guide it. We need not worry that the world will ever run short of candidates for places of honor and influence. Let us, rather, take our places next to Jesus, who led a life of poverty, obedience, hard work, suffering, and humiliation. We can follow Him and stand by Him in accepting those positions that others are unwilling to take, those places which are the most despised and scorned, where all seems to be lost. Let us do our utmost to train and provide enough candidates for those positions which are held to be the most humble and insignificant in the eyes of men.

Just as some consider it a great honor to attain high office, so let us deem it the greatest of God's graces to receive an assignment to a place that demands the most self-sacrifice, where we will have to endure and suffer more for Jesus, and where our lot will be more hard work, trouble, scorn, humiliation, poverty, and so on. Let us make certain that we never run short of candidates from among our ranks to fill these posts—and not only willing candidates, but enthusiastic ones. O Jesus, give us this great grace!

Superiors have a duty to protect both themselves and their subjects from the lure of high office and honorable positions. I am sincerely convinced that we can achieve more good for the Church by following in the footsteps of Christ by a life of humility, poverty, and self-denial than by occupying high positions. And, God forbid that any of us should accept tokens or titles of honor! In these matters we must strictly observe the Constitution and Instructions. We must not only reject all honors that might hamper us, but also avoid any position which could impede the pursuit of our goal: to work for the greater glory of God and the good of the Church.

We must particularly guard against becoming too involved in all kinds of women's organizations, sodalities, and societies, etc., by accepting positions of leadership in them. This type of work requires a great deal of time and burdens the mind so that one is no longer able to do anything else. The superiors of other communities know this from experience, as do I myself. At most, we can accept invitations to conduct women's retreats or consent to be extraordinary confessors, but only with the permission of our superiors. But these duties should not interfere with our proper assignments.

On the other hand, we should try to give as much of our time as we can to serve the spiritual needs of young men, both in villages and in cities, especially those attending high schools and university. We should also be willing to work with adult men, especially the educated, with their societies and organizations.

If we are asked to conduct a retreat for priests or seminarians, we ought to lay everything aside and respond immediately. We should also willingly undertake the spiritual direction of priests whenever requested to do so.

St. Ignatius was most charitable in his efforts to justify his enemies; he forgave them everything and even returned good for evil. But, if need be, he was perfectly capable of defending his good name and protecting his rights. Especially those of us who are working for the good of others in public life must be able to protect our good name and also to guard our rights when the greater glory of God and the welfare of souls requires it.

A lamp will not burn without oil. The preacher of the Gospel will not be the light of the world nor a spiritual force that attracts people to Christ, leads them in battle for the Church, encourages them in good works unless his own heart glows with the fire of true zeal, unless he himself is an example of goodness and holiness.

We must study the enemies of the Church and become familiar with their goals, desires, plans, methods, and means of warfare. Then, after considerable thought and reflection, we should courageously enter the conflict and become active wherever the enemy is most numerous and defend those positions which are most under attack. In my opinion, the assaults of the enemy on our faith and on the Church, their calumnies, distortions, and lies, etc., must never be allowed to continue unrefuted; they must be proven false and misleading. But this course of action is to be taken not to humiliate our enemies, but rather so that the truth may gain the upper hand and even our enemies may become aware of it, realize their error, and return to God. Our objective should be the salvation of the souls of our enemies and not their humiliation, ridicule, or ignominious defeat.

## ***February 6***

The members of our own Community and all those who intend to work with us should always show themselves true Catholics opposed to false doctrine and erroneous opinions, but never attack persons or

particular individuals. Let us not imagine that we can attract anyone to the Catholic faith by tolerating or overlooking errors, by sacrificing the tiniest particle of genuine truth. Only by giving people the whole truth, our holy Catholic doctrine in all its breadth, depth, beauty, and purity, can we hope to draw them toward our Church.

It is important to learn how to defend the truth. We must be able to stand up for the truth in such a way that even its adversaries, if any, would come away convinced that its defender is filled with love and respect for them. We must be careful, then, never to say anything that may insult, wound, or embitter an adversary because these things will repel him from the Church. Even when we are refuting an error, we should avoid terms of derision or ridicule. It is much better to present the teaching of the Church in all its splendor and thus to demonstrate the fallacy of other doctrines. I have always preferred the positive to the negative approach.

We must be very cautious about new ideas and opinions: we should not embrace novelties too quickly, but examine them first to see if they are in harmony with the traditional teaching of the Church. On the other hand, we need not be too hasty to reject everything that is new if the Church has not condemned it. We must be careful to investigate and study the matter and wait until the Church makes a pronouncement about it. However, that does not mean that we cannot study the matter and try to demonstrate whether it does or does not agree with traditional Catholic doctrine. “Probate spiritus”—test the spirits.<sup>1</sup>

Whenever several brothers have been assigned or sent together to some particular spot, they should find time either in the morning or in the evening to discuss among themselves how they may spend the day most profitably, what tasks each is to be responsible for, and so on. They should never be without plan or purpose.

We must definitely introduce the practice of fraternal correction among our brothers. From time to time (every week or two) each one should request his monitor or a fellow religious to point out honestly all his defects, errors, and lapses in everyday life—in his work, conversation, and relationships with those around him. This would be a service of true

---

1 Cf., 1 Jn 4:1. This may also refer to St. Ignatius’s famous doctrine of discernment of spirits.

friendship that we can render to one another. A person is not always aware of his shortcomings, or even if he is, he is often prone to make light of them or to overlook them altogether. Those around us see us much more clearly and more objectively. When someone points out some fault, we are much more likely to take note of it. This motivates us to correct it.

It seems to me that it would be a good thing to adopt the following procedure: a brother is appointed to take note of everything that another does—both good and bad—and reports it to the superior. The superior would then be aware of all the facts and thus be better equipped to direct the Community and each individual in it. If we sincerely desire to become more perfect, to serve God, and to grow in holiness, then, I think, we should willingly accept this service, whether from our peers or from our superiors. Should we not be most grateful to another for opening our eyes, for showing us our shortcomings, protecting us from evil, and directing us toward a surer path to God? Give us this holy simplicity, Lord, this humility, this upright heart and good will.<sup>1</sup>

We should make an effort to understand the times in which we live, to gain real insight into the desires goals and ideals of our contemporaries. Every good idea should meet with our approval, every good suggestion—gain our encouragement, every good deed or endeavor—our sincere support and praise, every trouble and hardship—our compassion and help. But every error, when it comes into contact with us, should be shattered—just as the fury of the waves breaking against the rocks is dissolved and dissipated, so should every evil deed and endeavor come to nothing.<sup>2</sup>

According to the teachings of the great ascetics, if a person desires to construct a beautiful edifice of perfection, he must first give it a firm foundation of mortification and humility.

St. Ignatius Loyola used to say to his brothers: “I would become really alarmed only when people stopped attacking and persecuting our Order. That would be a sign that we have so become lazy and are no longer serving the Lord as we should that the world and the evil spirit do

---

<sup>1</sup> “Da nobis, Domine, hanc sanctam simplicitatem, humilitatem, cordis rectitudinem, hanc bonam voluntatem.”

<sup>2</sup> The end of the sentence is illegible and left incomplete in the typewritten copy. It has been completed here according to the context. Ed.

not pay any attention to us and let us rest in peace.” We ought to remember these words. Whoever begins to work zealously for God and for the Church will never lack trials and even persecution. The way in which the world regards us and acts towards us should be an indication of whether we are truly following in the footsteps of Christ.

We must not lose heart because of difficulties and persecutions, but rather rejoice and praise God for having found us worthy to suffer a little for His name and for His holy Church. If we are the object of detractions, personal attacks, and accusations, we should be very careful to examine our lives to make sure that we have not done anything wrong and then make an effort to lead a more perfect life, to perform our tasks with even greater zeal, never giving way to sloth or neglect.

Lord, grant that the violence and fury of the evil spirit, the persecution and ridicule of the corrupt world may never cause us to falter or be deflected from the way of truth nor intimidate us to give up the work we have begun for Your greater glory or dampen the fire of our zeal. As the enemies of Your holy Name, Lord, grow bolder and as our many hardships, trials, persecutions and snares and traps set for us increase, may our zeal, fortitude, wisdom, and initiative as well as our daring and perseverance grow and become ever stronger. May our motto be this: “There is nothing I cannot master with the help of the One who gives me strength” (Phil 4:13).

In the midst of all the storms the evil spirit and the corrupt world may raise against us, give us the grace, Lord, to remain unwaveringly constant and peaceful so that the more we are oppressed and attacked, the more closely we may cling to your beloved Son, Jesus Christ, and the greater may be the trust with which we surrender to the protection of Our Lady of the Immaculate Conception.

### ***February 13***

Neither our work, nor our institutions will prosper unless we ground them in the virtue of humility. We will make better progress and achieve greater success when we proceed with humility, beginning our work modestly and without fanfare. Then, in time, it will grow as we nurture it carefully and, like a seed, reach full maturity.

Wherever we go, it would be best to begin our work among those people who are the most neglected—among the poor, the uneducated, the little children. Then gradually, when we have sunk down our roots, we can expand our efforts and spread out to encompass as wide a field as possible for the greater glory of God. Even if offered well-known and important institutions, let us not be too hasty to accept them, especially if we do not yet have qualified people to staff them. It is much better to start small and gradually progress to greater things than to take over eminent institutions and conduct them inefficiently or even bring them to ruin. In accepting responsibilities, we must be cautious and modest in the estimation of our own capabilities: “This is the only way to discover the will of God and know what is good, what it is that God wants, what is the perfect thing to do” (Rm 12:3).<sup>1</sup>

Both the Community and each individual must be careful not to overburden themselves with too much work so that they become exhausted and impair their health. Overwork will result in rapid burnout both for the individual and the Community.

### ***February 16***

“Nothing, therefore, can come between us and the love of Christ” (Rm 8:35).

Not everyone is aware that we must not only love, but learn how truly to love God and the Church. There are mothers who love their children very much, but imprudently and thoughtlessly. They not only harm their children by their misled love, but also, if they persist in it, push their children right out of this world. Just so do some Catholics love the Church and their faith very much, but that love is so imprudent and thoughtless that they do more harm than good.

### ***February 17***

It is said: “Be the person that you would like others to think you are, and you will be a good person.” And—“Do unto others as you would have them do unto you.”

---

<sup>1</sup> The original Latin quotation is “sapere ad sobrietatem,” which seems to be a rendering of Rom 12:3, but is given differently in modern translations.



### ***March 4***

Several days have passed since I made my monthly day of recollection. I had no time to record my thoughts in this Journal. My resolutions are the same. I have added only this: I shall do my best to turn my eyes toward Jesus carrying His cross and suffering upon it; I will offer the Lord Jesus Christ all my labors, trials, and sufferings to atone for my own sins and for those of the whole world.

Lord, grant me the spirit of penance so that I may be able to atone, in some small measure at least, for the great and grievous sins of my past life. Lord, make my tears flow abundantly so that I could mourn for my grave and numerous transgressions.

### ***March 5***

In human beings it is the intellect that governs the will. When the mind is in error, the will follows. Our thinking influences our entire life. If our thinking has become confused and chaotic, our whole life begins to decay. It seems to me that the greatest calamity of our times is the departure of the intellect from the path of genuine truth, from the way of faith, and the terrible confusion of mind that has resulted. To repair this evil, we ourselves must take pains to acquire a thorough understanding of the teaching of the Church and to know our faith as fully and deeply as possible. Then we must try to enlighten the minds of others with the light of faith. The return to sound thinking should be one of our most vital concerns.

Today we need to popularize, so to speak, the apostolic work of preaching, spreading, and defending the faith. We must recruit greater numbers of the faithful to take part in this work. Just as there are all kinds of charitable organizations with their rosters of numerous members, so too should there be similar organizations to preach, spread, and defend the faith. We should try to attract as many people as we can to join them. Nowadays, the battle to maintain a Catholic view of life is at its height everywhere and among all classes of people. A priest cannot reach them all, even if he tries his best to do so. The laity must come to the aid of the clergy so that both could work together in this most important task of spreading true Catholic teaching. The propagation and defense of the faith with the help of the laity should be one of our major concerns.

Various organizations, societies, and institutes could be established for this purpose. Men and women could be selected and trained as teachers of the faith. They could carry the light of our holy faith everywhere and at the same time be a living example of the Christian virtues. They could get into all kinds of places: into people's homes, into various institutions and factories, working not only among the faithful, but also among unbelievers, not only among Catholics, but also among non-Catholics. Such organizations could be established among domestics, teachers, laborers, craftsmen, and farmers. I think we could find enough people to join. We need to draw larger groups of people into this work. "Let everyone who has a fervor for the Law and takes his stand on the covenant come out and follow me" (1 Mac 2:27). Let everyone who loves God and the Church, who is concerned with the glory of God and the growth of His Church, come and take part in this holy battle on behalf of God and the Church.

### ***March 6***

"It is not listening to the Law but keeping it that will make people holy in the sight of God" (Rm 2:13). "If you can teach the ignorant and instruct the unlearned... then why not teach yourself as well as the others?" (Rm 2:21).

Each member of our Congregation should be well trained and knowledgeable in some field or other so that he may become a source of support and influence in this particular field within his own Community, in society, and in the Church. Depending on a person's gifts, this field of special concentration could be in the area of scholarship or administration, preaching or conducting retreats, pastoral ministry or some other profession or skill. This special training in some particular field would be valuable not only for the whole Community but also for the individual himself. We can apply the words of Sacred Scripture in this instance: the servant who has been faithful in small things can be trusted with greater ones (cf., Mt 25:21).

A person competent in one area will be ready and able, if the need arises, to undertake some other task as well. Such a person is more apt to find satisfaction in life. But the person who feels that he does not know anything and is unable to do anything, who cannot set to work on some particular task that he has chosen for himself will find that he is dissatisfied and unhappy. He is often at a loss about how to spend his time; he does not know what to do. The more you limit your work,

the more adept you will be. The work itself becomes more of a pleasure, and a person is able to make a more significant contribution to the work of the Church.

### *March 7*

First of all, we must make every effort to enhance the development of each of our members: to see that each receives the training and education he needs to enhance all his natural and supernatural gifts, keeping in mind, of course, the type of work he is to do, the task which he intends to perform, and so on. Moreover, we need to train each one in some particular field. It is only through holy, fully mature, well-trained, and educated individuals who have developed into valuable persons that we can hope to influence other people.

But with personal development we must not lose sight of another goal: that these well-trained and well-educated people also be prepared to live in community, to live and work with others. The effort expended in developing the individual talents of our members and training them for community life will prove a valuable asset to the whole Congregation, not diminish it in any way.

We do not propose to seclude or isolate ourselves from people or to surround ourselves with high walls and wear distinctive habits in order to dedicate ourselves entirely to prayer. What we mean to do is to live a pious, interior spiritual life and at the same time an active, intensely productive life. Our model is Jesus Himself not only working quietly in His home in Nazareth, not only the Jesus who mortified Himself spending forty days in the desert, often passing entire nights in prayer, but also the Jesus who worked hard, who wept and suffered; Jesus out among the crowds visiting the towns and villages, reaching out to sinners and the simple folk as well as to the learned, the righteous, and the rich; Jesus teaching and refuting the objections of the Pharisees; Jesus seeking the lost sheep; Jesus suffering persecution and being forced to go into hiding to avoid the hatred of His enemies.

We also intend to follow the example of St. Paul—his active life, his boldness, and fearlessness. Wherever we happen to be, even in prison or in exile, we intend to preach Christ and not to abandon our way of life. Who knows what we shall encounter in this life for the sake of

Christ? What hardship and persecution lie in store for us? We must be ready for anything. And so, we need people who are filled with energy, active and independent, but also prudent and resourceful, able to see this world and people with the eyes of faith and always remaining steadfastly intent on achieving their goal, faithful to the spirit of their enterprise until death, until they are eternally united to God.

We need the sort of people who, even if exiled or deported by the government, would be immediately capable of standing on their own feet, of organizing their life in such a way as to continue gathering people around them; who, even if they should be completely cut off from their colleagues, would still be able to live their religious life, to walk in the ways of God, and to draw others to do so; people who would not become apathetic or careless in their vocation, but would inspire other souls toward a higher and more spiritual way of life.

Even though we intend to work primarily among our own people, yet we should have a truly catholic heart able to embrace the whole Church and the whole world. If it be God's will that our superiors send us to another country or that the government send us into exile, we must immediately set to work there, to learn the local language and try to gain an understanding of the needs, desires, aspirations, and spirit of the people among whom we find ourselves. We should devote ourselves to these people with all our hearts just as if they were our own brothers and carry on the work of Christ among them. "If they persecute you in one town, take refuge in the next"(Mt 10:23).

We must certainly develop individual initiative in our members, but in a good sense. On the other hand, we must train them to conform to the Constitution, to the general discipline and order of community life with the brothers, to subject themselves humbly to the authority of their superiors. The good of the whole, our common undertakings and tasks, the greater glory of God and the salvation of souls as well as the needs of the Church must always take precedence, limiting individual initiative.

Individualism can become a destructive force if it is not ruled and ordered by self-denial, humility, complete dedication to God and to the salvation of souls and full obedience to the Congregation and its superiors.

If our Congregation neglects the development of the personality of its members, it will have a faceless mob, a flock of sheep; it will be like a pile of sand with each grain scarcely differing from the other, all of them haphazardly thrown together. But then again, if we cultivate only individuals without regard to preparing them for living and working together, we will end up with a field of sticks stuck in the ground, all dried-up and unable to bloom or bear fruit. Each religious would be like a barren rock against which the waves break and fall back with a roar, a rock against which ships crash and are wrecked.

Not only should we not try to eradicate the individuality of our members, their special talents, gifts, and resources, but we should even train and develop them. But, on the other hand, we must take pains to teach and form them to be docile, obedient, and self-denying so that whenever the glory of God or the welfare of the Church demands it, they will be ready to give up their talents, their dreams, and desires in order to be of service.

We do not want to have a crowd of dull people who are simply led about, but neither do we want a mob of stubborn, selfish people intent on getting their own way, on pursuing their own interests and goals, with no regard for the general good or our common tasks—people going their own way and “more interested in themselves than in Jesus Christ” (Phil 2:21). Here too we must find a balanced approach—a way of reconciling personal initiative and energy with complete and wholehearted obedience and self-denial. In this instance, as in everything else, we must avoid one-sidedness.

May we be filled with joy in our work, remain strong and persevering in suffering and in pursuing our goals, firm and constant in leadership. We should try to find a suitable field of work and proper occupation for each of our members, to distribute their duties fairly, but at the same time each one of us should be able to submit, to forget himself, to bend his will for the common good and higher aims.

As we work at our various occupations, at becoming more proficient in our various fields, let us also be ready and willing to lend a hand wherever needed. Let us never shirk any task or chore that may serve the greater glory of God and the salvation of souls. Let us foster a productive diversity of work that is also coordinated, ordered,

and unified, governed by higher motives: the glory of God, the good of the Church, and the welfare of our own Community. Diversity of talent, education, tasks, and duties notwithstanding, we must all be united by the firm discipline without which community life is impossible. We must be bound together in one spirit: love of God and neighbor, devotion to our Congregation, a zealous spirit of sacrifice, a desire to serve the glory of God in self-renunciation and self-forgetfulness. Let us be united by an obedience that does not spring from coercion but from a humble heart, full of love for God and the Congregation. As we cultivate and develop our various God-given talents and gifts, let us learn to use them with love wherever needed for God, for souls, and for our Congregation.

How weak a person is when he stands alone by himself, but how strong he becomes when his individuality is merged with and blended into the whole Community. How miserable a person often is with no one to rely on but himself and how rich he becomes when he deposits his talents in the common treasury. The more a person is able to renounce himself and merge with the other members of the community, with its common life and work, the stronger the community becomes and in it the person himself.

May our Congregation be a miniature society in which each member can be employed purposefully and productively, where each can use his gifts in the service of God and man. There is no physical or mental ability which, if properly developed, cannot be useful in the Congregation. But then again, each member should be careful not to allow himself to be deluded by unrealistic aspirations. Often a person does not really know himself: he imagines that he has the ability for this or that work, that he has the skill to perform one task or another, when, in reality, the opposite is true. He has the gift for something entirely different. Then too there are people who doubt their own ability and lack self-confidence. They think that they will not be able to perform the task assigned to them. Each one, therefore, should be submissive to the judgment of his superior, whose duty it is to understand us and our talents and to place us accordingly. Superiors can often be more objective and know us better. From their own observation and the reports of others they can put together a pretty accurate profile. That is why we should trust our superiors. Inspired by the Spirit of God, they are not seeking any other end but our own good,

the greater glory of God, and the salvation of souls, and so, we can be confident that they will make the best use of us for the greater glory of God.

We are more easily misled and deluded in trying to pursue our own course of action and trying to achieve our own goals than in submitting to the authority of our superiors and humbly accepting their direction “because God refuses the proud and will always favor the humble” (1 Peter 5:5). Let us pray that God would teach us how to unite prudent initiative with perfect obedience, personal resourcefulness, energy, and diligence with perfect dedication to our Congregation, to its tasks, needs, and goals and through the Congregation—to God and to the Church.

Lord, give us the courage and strength to forget and deny ourselves; to die to ourselves so that we may not be afraid to lose ourselves in the Community for the greater glory of God and the good of the Church; to shine forth like a candle on the altar; to be consumed for the glory of God like grains of incense which give off a sweet fragrance; let us not be afraid to be worn out, used up, diminished for the greater glory of God.

“With God on our side, who can be against us?” (Rm 8:31). “Nothing therefore can come between us and the love of Christ, even if we are troubled and worried, or being persecuted, or lacking food or clothes, or being threatened or even attacked.” As Scripture promised: “For your sake we are being massacred daily, and reckoned as sheep for the slaughter. These are the trials through which we triumph, by the power of him who loved us. For I am certain of this: neither death nor life, no angel, no prince, nothing that exists, nothing still to come, not any power, or height or depth, nor any created thing can ever come between us and the love of God made visible in Jesus Our Lord ” (Rm 8:35-39).

May these words encourage us to persevere and may they comfort and support us in time of persecution. Let us grasp from these words where our strength lies: in complete surrender to Christ we unite and blend with Him. Let us take hold of and embrace the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, and no power will harm us, no power will hinder us or block our path. “With God on our side, who can be against us?” (Rm 8:31) “There is nothing I cannot master with the help of the One who gives me strength” (Phil 4:13).

## ***March 8***

“Do not model yourselves on the behavior of the world around you, but let your behavior change, modeled by your new mind. This is the only way to discover the will of God and to know what is good, what it is that God wants, what is the perfect thing to do” (Rm 12:2).

It is not by giving in to the vices, the concupiscence, and the false opinions and views of the world that we will renew all things in Christ, but by first renewing ourselves, by becoming filled with the Spirit of Christ, by assimilating His teaching and His laws, preaching Christ to the world, and drawing everyone to Him.

Wherever we are stationed, we must not only conduct ourselves properly and perform the duties entrusted to us as faithfully as possible, but we must also try to do our share for the common good of the Congregation.



*There are no entries in the Journal for over five months. During this period several significant events have taken place. Father Vincent Sękowski,<sup>1</sup> the last white Marian and Superior General of the Congregation, died April 10, 1911. During summer vacation the three professed Marians of the renewed Congregation—Matulaitis, Bučys, and Totoraitis—held a general Chapter in the sacristy of the parish church in the town of Gelgaudiškis, Lithuania. On July 14, Matulaitis was elected Superior General. Because the situation in St. Petersburg had become too dangerous, it was decided to move the Marian novitiate to Fribourg, Switzerland,<sup>2</sup> where all three Marians had studied. Matulaitis resigned from all his duties at the Theological Academy, and the little band of Marians moved to Fribourg in August. They lived at the Canisianum, a house of studies connected with the University. Here Matulaitis continues to write his Journal.*

### **August 17**

I have not written anything down for some time, although many experiences came my way—I had to suffer a great deal and to think about many things.

A new storm of persecution arose against the Church; I had to remove and conceal everything because it was dangerous to have any scrap of paper lying about. I was afraid not only of involving other people needlessly, but also of betraying myself. May God be praised for everything!

Lord, You alone know how many and how difficult were the temptations I had to overcome during that time. If it were not for the example of Your Son Jesus Christ, firmly repelling and overcoming the evil spirit in the desert when he tried to hinder Jesus and distract Him from His mission; if it were not for the example of the Lord Jesus enduring His agony in the Garden of Olives—fainting and sweating blood; if it were not for His words on the cross: “My God, my God, why have you deserted me” (Mt 27:46) and at the same time commending His soul completely to God—“Father, into your hands I commit my spirit” (Lk 23:46); and especially, if it had not been for Your grace, O heavenly Father,

---

1 Vincent Sękowski (Senkus) (1840-1911) the last Superior General of the Marian Order before its renovation in 1909. He died in Marijampole, Lithuania, where he had been pastor of the parish church since 1904, when the Russian government closed the Marian monastery. He still wore the traditional white habit, not used after Matulaitis reformed the Order.

2 The June 1911 issue of the Jesuit magazine *Civiltà Cattolica* reported a series of raids by the Russian secret police on the prowl for underground Catholic religious communities. These raids took place in Russia itself and also in various countries under Russian rule. This is probably what prompted Matulaitis to remove the Marian novitiate to Fribourg.

I would not have had the strength to overcome those temptations. All glory and thanks to You, O God! And may the Lord Jesus be thanked and praised, for it is He who shows us how to carry every cross. I also thank the most Blessed Virgin, who defends and intercedes for all who are in distress.

When so many difficulties beset me, how often did my arms fall down helplessly by my side and my feet become so numb that I could not take another step. But You gave me strength, Lord. When I was beset by darkness, You lighted my way by the example of Your Son Jesus Christ, the most brilliant of all brightly shining stars. You comforted and refreshed me with your greatest graces. What can I, wretched creature that I am, give You in return, O God, for all that you have done for me? I shall take up Your Son's cross, which You have graciously placed upon my shoulders, and I shall carry it. O Jesus, I dedicate myself to Your Church and to the salvation of souls redeemed with Your blood. "If we have died with him, then we shall live with him. If we hold firm, then we shall reign with him" (2 Tm 2:12).

What an amazing thing! While I had not yet decided to give up everything to follow Jesus who led a life of poverty, humiliation, obedience, hard work and who endured hardship, persecution, and suffering, people hardly took any notice of me. They even kept me away from all kinds of positions and honors. I had been called an enemy of the Church, a liberal, a socialist,<sup>1</sup> a Chekist,<sup>2</sup> and so on. But as soon as I had taken the first step really to walk in the footsteps of Christ, people began to offer me important and influential positions: they wanted to make me rector of a seminary or a canon. After I had been appointed Vice Rector of the Academy (of St. Petersburg) without my consent, rumors spread that I would soon be made auxiliary bishop or rector.

Before we started to get organized<sup>3</sup> in earnest, even the civil authorities kept quiet about Catholic religious activities and associations. But as soon as we began to put our plans into action, the government began a new wave of religious persecution: homes were

---

1 These epithets probably refer to Matulaitis's work in Warsaw in 1905-1906, when he helped organize a Christian workers' association according to the social principles set down by Pope Leo XIII. Certain members of the clergy and nobility disapproved.

2 The Cheka was actually founded in 1917 by the Communists. It was a special commission for the repression of counter revolutionaries and the predecessor of the NKVD and KGB. However, the term was also used before 1917 to refer to the Czar's secret police.

3 Referring to his project of restoring the Marian Congregation and conducting a secret novitiate at the Theological Academy.

ransacked and a search for secret religious societies was launched to flush out Jesuits<sup>1</sup> and others.

People to whom we had to report about what we were doing, even priests, made fun of us and of our plans, predicting that nothing would come of them. There were, however, some priests and bishops—good, God fearing men—who gave us their approval. But our greatest confidence is in you, O Lord! “In You, Lord, I have placed my trust and will never be put to shame.”<sup>2</sup>

Lord, you see that we desire nothing other than Your greater glory, the perfection and salvation of our own souls and those of others, the welfare and exaltation of Your Church. Accept our good will, Lord, and also all our abilities and talents, our lives—everything that we have and are. Use us according to Your will.

During this retreat<sup>3</sup>, I felt tired and drained. Besides, I had to conduct it and needed to be more concerned about others than about myself. All I can see is that I am still full of imperfections, truly a great and abject sinner. In everything that I have undertaken in my life, whatever I have attempted to do, no matter which of my duties I reflect upon, everywhere I see so many mistakes, faults, and sins. That is why during this retreat I made an effort to renew my spirit in general, to revive the ideals of my spiritual life and vocation, and to lift my soul higher to God.

I made only these three resolutions: 1. to try to live in the closest union with the Lord God in my inner spiritual life and to seek God in all things so that I may become more pleasing to Him; 2. to use my time to the best advantage and not waste a moment of it—especially to avoid distracting thoughts about peripheral matters and concerns that interfere with the work I am doing at the moment; 3. to make an effort to write down the Instructions and, in general, to do my best to serve my friends and brothers. I shall make my particular examination of conscience on how I spend my time.

## *September 7*

Today I made my monthly retreat. Thank You, Lord, for all Your graces. Most Blessed Virgin Mary, I ask you to obtain from your Son the

---

<sup>1</sup> The Jesuits had been banned from Russia since 1820 by decree of Czar Nicholas I. Alexander II, in 1864, decreed that religious orders were forbidden to receive candidates. Nicholas II (1854-1917), who was ruling at this time, continued the anti-Catholic policies of his predecessors.

<sup>2</sup> A line from the hymn, *Te Deum*: “In te, Domine, speravi, non confundar in eternum.”

<sup>3</sup> This was the long annual retreat.

grace to love you more, to have ever more confidence in you, and to cherish your glorious protection more and more. Take our Congregation under your powerful protection, O Mother. Accept us, unworthy though we are—so destitute, such spiritual beggars—if for no other reason, than, at least, because of the name we bear. Grant that our lives be pure and untainted.

I resolve: 1. to cultivate a spirit of prayer; to walk in the presence of God and to try to please Him; 2. to treasure every moment of my time; 3. to continue working on the Instructions and to serve my brothers.



RECORD  
OF  
A TRIP TO ROME  
1911



*In November of 1911, Father George Matulaitis went to Rome to obtain official permission for the transfer of the Marian novitiate from St. Petersburg to Fribourg, Switzerland, and also to deliver a report on the Theological Academy prepared by its Rector, Alexander Kakowski, which could not be sent by mail because of the political situation in Russia. On this second visit, Matulaitis spent two weeks in Rome. He wrote a day-by-day account<sup>1</sup> of his activities, which helps fill in the gaps in the Journal.*

### **November 14**

Very early in the morning I set out for Rome from Fribourg, Switzerland. I had two matters to take care of concerning the Theological Academy of St. Petersburg and the Marian Congregation. Along the way, I passed through Lausanne, Montreux, St. Moritz, Domodossola, Milan, Genoa, and Pisa. I was in Rome on the morning of the 15th of November at about 9 o'clock.

The journey went well: the weather was fine and warm; passing through the mountains, the view was magnificent. During the trip I fell into conversation with two Jews about matters of faith. I have noticed that Jews especially like to touch upon religious questions if they suspect that the person with whom they are traveling is a priest.

### **November 15**

After washing up, I set out for the Resurrectionist Fathers<sup>2</sup> to celebrate Mass. They promised to take care of all the formalities at the Vicariate, and so I left my "celebret"<sup>3</sup> with them. After Mass, the Fathers offered me coffee. Then I returned to my lodgings: Albergo Bavaria, Mullers, vicolo Alibert. Soon afterwards I hurried over to

---

<sup>1</sup> The full title of this document is *Relatio ex itinere Romam negotiorum causa*. The original has a cautionary phrase under the title: "Not everything has been included; certain secret matters have been passed over." Otherwise, it is an interesting personal chronicle similar in style to the Journal.

<sup>2</sup> Religious Community of Polish origin for men founded in Paris in 1836. Its full Latin title was *Congregatio a Resurrectione DN Jesu Christi*. Its generalate was in Rome, but it was especially successful among Polish immigrants in the USA and Canada.

<sup>3</sup> A document signed and sealed by a priest's bishop or religious superior stating that the owner is an ordained priest and can celebrate Mass.



the Sacred Congregation of Studies to see Monsignor Antonucci<sup>1</sup> about some matters of the Academy. I gave him the letter from Alexander Kakowski<sup>2</sup> and also the *Report on the State of the Theological Academy of St. Petersburg*.<sup>3</sup> I asked him to look it over and to check whether anything had been omitted. He promised to do so, and I would then visit him at home around 4:30 p.m., Via dell'Anima 45, to inquire about the report and at the same time to give him some books from the rector. He had collected more or less all that had been published by the professors of the Academy in recent years and had given these publications to me to hand over to the Sacred Congregation as evidence of the fruits of the professors' labors.

Immediately after the noonday meal, at about 2 o'clock, Father Mosser<sup>4</sup> (a Resurrectionist) came to see me and took me to the Polish College<sup>5</sup> (via Marioniti 22) to visit Archbishop Teodorowicz.<sup>6</sup> I also wanted to see two seminarians who lived at the College—Łysik<sup>7</sup> and Kalinowski<sup>8</sup>—both from the seminary of Warsaw. I gave them some letters from Father Bronikowski<sup>9</sup> and spoke with each of them separately about our plans for the Marian Congregation, but only very briefly. I said that if they were interested and wanted more information they could continue to correspond with Father Bronikowski. Łysik had already been in touch with Father Bronikowski and said that he intended to join us in Fribourg this year, but the rector of the seminary had detained him because he had a scholarship to study in Rome. Kalinowski was also not opposed to

---

1 Giuseppe Antonucci: in 1911, undersecretary of the Congregation of Sacred Studies.

2 Kakowski (1862-1938) was Rector of the Theological Academy of St. Petersburg (1910-1913).

3 The Latin title was *Relatio de Statu Accademiae Petropolitanae Ecclesiasticae*.

4 August Mosser (1857-1930) was general procurator of the Resurrectionist Congregation at this time.

5 The Polish Papal College founded by the Resurrectionist Fathers in 1866 and directed by them until 1928.

6 Jozef Teofil Teodorowicz (1864-1938): Armenian-rite Archbishop of Lvov (Ukraine) from 1901. In 1911, he was living in Rome at the Polish Papal College.

7 Władysław Łysik (1890-1964): seminarian studying at the Gregorianum, where he got his doctorate in philosophy. Ordained in 1914; entered the Marian novitiate in Bielany, Poland, and became one of the more prominent members of the Polish province.

8 Leon Kalinowski (1885-1934): ordained in 1913; professor at the Warsaw Seminary (1914-1929).

9 Kazimierz Bronikowski (1877-1950) had been spiritual director at the Warsaw Seminary (1907-1911). Joined the Marians in 1911, completed his novitiate in Fribourg, and became one of the founders of the Polish province.

the idea of joining us. However, both of them still have plenty of time, since they have not yet completed their studies, and so there seemed to be no point in discussing our work and our plans in detail. But it would be a good thing to keep in touch with them by letter.

While I was visiting with His Excellency Archbishop Teodorowicz, Father Gralewski<sup>1</sup> came in almost at once. He immediately asked me whether we had not founded some sort of monastery in Fribourg. He had met Lutosławski<sup>2</sup> and had learned of it from him. I changed the subject. After a short visit with His Excellency, I went with Father Mosser to see Archbishop Symon,<sup>3</sup> who had been rector in my time and also professor at the Academy. Among other things, Archbishop Symon spoke out very strongly against professor Trzeciak<sup>4</sup> and his latest work which contains many opinions and statements that are not genuinely Catholic. Since I had not yet read the book, I could not say much about it.

From Archbishop Symon's I hurried over to Monsignor Antonucci with the books. He had already read the report on the Academy and was pleased with everything. He pointed out that the report had not been signed and witnessed by the Archbishop of Mogilev. I explained that the report had been written in secret outside Russian territory and that is why it was impossible to get in touch with the Archbishop. He promised to submit the report and the books to the Secretary of the Congregation of Studies, Monsignor Dandini,<sup>5</sup> and to notify me if it is necessary for me to see the Secretary personally.

## **November 16**

With Father Mosser I went to the Sacred Congregation for Religious. On the way over he took me to a religious articles shop, where I spent thirty francs on some things that we needed. I could not take care of my business at the Congregation for Religious because its weekly meeting was in session.

---

1 Jan Gralewski (1868-1924): pastor of Mother of Mercy Church in Warsaw; elected Polish delegate to the Duma; well-known in Poland as an educator.

2 Kazimierz Lutosławski (1880-1924): ordained in 1912; studied at the University of Fribourg and received a doctorate in theology in 1914. Known in Poland as an editor and journalist, as an economist and also for his work with youth; in 1919 elected member of the Polish Parliament.

3 Franciszek Albin Symon (1842-1918): professor of Sacred Scripture and rector of the Theological Academy (1884-1897); assistant to the Archbishop of Mogilev from 1891. Consecrated Bishop of Płock (Poland) in 1897, then exiled to Siberia. Pope Leo XIII made him titular archbishop.

4 Stanisław Trzeciak (1873-1944): New Testament professor at the Academy from 1907. His book, published in Warsaw in 1911 *Jewish Religion and Literature at the Time of Christ*, vols I & II, was criticized for its anti-Semitism.

5 Ascenso Dandini: in 1911, he was Secretary of the Congregation for Sacred Studies.

After lunch I went to see Monsignor Sapieha,<sup>1</sup> but did not find him at home and left my calling card. Then I went to the Via dell' Olmata 16 to pay a visit to the Countess Ledóchowska,<sup>2</sup> hoping to find her sister Urszula<sup>3</sup> there, a religious who worked in St. Petersburg. I rang, but nobody answered the door. Later I learned that Sister Urszula had already left, and so I did not stop to visit the Countess again.

In my free time, I visited the churches and prayed. I had prepared a report for the Sacred Congregation for Religious and some other documents and now I reconsidered my ideas and rephrased them better.

### *November 17*

Again I went to the Sacred Congregation for Religious and was admitted to the assistant who dealt with cases pertaining to religious men, Monsignor Caroli.<sup>4</sup> I explained the situation of our Congregation.

1) I had resigned my position as professor and inspector at the Academy of St. Petersburg and had gone to live in Fribourg, Switzerland. The reason: it had become clear that it was impossible to conduct a larger novitiate in St. Petersburg or in Russia generally, for this immediately attracted the attention of the civil authorities, especially if some of the candidates were priests. At Fribourg there were many priests and seminarians who had come to study at the University—even from Russia. Thus we could conceal ourselves more easily there, using the university as cover. So far the Russian government does not look askance at the University of Fribourg, although it hates Innsbruck<sup>5</sup> and is afraid of Rome. That is why I think we will be able to educate ourselves spiritually and intellectually in Fribourg much more easily and freely and then go back to Russia to take up our work there without any difficulty, as I already discussed this matter with some of the bishops.

---

1 Prince Adam Sapieha (1867-1952): worked in the Vatican Secretariat of State (1905-1911). Appointed Bishop of Kraków in 1911, and Cardinal in 1946.

2 Maria Teresa Ledochowska (1863-1922); foundress of the St. Peter Claver Society. Beatified in 1975.

3 Urszula Ledochowska (1865-1939): foundress of the Polish Community of the Sisters of the Sacred Heart of Jesus in Agony; directed a boarding school for girls (1907-1911). Beatified in 1985.

4 Rodolfo Caroli (1869-1921): Undersecretary of the Sacred Congregation for Religious. Elevated to titular Archbishop in 1917 and appointed Nuncio to Bolivia.

5 The University of Innsbruck in Austria was known for its connection with the Jesuits: they directed and staffed the Department of Theology, and Jesuit scholastics studied there. The Czarist government of Russia was determined to keep the Jesuits out of its territories.

2) I also explained that for the time being I had to act as novice master, although this is not strictly according to our Constitutions,<sup>1</sup> but our number is so small—only three professed—with ten in the novitiate and many more wanting to enter.

3) I inquired what was to be done in the following case: the bishops of Russia gladly give verbal assent to those candidates who wish to join us, but they are afraid to give it in writing, lest the government should find out and punish them.<sup>2</sup> Is verbal assent sufficient in such cases?

4) What must be done about bishops who impede and detain candidates wanting to enter our Congregation? He answered that we must be patient and try to persuade them courteously and quietly. We should not appeal to the Sacred Congregations. Then I added that I hope the bishops, when they see our work, will be more flexible and conform to Canon Law more readily.

5) I asked whether the Congregation for Religious readily granted dispensations for those who wished to enter our Community but were thirty-six years of age or older. He replied that in some cases such dispensations were granted, but each case was considered individually.

6) I inquired where I must go to obtain certain faculties and spiritual privileges for our Congregation. He replied: to the Congregation of the Holy Office.

7) I brought up the cases of Bizauskas<sup>3</sup> and Indrulis.<sup>4</sup> He answered that if the bishop has appealed to the Sacred Congregation, he must wait for its reply. If the reply is negative, then they may enter our Community.

I then presented the following petitions:

1) that I be confirmed as Superior General; 2) that the transfer of the novitiate to Fribourg be confirmed; 3) that Father Vincent Dvaranauskas,<sup>5</sup> who is over thirty-six years old, be granted a

1 Canon Law also did not allow the superior general of a religious community to be novice master as well.

2 It was illegal for religious communities to accept candidates in lands ruled by the Russian Czar; a bishop could be punished for allowing a person to enter a religious community. The Church required ordained priests to get written permission from their bishop to join a religious community.

3 Pranciskus Bizauskas (1861-1937): a Lithuanian priest; he joined the Franciscans in 1911 and worked in Lithuania.

4 Jonas Indrulis (b. 1861): also a Lithuanian priest; he did not join the Marians.

5 Vincentas Dvaranauskas (1871-1966): had studied with Matulaitis at the Theological Academy of St. Petersburg; ordained in 1899. Joined the Marians in 1911, made his novitiate in Fribourg. Returned to Lithuania and worked in Marijampole; in 1918 Matulaitis appointed him superior of the Marian monastery and pastor of the church.

dispensation; 4) that a dispensation also be given to Płókarz,<sup>1</sup> who had been dismissed from the Seminary of Warsaw because he was suspected of secretly belonging to the Mariavite sect.<sup>2</sup>

Monsignor Caroli further advised me to present the following additional petitions the next day:

1) that I be permitted to continue as novice master while Superior; 2) that the Sacred Congregation declare verbal assent sufficient when bishops are unwilling to give it in writing; 3) that in certain cases I be allowed to receive into the Congregation those candidates who have passed their thirty-sixth year. 4) I had previously asked whether we could have low Mass said in our Chapel instead of high Mass. He answered that I could add this request as well.

At 12:30 I was invited to lunch with His Excellency Archbishop Teodorowicz at the Polish College. Monsignor Sapieha, the future Archbishop of Kraków, also came. Two Resurrectionist Fathers—Czarba<sup>3</sup> and later Smolikowski<sup>4</sup>—arrived as well. Sapieha and Teodorowicz questioned me about various matters in Russia. I was very reluctant to give my opinion about certain people. I did so, turning my attention to God and saying only as much as was strictly necessary to reply to their questions.

The conversation turned to Mother Darowska<sup>5</sup> and her retreat manual which I had criticized. I explained why I had done so. Having written an evaluation of it, I had sent a message to Archbishop Bilczewski<sup>6</sup> through Ratuszny<sup>7</sup> that the booklet should not be published since it was not good. I waited for a year. When the second edition came out, I published my own review and now I regret having done so because I may have been too harsh and caused damage. Such a course of action is negative, at any rate.

1 Jozafat Płókarz (b. 1888): studied at the Seminary of Warsaw (1906-1907), but was dismissed. He did get a dispensation and joined the Marians in Fribourg in 1911.

2 The Mariavites, a religious society of priests and lay people, founded in Poland in 1893; condemned by Rome in 1906, it continued as a heretical sect with a considerable number of followers in Poland and also in Lithuania.

3 Konstancy Czarba (1848-1927): Vice General of the Resurrectionists from 1911.

4 Pawel Smolikowski (1849-1926): former Superior General of the Resurrectionists; Rector of the Polish Papal College in 1911.

5 Marcelina Darowska (1827-1911): co-foundress of the Polish religious community for women, the Sisters of the Immaculate Conception. Her booklet was reprinted in Lvov in 1907, titled *Four Spiritual Conferences by M.M. with her Students*.

6 Józef Bilczewski (1860-1923): Archbishop of Lvov from 1910.

7 Antoni Ratuszny (b. 1877): censor of religious publications for the Archdiocese of Lvov.

From Father Smolikowski I learned that Józefa Karska<sup>1</sup> was the foundress of the Sisters of the Immaculate Conception. Father Kajsiewicz<sup>2</sup> had written her biography but at the request of Darowska had given it to her. Darowska did not want the biography to be published. I also found out that some of the Resurrectionist Fathers<sup>3</sup> were greatly influenced by Darowska and that this influence was detrimental to the Resurrectionists in no small way. Father Smolikowski now has the biography of Karska written by Kaisevicius and also many of Marcelina Darowska's letters and other documents, some of which are rather peculiar.

Bidding me farewell, Monsignor Sapięha said that I would be welcome to visit him on Saturday at about seven.

At five I was with Antonucci. Briefly, I related various present concerns of our Congregation, particularly that I am remaining in Fribourg. I asked him to obtain for our Congregation various faculties and privileges. He consented to do so. We drew up a whole list of them, and he promised to take care of the matter and to give me an answer Tuesday afternoon. He said that the Sacred Congregation of Studies would receive me on the following Monday at about eleven to give me some instructions.

## *November 18*

I brought Monsignor Caroli at the Sacred Congregation for Religious the list of prepared petitions which he had suggested that I present. First of all, Monsignor Caroli received me very graciously and encouraged me to continue along the way I had chosen and expressed his best wishes for the growth of our community.

In the afternoon I went with Father Mosser to the magnificently beautiful Basilica of St. Paul Outside the Walls to pray and to look about. At seven o'clock in the evening I visited Monsignor Sapięha for about an hour. We talked about the life of the Church in Russia.

---

1 Józefa Maria Karska (1824-1860): foundress of the Congregation of the Immaculate Conception, with M. Darowska.

2 Hieronim Kajsiewicz (1812-1873) He was one of the three founders of the Resurrectionists.

3 Piotr Semenenko: a Polish priest, also one of the founders of the Resurrectionists. The third founder was Bogdan Jański. The Congregation took its name from the feast of the Resurrection, when the founding members pronounced their vows.

He invited me to dinner on the following Tuesday (November 21st).

### ***November 19***

I went to the Basilica of St. John Lateran where I made my confession and heard two Masses. Then I returned to my lodgings where I read and prayed for the rest of the day.

### ***November 20***

I went to the Sacred Congregation of Studies. About eleven o'clock, the secretary, Monsignor Dandini, received me.

1) He told me that he was very pleased that the rector had submitted his report. The Congregation had been expecting it and waiting for it.

2) He requested that the Academy make every effort to introduce philosophy in accordance with the Decree and other regulations issued by the Congregation. In connection with this I explained how difficult and actually impossible it would be to add physics, astronomy, and secular subjects in general to the curriculum. First of all, the government would not consent to the introduction of such subjects in the Department of Theology, and if it did consent, then it would try to impose a Russian Orthodox professor. That is both undesirable and dangerous. He replied: is it necessary to consult the civil authorities in every instance? Could we not, for example, introduce those subjects under the guise of cosmology or natural philosophy?

3) At least two years should be dedicated to the study of philosophy and two to the study of theology. This is a general rule, applicable not only to Russia, but everywhere else as well.

4) Only those who have completed their seminary studies and have been ordained should be admitted to the Academy. I was surprised at this, because at the Academy of St. Petersburg I had always been under the impression that the students there ought not to be ordained to the priesthood until they had completed their studies and that there was a Decree of the Congregation of Studies to this effect. Then I learned from Monsignor Sapieha that there had been a plan to include a regulation in the Decree requiring that only ordained priests would be admitted to the Academy.

5) He asked whether the Rector of the Academy had any other duties. I said that he did not. He was pleased with this because the Congregation

wants the rector to devote all his time to the Academy.

6) He noted that many graduates of the Academy had joined the Mariavite sect and that this should be corrected. I had seen the report prepared by the former Rector—Żarnowiecki<sup>1</sup>—with instructions that it be passed on to Trzeciak. Unfortunately, I did not know what was in it, nor, in all probability, did Kakowski. I was not quite sure what to say and wanted to avoid any contradictions. The Secretary said that Żarnowiecki had been strongly in favor of the Mariavites.

7) Later, Antonucci himself advised me that His Excellency the Archbishop<sup>2</sup> should turn his attention to the seminaries and instruct them to strengthen their philosophy courses. Then the Congregation would be satisfied, and the Academy could then concentrate on theology.

8) Finally, Antonucci said that he himself would write to the rector if the Congregation made any decisions. He said that perhaps the Congregation will give a reply.

### *November 21*

I was invited to lunch with Monsignor Sapieha. When I arrived at one o'clock, Archbishop Teodorowicz was there as well. We talked about various matters concerning the Church in Russia and especially about the Academy. He urged me to call on Ledóchowski<sup>3</sup> and De Lai.<sup>4</sup> I replied that if they wished it and there was sufficient reason, I would do so. Otherwise, I am reluctant to take up other people's time needlessly. Sapieha suggested that he would get in touch with these people and that I should think it over.

I did not like their questioning me so much. When speaking of other people or about the state of the Church, one must assume responsibility for one's words. It seemed to me that they were too concerned with politics and diplomacy. I had come here for a different reason. I am determined to do everything I can to serve the Church. But my ideal is to work for the Church. I have much more confidence in work guided by the Holy Spirit than in the cleverest diplomacies and manipulations. My desire is to be a laborer in the Lord's vineyard, not a politician or a diplomat.

We discussed how the transmission of information to Rome ought to

---

1 Longin Żarnowiecki (1842-1915) had been Rector of the Academy from 1901 to 1907.

2 The Archbishop of Mogilev was directly responsible for the Theological Academy of St. Petersburg and also for the seminaries in the archdiocese.

3 Włodzimierz Ledóchowski (1866-1942): Polish Jesuit, assistant to the General Francis Xavier Wernz (1906-1915). Himself elected General in 1915, he was one of the most active and prominent Generals of the Society. Brother of Countess Maria Ledochowska and Sister Urszula, mentioned above.

4 Gaetano De Lai (1853-1928): Secretary of the Consistorial Congregation from 1908.



be arranged so that facts be reported quickly and accurately, especially about action taken by the civil authorities and about what is printed in the newspapers and so on.

At about five in the afternoon I called on Antonucci once more. Again, we discussed the Academy, but this time I heard nothing new. Antonucci admitted that he was not in favor of the Decree which Archbishop Kluczyński<sup>1</sup> had already received in its final draft, since he was aware that the program of studies that it required could not be put into practice. Then we spoke about the indulgences I wanted to obtain for our Congregation. I asked Antonucci to send us the faculties and privileges by mail when they are granted. After that we said our final goodbyes.

### ***November 22***

I had a free day. After all my labors I felt very tired and drained. I visited the Church of St. Cecilia<sup>2</sup> with Father Mosser and prayed. In the evening Sergei Grum-Grzymajlo<sup>3</sup> came to see me. We arranged to meet again the next morning to discuss those things for which he had come to Rome.

### ***November 23***

Today I offered up my Mass for our Congregation. I saw Father Grum this morning. He has come at the request of certain priests to report on the situation of the Church in Russia and especially about the bishops.<sup>4</sup> He will be calling on the Jesuit Father Ledóchowski and, in the evening, on Monsignor Sapieha. I requested that he ask Father Ledóchowski if he would consent to see me sometime.

In my free time I visited churches and prayed. I drew up a list of things that I wanted to discuss with Father Ledóchowski about our Congregation and the Academy. Also, I had another talk with Grum who has moved into the same hotel.

### ***November 24***

At about ten in the morning I went to see Father Ledóchowski. He

1 Wincenty Kluczyński (1847-1917): Archbishop of Mogilev (1910-1914). The jurisdiction of the Archdiocese of Mogilev extended to all Roman Catholics within the territories ruled by the Russian czars, including the diocese of Vilnius, Warsaw, Mińsk, etc. Since 1798, St. Petersburg was the official residence of the Archbishop of Mogilev.

2 It was the feast of St. Cecilia.

3 Sergei Grum-Grzymajlo (1866-1925): son of a Russian count, one of the czar's ministers. He had studied abroad and converted to Catholicism. In 1904-1908, he studied theology with the Jesuits at Innsbruck and was ordained in 1908. Grum and Matulaitis met in Rome in 1909, where Grum was very helpful in arranging introductions and audiences, since he had friends at the Vatican.

4 The problem was Archbishop Kluczyński's policy of submission and conciliation towards the Russian government which many priests considered not in the best interest of the Church. Kluczyński came to Rome in 1913 to confer with Pope Pius X and resigned toward the end of that year.

received me very amicably and graciously.

1. I told him about how we had revived the Marian Congregation and how we intend to carry on our work. He approved and showed great sympathy. Then I asked him whether he thought that it would be detrimental to our Congregation if many of our men, at least in the beginning, went to work individually, since some are being asked to be spiritual directors in various seminaries. I added that, in my opinion, we have to help the bishops and the seminaries. We can come together from time to time and in this way renew our community spirit. Father Ledóchowski agreed that this was permissible.

I also went on to explain the difficulties we sometimes have with their excellencies, the bishops. In general, they approve of and are sympathetic toward our plans, but as soon as some priest expresses a desire to join us, they immediately raise objections and try to detain him for some time, justifying their action by saying that they are short of priests and people are dying without the sacraments. Father Ledóchowski said that, at first, the Jesuits would not accept priests whose bishops were unwilling to allow them to leave. In such cases they used to take the part of the bishops, but now they are convinced that such a policy is wrong. He said that we should do our best to convince the bishops to give their permission to those desiring to enter religious life, but the bishops should also be aware of the Decree of Benedict XIV<sup>1</sup> in this matter. Rome still honors this Decree and will always do so. Therefore, we must do everything we can to help a priest enter religious life if he wishes to do so, but we must not oppose the bishops nor go against their authority. Rather, with courtesy and tact, we should keep trying to get their permission. He advised me to consult Cardinal Vives y Tuto<sup>2</sup> about this difficulty.

Father Ledóchowski further encouraged us to make every effort to develop the interior spiritual life of our candidates. Experience has shown him that those priests in religious life, including the Society of Jesus, who are men of prayer are also most capable of influencing other people. We represent the supernatural life and must first of all take

---

1 Apostolic letter "Ex quo," published Jan. 14, 1747.

2 Giuseppe Vives y Tuto (1854-1913): Capuchin, head of the Sacred Congregation for Religious (1908-1913).

care to foster it within ourselves. We must be careful to remain the representatives of the spiritual life, of the Church, and of the Gospel, and not of some peripheral concerns or aims. As far as studies are concerned, he advised us to make sure that our students are well grounded in philosophy. Without this foundation, theology and the other sciences, especially the positive sciences, will be suspended in the air, as it were. In theology, it is best to follow St. Thomas Aquinas.

Father Ledóchowski also spoke about the asceticism practiced in our country. He said that it is not very healthy and is distorted by sentimentality. He explained this as being partly due to the political situation in Poland—its oppression by Russia. I replied that we shall make every effort to ground our asceticism on the solid foundation of philosophy and theology. I also added that we intend to take good care to avoid any nationalistic, political, or social overtones in our Congregation, and to make it a truly catholic, religious institution, dedicated to the service of God and of His Church.

I had many other questions to ask him, but did not want to take up any more of his time. When we have more experience and new questions crop up, it is a good idea to consult with the Jesuits once again—and also with other exemplary religious communities.

2. I also brought up some matters pertaining to the Academy, for which I also came here, about the report prepared by Father Kakowski. I tried to point out that the Decree put out by the Congregation of Studies is, in many instances, impossible to implement because of present conditions: it is impossible to introduce physics and astronomy. In our conversation with Father Ledóchowski it became clear an entirely different project had been proposed for the reform of the Academy. It had taken into account the guidelines set up for the Academy by Czar Nicholas I.<sup>1</sup> But somehow things got confused, and the outcome was quite different. We talked for some time about the Academy. I stayed with Father Ledóchowski for over an hour. He advised me to be sure to see His Eminence, Cardinal Vives y Tuto, about our Congregation and, in general, to make an appearance before the prefect of the Congregation for Religious. He gave me a

---

<sup>1</sup> In 1847, the Czar had signed a concordat with Pope Gregory XVI according to which the Theological Academy of St. Petersburg was founded and guidelines provided for its operation.

letter of recommendation to present to the Cardinal.

From Father Ledóchowski's I went to the Congregation for Religious. Monsignor Caroli said that all our petitions had been granted, except for one—the request that low Mass be said in our Chapel instead of high Mass. He asked me for other explanations as well.

I understood that I had made a mistake in not coming to see Cardinal Vives y Tuto in the first place and explaining everything to him personally. It seems that the officials of the Church in Rome want to know whom they are dealing with and that personal acquaintance has great value here. When they know the person with whom they are dealing, they can judge whether he is trustworthy or not and to what extent he may be trusted. I have noticed that in transacting certain business myself or sending others to do so, it is useful not only to give careful consideration to the whole matter, but also to decide on the approach—which people one needs to know and to visit.

In the afternoon I went to St. Peter's Basilica. There, at the tomb of the Holy Apostle, I made a vow to do everything in my power that neither I myself, nor any of our members, nor the Congregation itself would ever pursue any other aims, whether national, political, or the like, but seek only to serve God, the Church, and to work for the salvation of souls, making use of all natural and supernatural means as instruments in the pursuit of this highest goal, namely, the greater glory of God. I prayed for some time.

In my spare time I spoke with Father Grum about various matters. Later, I will make a summary of the main points of our conversation.

Grum was accompanied by two young priests—Araszkievicz<sup>1</sup> from the diocese of Vilnius and Kępiński<sup>2</sup> from the diocese of Warsaw. Later, when we were left alone, Kępiński started to talk about our Congregation. He told me that he and four others had decided to enter the monastery of Częstochowa as soon as they had received their doctorates, but none of them had done so yet. Kępiński seemed interested in joining us. I spoke briefly about religious life in

---

1. Władysław Araszkievicz (1885-1968): received a doctorate in philosophy in Rome, then returned to Vilnius, where he worked for many years as prefect of the secondary schools. He was there when Matulaitis was Bishop of Vilnius.

2. Władysław Kępiński (1881-1924): priest, studied theology at Innsbruck and Rome from 1906 to 1912. Returned to Warsaw, where he worked as professor at the Seminary and also served as pastor of various parishes.

general. Since I did not know him very well, I had to be careful. I asked Grum who this Kepiński was, and he answered that he did not appear to have a religious vocation. The next day I took a walk with Kepiński and came to the same conclusion. However, nothing is impossible with God—he may yet acquire the necessary spirit. The other one—Father Araszkievicz—I liked very much.

### *November 25*

In the morning, I visited the Vatican museum and the Sistine Chapel with Kepiński. I am not very fond of museums, but I wanted to walk through it at least, to get a general idea of the place. I prefer to visit churches, to meditate on the history of the Church, and to look at beautiful paintings on religious subjects. When I left the Vatican museum, my head felt heavy and there was a ringing in my ears. The trip was practically useless: I do not know anything about art.

At about five in the afternoon I went to see Cardinal Vives y Tuto. I had prepared beforehand the points I wanted to cover. I told him about our Congregation and why I had moved from St. Petersburg to Fribourg. I did not have to go on too long, since it appeared that His Eminence was well aware of the situation of the Church in our part of the world. I also spoke of the impediments which the bishops place in the way of candidates wishing to join us: they go on about the shortage of priests and how people are dying without the sacraments. In fact, we intend to go back to work among our own people as far as possible. It would be no loss to the bishops.

His Eminence the Cardinal remembered very well that I had visited him two years ago; he recalled that we had revived the Marian Congregation.<sup>1</sup> He was very kind and understanding. He said: last Thursday we spoke of your Congregation and granted you many things. He promised to support us and to help us in any way he could. Later, he gave me three of his books. I asked him not to forget us in the future, but to keep us under his fatherly protection and to grant

---

<sup>1</sup> In July of 1909, Matulaitis made his first trip to Rome to get permission to revive the Marians and to make his own religious vows to become a member of the Congregation. This was granted by a decree of the Congregation for Religious on August 2, 1909.

me, and our Congregation with all its members, his paternal blessing. I took my leave of him, strengthened in spirit. How good a father to all religious is His Eminence Cardinal Vives y Tuto!

As I went back to my lodgings, I gave my heartfelt thanks to God for all the good He has granted us, for the whole Church, for all our benefactors, and also for our enemies.

That same day Father Wiskont<sup>1</sup> from the diocese of Vilnius came to see me. He lives at the French College. He has received his doctorate in philosophy from Louvain and is now studying theology.

## *November 26*

In the morning I attended Mass at St. Peter's Basilica and prayed there for a while. Later, I went to the Polish College, since I wanted to say goodbye to Archbishop Teodorowicz, but did not find him at home. I met with the seminarians Łysik and Kalinowski and also Father Saldra.<sup>2</sup> I promised the latter that I would call on him again.

In the afternoon Father Grum and I went to the French College, where I visited Wiskont and Araszkiewicz—I also met two Russians there who were studying theology: Jevreinov<sup>3</sup> and Kolpinski.<sup>4</sup> The latter knew Father Bučys<sup>5</sup> and used to go to confession to him. I also knew an Italian priest, Campa,<sup>6</sup> who works at the Vicariate. The whole group of us then went to St. Paul's Basilica.

At about six I went to Monsignor Sapięha's as had been arranged. We talked a little about the situation of our Church. Then he made me the following proposal: that I remain in Rome or move here

---

1 Antanas Wiskont (1875-1940): priest, ordained in 1900. After receiving his doctorate at Louvain, he studied theology in Rome. When Matulaitis was Bishop of Vilnius, he was appointed Notary for the diocesan tribunal and Censor of Religious Publications.

2 Klemensas Sova (1886-1956): used the pen name Saldra; Lithuanian priest and writer studying in Rome (1908-1913) and living at the Polish Papal College. Returned to Lithuania to work in the diocese of Kaunas.

3 Alexander Jevreinov (1877-1959): Russian seminarian, ordained in 1913. Appointed Bishop to Russian Catholics of the Eastern Rite in Rome, in 1935; friend of Bishop Bučys. Lived and died in Rome.

4 Diodor Kolpiński (1892-1935): Russian student received into the Catholic Church by Fr. Bučys in 1911. Studied in Rome and was ordained there. Worked in Russia until 1926; professor at the Institute for Missions in Louvain (1926-1929).

5 Pranciskus Bučys (1872-1951): Matulaitis's close friend and associate; had become a Marian in the renovated community in 1909; professor at the Theological Academy of St. Petersburg (1902-1915); Vice Rector (1912), Rector (1913-1915).

6 Luigi Campa (1879-1966): worked in the Vicariate of Rome.

permanently to represent the Catholic Church of Russia, Lithuania, Poland, and also Posnania and Galicia and to inform the Holy See about the state of the Church in those territories.<sup>1</sup> He said that he had already discussed the matter with Cardinal De Lai and that everything could be arranged. Then he told me that I would hold an official position as consultant to the Consistorial Congregation that decides the most important ecclesiastical matters: I would attend its meetings and have the right to vote. Of course, he said, I could then expect no position in Russia. He had been assured by Cardinal De Lai that such a representative would be guaranteed a secure future. As for the financial side of it, the diocese of Galicia would contribute the necessary funds to maintain the position.

Now is a good time to introduce such a representative because the Holy Father would gladly approve, but there is no telling what may happen. Such a consultant is much needed here in Rome, since the Vatican often receives complex and contradictory information and does not know whom to trust. The Church suffers because of it.

I admitted that such a representative is absolutely necessary, but as for myself, I see many difficulties:

a. I have just begun to build up our newly renovated Congregation; this work cannot be abandoned.

b. I am Lithuanian; it's doubtful whether the Poles would consider me trustworthy.

c. I don't speak Italian; but that is a minor problem, since it is easy to learn.

d. I do not feel that I have any talent for diplomacy—my French is imperfect and I am not very good at entertaining guests. I find it easier to express myself one on one, but I am not very eloquent in public and am not a good conversationalist.

e. Generally speaking, my ideal in life is different: up until the present, I have avoided influential positions, for I am determined to follow Christ on another path.

f. But especially, I emphasized the point once again that the work for our Congregation deters me. It is necessary that I devote myself completely to it, now that we have made a start.

Monsignor Sapieha asked whether it would be possible to transfer

---

<sup>1</sup> Pope Pius X (1903-1914) was very interested in achieving better relations between the Russian Orthodox and the Catholic Church in lands ruled by Russia as well as improving the difficult conditions of the Catholic Church in the subjugated nations of Eastern Europe.

our Congregation to Rome and to undertake both tasks. To me this seemed impossible, at least for the time being. In the end, he asked me to reconsider and to give him my final answer next Tuesday. He invited me to dinner with him on Tuesday, indicating that, besides me, the other guests would be Father Grum and His Excellency Archbishop Teodorowicz.

### *November 27*

I went to the Sacred Congregation for Religious to see whether the necessary documents were prepared. It turned out that the Sacred Congregation was not working because that day a private consistory<sup>1</sup> was in session, during which the pope named new cardinals and bishops. Monsignor Sapieha was named Bishop of Kraków.

The morning was free and so I spent the time in prayer at St. Peter's Basilica, and in the presence of God pondered Monsignor Sapieha's proposal. In prayer God gave me grace and light. I came to the conclusion that this was no time even to consider such a proposal because it would mean laying aside my present task and occupation. At least two years are absolutely necessary to place our Congregation on a firm foundation. I find it especially distasteful to be involved in diplomacy; it is much better to follow Christ along the way of quiet and unostentatious labor. Of course, being in a higher position means greater influence. But who is to say what sort of influence and whether it would be for the good? In the supernatural sphere God alone can judge where a person can do more for His greater glory.

Often it is evident that persons in high positions have not done very much for God, while those more humbly placed have accomplished a great deal. I have even observed a person doing much good in an inferior position, who, when elevated to a higher post, did not fit in at all. Consequently, it is much better, abandoning oneself to God and to His holy will, to continue the work that has been started.

In my free time I spoke with Father Grum about the needs of the Church and of our Congregation. I also went to see Father Saldra. Accompanied by Grum, I visited Potulicki,<sup>2</sup> Director of the Polish Hospicium.<sup>3</sup> I called on Monsignor Skirmunt,<sup>4</sup> whom I had met at

---

<sup>1</sup> Consistorium: an assembly of cardinals, summoned at the discretion of the pope. Its function is promulgation rather than deliberation. At a private consistory, the pope names new cardinals, announces the appointment or transfer of bishops.

<sup>2</sup> Adam Potulicki: Rector of the Polish Papal Institute (1910-1912).

<sup>3</sup> Polish Papal Institute, founded in 1910 for priests studying in Rome.

<sup>4</sup> Kazimierz Skirmunt (1861-1931): Polish priest from the Diocese of Kraków; he was responsible for informing the Vatican about the Catholic Church in Poland. After WWI, he worked at the Polish embassy at the Vatican.



Monsignor Sapieha's, but did not find him at home.

On my way back and afterwards, I kept thinking why it is that I have run into so many difficulties ever since the day I decided to follow the Lord Jesus in poverty, humiliation, obedience, hard work, and so on. Before, when I was on my own, no one ever offered me honorable and influential positions or tried to pressure me. But now, more and more often they present me with new proposals and such in which one could truly work for the greater glory of God. As a result, I must consider my decision very carefully.

For some time now, I have made it my rule of life that in such instances I will choose Christ's lot—His life of abjection, poverty, hardship, and labor. That is the surest way. I am determined and absolutely resolved to reject all these proposals. Without betraying my inner conviction, I sought Father Grum's advice. I had hoped that he would support my position, and it surprised me that he should try to persuade me that, after a year or two, when I had put my affairs in order, I should become bishop or move to Rome to represent ecclesial matters. I heard him out and agreed that, in principle, nothing should be rejected outright, but that one needs to seek the greater glory of God in all things.

In my heart I was certain that, first of all, I ought to make every effort to foster the growth and development of our Congregation and not be sidetracked. Besides, I was not happy that any member of our Congregation should be mixed up in politics or diplomacy. My ideal is that we should be good workers in the Lord's vineyard, not politicians. Deep within, my spirit prompted me to disregard Monsignor Sapieha's and Father Grum's arguments and to continue the work we have begun, to follow the poor, humble, hardworking Christ, to keep walking along the path of peaceful and quiet labor. It is not right for us to get involved in diplomacy or high places where decisions are made, even about the fate of bishops. Rather, we ought to be the bishops' servants. Nevertheless, I resolved to seek more light in prayer the next day.

### ***November 28***

In the streetcar I met Father Ledóchowski. I mentioned Monsignor Sapieha's proposal, about which Monsignor, it seems, had already spoken with him. Father said to me: "Age quod agis" ("Do what you are doing").

This further strengthened my own determination.

I was at the Congregation for Religious. They gave me only one document; the others were not ready yet. They promised to send them to me in Fribourg; I left them my address.

I visited an antique shop and bought some books, one of which was Benedict XIV's *On the Beatification and Canonization of Saints*.<sup>1</sup> And besides that I also got *On the Founding of Religious Life*<sup>2</sup> by De Paz.

At one o'clock, accompanied by Father Grum, I called on Monsignor Sapieha. We found His Excellency Archbishop Teodorowicz already there. During the meal, the talk was about philosophy and the Russian Catholics of the Eastern Rite. After lunch we discussed, especially with Grum, the same topics as before, including the state of the Church in our part of the world. We decided when and which cardinals Grum ought to call on.

When Grum left, Archbishop Teodorowicz, Monsignor Sapieha, and I discussed the possibility of my remaining in Rome. I briefly outlined the difficulties and told them that only after two years would I be able to consider it. They agreed about the impossibility of abandoning the work already begun. We also discussed other candidates for the position. I mentioned a friend of mine, Father Henryk Przeździecki,<sup>3</sup> pastor at Lodz. Among my acquaintances I know of no one else who would be more suitable. They asked me to write to Przeździecki through Chancellor Nikiel<sup>4</sup> in Kraków. I shall have to do this first thing. I then said good-bye and left.

Through Grum, Father Fonck<sup>5</sup> had said that he wanted to meet me. But Fonck had to leave Rome for two days, and I could not stay any longer, and so I wrote Father Fonck a card in care of Father Grum.

At 6:15 in the evening I left Rome. Fathers Grum, Mosser (the Resurrectionist), and Kepinski were there to see me off.

## **November 29**

At two o'clock in the afternoon I arrived at Montreux, where I

1 Original Latin title: *De Beatificatione et Canonizatione Sanctorum*, 4 vols. published in Bologna, 1734-1738.

2 Original Latin title *De Vita Religiosa Instituenda* by Alvarez de Paz (1560-1620), a prominent author of the Society of Jesus.

3 Przeździecki (1873-1939): Matulaitis's good friend from their Seminary days in Warsaw (1893-1895); they also studied together at the Theological Academy of St. Petersburg. A professor at Warsaw Seminary and pastor in various parishes in Poland, he was consecrated bishop in 1918.

4 Karol Nikiel (1873-1929): Chancellor of the Curia at Kraków.

5 Leopold Fonck (1865-1930): a German Jesuit, founder and first Rector of the Papal Biblical Institute in Rome.

visited my cousin at the Bel-etir hotel. At 5:15 I left Montreux for Lausanne-Fribourg. Three members of our Community came to meet me, and I went home to the Canisianum<sup>1</sup> with them. We all greeted each other warmly, then ate supper and went in to evening prayer.

## TOPICS DISCUSSED WITH FATHER GRUM

1. We talked about the spiritual exercises practiced in our community. I outlined our daily schedule for him and asked whether he thought we had sufficient spiritual exercises. He said they were sufficient and that the Jesuits<sup>2</sup> do not have any more.

2. Up to now we have had no manual labor or domestic work, since we are restricted because of our circumstances and depend on the sisters to whom the boarding house belongs. In place of such work, we concentrate on our studies.

3. Grum asked whether we make use of the discipline, that is, a light flagellation of one's self—at least on Fridays. He said that, generally speaking, it is a good practice, although it may be harmful for certain individuals. I answered that this practice has not been introduced as mandatory for all, but some are using it—there is freedom of choice. Each one can consult his confessor in this matter. I said that in place of this practice, which is both negative and problematic, other acts of mortification can be substituted, for instance, work and self-denial in small things, etc. In these matters I prefer to allow the freedom of the children of God.<sup>3</sup> Here the important thing is that each one understand the need for mortification and practice it, choosing those means which are most effective.

4. We discussed the matter of studies and I asked him who should supervise the students and what we must do about taking examinations. We agreed that they should take the examinations in those subjects which they are studying, at least in the most important ones. We have to appoint a Prefect of Studies, because so far I have been doing it all. This will have to continue awhile until someone else can spare the time. Right now they are all busy with their studies.

5. Grum suggested that everyone ought to have an afternoon snack. I

---

1 The Canisianum was one of three student boarding houses near the University of Fribourg. The Marians lived here first, but soon moved into a rented house.

2 Matulaitis was asking Grum's advice in these matters because he had studied with the Jesuits at Innsbruck and had followed the same way of life as the Jesuit novices and scholastics.

3 The original Latin phrase is "sancta filiorum Dei libertas" (cf., Rom 8:21).

said that the younger and weaker students do have one. The others are free, but so far no one feels the need. We both agreed that the food must be sufficient and that each should have the clothing he needs. Everyone must bathe at least once a month. Each one must learn to keep his room and his things clean and neat.

6. I asked about what is generally done during summer vacation. He told me that after the examinations, the Jesuits take their scholastics out into the country where they rest for an entire fortnight: eating well, sleeping a lot, even taking afternoon naps, and, in general, taking it easy. Then they make a ten-day retreat. After that, they resume their studies and work year-round, not even taking time off for feast days.

7. We also talked about how to avoid any inappropriate tendencies within our Congregation—especially harmful nationalistic and political views. We both agreed that those whose spirit proves intractable or incorrigible in this respect should be dismissed.

8. We discussed recreation. This has been worrying me because we live in such cramped quarters that it is difficult to schedule recreation periods properly. But we have to put up with this situation at present until, God willing, we can move into another house, where we would be freer to order our daily life in a more satisfactory manner.

9. We both agreed that it would be a good thing to invite an outsider to give our retreat and considered the possibility of asking Father Weiss<sup>1</sup> to conduct it. It is very helpful to have an outsider, someone from another religious community, come in to direct the annual retreat.

10. We considered the possibility of renting a house and finding some sisters to take care of it for us so that we would be able to take full charge and order our daily life without hindrance. Among ourselves we had already discussed the question of finding a suitable house and adapting it to fit our needs, but we still have to wait awhile. We must put up with these inconveniences. At the beginning, other congregations had to put up with worse things than we do. Often they had to suffer hunger and could not even have a proper novitiate. Thank God, we do not lack anything. Although we are faced with certain difficulties, we are getting along. God willing, we will soon be able to organize our daily

---

<sup>1</sup> Albert Maria Weiss (1844-1925): a German Dominican, professor of Apologetics at the University of Fribourg from 1890 to 1919. Both Fr. Bučys and Fr. George Matulaitis had studied under him and admired him as a scholar and an ascetic.

life better. Now we must thank God for everything we have.

11. Grum told me about some of the difficulties he has with community life. They are of a psychological nature. In our Congregation we take into account the particular characteristics of each individual to see whether they would really prevent him from being a good religious. The older orders were stricter in this respect, but we are inclined to be more flexible. Really, if anyone wants to be by himself for a while, we gladly allow him to do so—if, for example, he wants to take a walk by himself. It is more important that he be willing to renounce himself, to be humble, and to love God and others, to be faithful to his vows and the evangelical counsels. As for the other requirements, he can occasionally be dispensed from these, if need be.

12. Grum expressed some anxiety about what might happen if he were to enter our Congregation and his parents became seriously ill. He would not want to leave them, but would like to show his love for them, especially since they oppose Catholicism. It would be good to show them that the Catholic Faith changes a person for the better, gives him the strength to be good, etc. I responded that, in my opinion, a member of our community would certainly be allowed to go and stay with his parents and to care for them in such an eventuality. Charity is most important of all.<sup>1</sup> In fact, in Grum's case, as he presented it, it could not be otherwise.

13. We were both of the same opinion that it would be a good idea if, at some later date, I could visit a Jesuit novitiate (Feldkirch<sup>2</sup>) or a Benedictine one (Beuron<sup>3</sup>) and stay there for about a week, talk to the Novice Master, etc. I told Grum that I had been thinking about it and intended to send some member of our community to look around. Grum said that it would be better if I did the traveling myself. We agreed on this point.

---

1 Cf., 1 Cor. 13:13b.

2 The Jesuit novitiate in Feldkirch, in the Austrian district of Vorarlberg, was founded in the 19th century and in use until 1982, with Stella Matutina College.

3. A Benedictine monastery in Germany, famous for its publications, religious art, and liturgical music. After the closing of many monasteries in Europe and Russia in the mid-19th century, it became one of the centers for the revival of monastic and religious life.

14. Before my departure from Rome, I had suggested to Grum that he reflect on the matter and, after he had completed his doctorate and settled his affairs, that he come and join us<sup>1</sup> so that we could work together. Jurgutis<sup>2</sup> had mentioned this wish of Grum's. The difficulties that he raised were not real obstacles, in my judgment, because we already have people with similar ones and they, I trust, will be good religious. Grum promised to think and pray about it. I said that he would be able to do much good and work for the greater glory of God if he joined us. I committed the matter to Divine Providence. I shall have to pray for this intention.

Grum also pointed out the fact that in joining us he might cause us trouble with the Russian civil authorities.<sup>3</sup> To this I replied that, in my opinion, it would not hurt us at all. Finally, I thought to myself: in such matters we should be more concerned about doing the will of God and serving the Church.

---

1 Grum visited the Marian novitiate in Fribourg in 1913, but he never did join the Marians.

2 Vladas Jurgutis (1885-1966): studied at the Theological Academy of St. Petersburg in 1906-1910 and was one of Matulaitis's students. He was ordained, but gave up the priesthood to become Minister of Finance in independent Lithuania.

3 Grum had been back in St. Petersburg for a few months in 1911. He had managed to get into a serious conflict with Archbishop Kluczyński and was considered suspect by the Russian government. The Department of Public Cult had been keeping him under surveillance. Having violated various regulations and unable to secure a position, he got a foreign passport and left Russia for Rome in November of 1911. After this meeting with Matulaitis in Rome, they probably never met again, although Grum followed Matulaitis's subsequent career and admired him greatly. Grum himself could not go back to Russia after WWI. He lived in Germany, Austria, and Switzerland, unable to commit himself to any community or institution; he died as convent chaplain to the Sisters of the Sacred Heart in Switzerland in 1945.

## A DISCUSSION ABOUT THE CATHOLIC CHURCH IN RUSSIA

Grum, Sapieha, Teodorowicz, and I participated in a discussion about various Church matters. Here I have set down some of what was said on this occasion.

1. Why does the Catholic faith spread so little among the Orthodox? What should be done about it?

a) We need true shepherds—both pastors and bishops, who would give the Russians good example. As it is, they say: “Things are bad with us, but they are even worse among you Catholics!”

b) Our Catholic parishes should be exemplary and well-organized.

c) Catholics, and especially the clergy, should try to make contact with the Orthodox: to mingle with them, live among them, always living an exemplary life.

d) To work in a positive way, avoiding criticism. Simple people do not understand dogmatic differences and errors. Ideals attract them, the faith itself. Therefore, we must avoid attacking and criticizing the Orthodox faith.

e) We should pray for conversions. It would be a good idea to create a special society for this purpose.

f) In my opinion, it would be possible to spread the Catholic faith among the Orthodox through the laity, if they were specially trained and organized for this. With Grum we discussed how lay brothers could be trained as effective catechists. In my view, even in our work among Catholics, we will not be able to manage without lay catechists. Since atheism has become so widespread and so many people have left the Church, many places and many people can be reached only through the laity. Right now we need to draw more people into our apostolate—our own lay bothers and the laity in general.

g) In order to attract the Orthodox, we, the clergy, should be able to rise above all political and nationalistic prejudice and seek only the greater glory of God, the salvation of souls, and the good of the Church.

2. What are the most pressing needs of the Catholic Church in

Russia?

a) Bishops who are good pastors; who are not only talented politicians, diplomats and administrators, but who are, above all, good, devoted shepherds. Practicing diplomacy with the Russian government is of little value, while a bishop filled with the Spirit of God is, at least, able to strengthen the people's faith, and zealous, courageous and industrious priests can count on his support for their work and their plans.

b) Too much fear, diffidence, and cringing before the civil authorities can be observed among us. We should learn to say: "Non possumus" ("We cannot"—do such and such).

c) Priests and bishops ought to keep their distance from the Department<sup>1</sup> and its officials, although the Department is very anxious that the bishops continually consult it so that it would become the center of our (Catholic) life. It is quick to make use of its system of intimidation, house searches, etc. It is important to adopt the right attitude: not to be afraid to suffer for the Church and boldly to continue along the way shown us in the Gospel.

There was talk of many other things, but I cannot repeat them.<sup>2</sup>

I am convinced that it is a good thing to make a personal visit in Rome every once in a while. It is very useful when one is personally known there. The best thing is to transact one's business directly with the cardinals, not only with their secretaries.

---

1 The Department of Public Cult supervised all religious activities, but especially those of the Catholic Church in the territories ruled by Russia.

2 In the original, the authors' signatures placed here. The following remarks are a postscript.





CONTINUATION  
OF  
THOUGHTS, ENLIGHTENMENTS,  
INSPIRATION, AND RESOLUTIONS  
1912-1914



# 1912

*There are only two short entries in the Journal during the whole year of 1912. It was a busy and difficult year. The Marians had rented a small house on the rue Père Girard and had moved in. In order to avoid attracting unnecessary attention to his little community, Father Matulaitis called their new home a House of Studies. Despite all his precautions, however, rumors soon began to spread at the University of Fribourg that a suspicious group of modernists and radicals had established itself on the very doorstep of the university. One of the lay professors went so far as to complain to Rome. Matulaitis was called in by the university authorities and asked to explain his activities.*

## **February 3**

Today we made our monthly retreat with the help of God. I have calmed down and renewed my spirit.

My resolutions for the coming month are as follows: 1. to use my time well so that I do not lose even a moment. I have noticed that my imagination is often a source of distraction while I am working. Some nagging thought occupies my mind and carries me off to heaven knows where. 2. I must devote all my energy to the Congregation and make a greater effort to concentrate on preparing the Instructions.

Lord Jesus, give me strength and perseverance. O Blessed Virgin Mary, immaculately conceived, protect me.

## **November 18**

For a long, long time I have not written anything down in this little notebook. But during this period I have had to endure a great deal. Let it all be for the glory of God. May all these hurts, trials, sufferings, and heartaches be banked as penance for the sins of my past life.

When I became a religious, I did not expect people to hinder me so much in following the footsteps of Christ. If only I did follow them

more perfectly, but alas, I still have a long way to go. Even so, all kinds of rumors have been spread about and all sorts of obstacles have appeared. But, after all, Lord, look at what Your saints have had to suffer, Your true servants and followers.

Thank You, Lord, for making the bitterness of life sweet with all many graces, with such extraordinary spiritual consolations.

## 1913

*Difficulties with the administration and faculty of the university continued. Matulaitis made the rounds of various persons in authority and finally had to appeal to the bishop. He presented his credentials and documents, explaining that the group was a religious community approved by Rome. The reason for all this secrecy was to conceal the members from the scrutiny of the Russian government, which could prevent them from returning to work in lands ruled by Russia. Matulaitis was also receiving a good deal of criticism from former friends and colleagues who thought his efforts to revive the Marians an unrealistic dream. Still, the little community was struggling along, its numbers and spirit growing steadily in spite of all the hardships.*

### **January 6**

Yesterday was my monthly day of recollection. The holy days themselves, the meditations on the Child Jesus lifted my heart to God. It overflowed with holy affections.

Once again I examined my life. On all sides I see how very corrupt my human nature is, Lord. Such weakness. So many mistakes and imperfections. I would fall into despair, if I did not trust so completely in your infinite mercy.

I can see, Lord, how your abundant graces, flowing like the waters of a stream, constantly wash and purify my soul of the dust of its imperfections and the dirt of its transgressions. Thank you for this, O merciful God!

This past month I have been tormented most of all by my imagination and distracting thoughts. I did not control them well enough. So often some pressing matter would come up and immediately take hold of me, tossing me about and carrying my thoughts in all directions and thus distracting me from my work. And also, although I was doing my work, it was not organized properly. Therefore, with the help of God, this month I am determined to avoid disorder in my work and to exercise greater control over my thoughts and

imagination.

What is the source of our strength? Without any doubt, it is Christ and the spirit of His Church: the goal toward which the Church directs us and the precepts and sacraments she gives us. These are the wellsprings of our life! The more deeply a person becomes immersed in the Spirit of Christ and of the Church, becomes soaked in it, saturated with it, the more complete will be his holiness and the more fruitful will be his work. “This is the victory over the world—our faith” (1 Jn 5:4b). “By this sign—the sign of the cross—will you conquer.”<sup>1</sup>

### *January 7*

I wonder if it would not be a good thing for our Congregation to adopt the practice of religious who have completed their studies to repeat the novitiate for about three months before going out to work. In this way they would renew their spirit, enkindle it with the fire of zeal. After a certain time, those brothers also who have already been out working could profit by making such a short novitiate. This could be done every six or ten years. Just as soldiers are periodically recalled to take refresher courses, so too should religious be called in from time to time to make a novitiate in order to refresh and renew their spirit.

The introduction of such a practice could prove very useful, in my opinion, for the individual religious and also for the community and its apostolate. Naturally, such a novitiate would have to be conducted separately from the regular novitiate.

### *January 12*

Continually we hear complaints about the dearth of people: there is so much to be done and no one to do it. Often it is easier to raise money

---

<sup>1</sup> A paraphrase of the famous words “In hoc signo vinces” of the Emperor Constantine’s vision, as reported in Greek by the historian Eusebius. The vision occurred, probably in Gaul, just before the critical battle at the Milvian Bridge on Oct. 28, 312.

for some institution than to find people to staff it. Our greatest concern, therefore, should be to train as many men as possible for the most important tasks and needs of the Church. Let us spare nothing for the training and education of our members. The funds, the energy, and the effort that we invest in this task will pay great dividends later.

In the formation of our lay brothers, our concern should be not only to educate them properly, not only to teach them a trade, but, especially, to instruct them in Christian doctrine, to help them develop their spiritual life, and, besides all this, to enkindle in them an ardent apostolic spirit. Then they will be able to go out and renew the faith in the hearts of everyone they meet and associate with.

Burning with the fire of zeal, lay brothers could be very effective in combating vice and immorality. They could go out in pairs or teams to rescue those that are sunk in the mire of vice and degradation, working just like the Salvation Army, a noteworthy Protestant organization. In our case, however, our work would have to proceed along Catholic lines and with the consent of the bishops.

Going out in pairs or teams, our lay brothers could also visit the sick and the poor—the workers are often in such dire need, for they live in hovels and slums, where no one comes to help or encourage them in their hard lot. May God give us many such brothers. They could bring Christ even into those places priests cannot reach. If, with God's help, we could train these brothers, they could not only distribute alms, but also instruct the poor, give them some good books or read to them, invite them to come to church, and so on. Such brothers, working under the direction and supervision of our priests, would be a tremendous help in the apostolate.

### *January 20*

To go out and look for people to join us and, having found them, to educate, instruct, and prepare them to undertake the work most urgently needed in the Church—this should be our vital concern.

O God, give us some good men. Gather us together from every land, country, and nation and make us one so that we may glorify Your Holy Name and serve You faithfully; so that we may fight the good fight and spread Your Spirit everywhere, bringing it into every place.

Just because we have made our novitiate and completed our



studies is no reason for any of us to stop furthering our education. It would be a good thing to appoint supervisors of studies who would visit our houses and give our members suitable direction and counsel about what and how to study, to urge them on so that they would not become complacent, but rather make continual progress.

When a brother receives an assignment, sooner or later he should devote some time to setting up some guidelines for his work and submitting them to his superiors for approval. In this manner, he himself will discover the best methods and ways to perform his tasks and others will also derive no small benefit from his experience and directives.

### *January 21*

It is a mistake to think that education and talent are needed only by writers and teachers, while anyone can do parish work. It seems to me that considerable talent and adaptability are required to organize and conduct a parish properly. If we were to undertake the organization and administration of a parish and do it really well, this would benefit the entire community. We should be careful not to neglect rural parishes. A well-organized parish would be a good example to others. Our lay brothers could be a great help in this work.

### *January 23*

We have not gathered together in order to try to reform the Church or improve her priests—that is the work of the Holy Father and his bishops—but in order to seek our own perfection and to serve the Church better: the people, priests, and bishops. It is especially important that we remain loyal to the bishops and cooperate with them. At times it may be good to offer our services to the bishops so that they could make use of us more effectively for the greater glory of God, especially in those instances when no one is willing to take on some dangerous post, task, or duty.

Priests and bishops should be held in the greatest respect. Let no one of our members dare to speak badly of any priest or to disparage him. If we observe anything amiss among the clergy, we should do our best to make up for it by doing penance, by self-denial, by prayer and good works so that by our increased devotion we may cover up the evil as good sons cover their

---

<sup>1</sup> Cf., Gn 9:23: Noah's sons cover their father with a cloak.

father's nakedness with a cloak.<sup>1</sup>

Loving the Holy Father with all our hearts, we must be completely obedient to him, observing his precepts, instructions, and promulgations and also defending his honor, his actions, and directives. Let us try to inspire others also to love and respect the Holy Father.

### ***February 3***

I made my monthly day of recollection. Still the same imperfections and faults. O my God, how long will You bear with me, miserable sinner that I am? I repent with all my heart and promise to keep up the struggle to overcome myself. I know that You will help me, O God.

Once again I resolve to make good use of my time.

### ***February 6***

It is not always wise to advertise what we plan to do or what we are already doing. All too often pride and self-love appear when our efforts succeed. By showing off our work, we attract needless attention to ourselves. Then people begin to examine and criticize our work, while those who may have joined us become filled with misgivings and turn away. We are defeated by our own efforts. Instead of concentrating on our work, we are forced to defend ourselves against our enemies and thus dissipate our energy needlessly.

It is better to work quietly, especially at the beginning, when our Congregation is not very strong. If some project is going well, sometimes it may be advisable to acknowledge it, if the greater glory of God and the welfare of people require it, but even this must be done with caution. "Desire to be unknown and regarded as of no account."<sup>1</sup> However, there is this saying as well: "In the same way your light must shine in the sight of men, so that, seeing your good works, they may give praise to your Father in heaven" (Mt 5:16).

We must seek the greater glory of God in all things. But if the

---

<sup>1</sup> From *The Imitation of Christ*, I: 2, 4. Originally quoted in Latin: "Ama nesciri et pro nihilo reputari."

glory of God does not demand that we draw attention to our work, it is better to work quietly. When there is a lot of noise, it is more difficult to work peacefully and one does not accomplish as much. “Your Father who sees all that is done in secret will reward you” (Mt 6:18).

### *April 5*

Considerable time has passed since we made our three-day retreat before renewing our vows, and I have not yet had an opportunity to set down my resolutions.

My Lord and my God, I offer You my work, troubles, worries, all my sufferings, trials, and crosses. Grant, O God, that for You and for Your Church I may work, labor, and suffer yet more. Grant that I may be consumed, like the candle on the altar, by the heat of labor and the fire of love for You and for Your Church.

Thank you, Lord, for having delivered me from this world, where I wandered about aimlessly and perhaps even misled others. It was all due to what I thought was true zeal. Correct what I have done wrong, Lord. I am grateful for all the graces You have given me. How generous You are, Lord. How abundantly You distribute Your graces to us, poor creatures.

My God, my God how sweet it is to serve You. What will Your heaven be like if You fill a person’s soul with such sweetness here on earth, passing through the body with such holy tremors and transporting it into the third heaven.<sup>1</sup> The heart melts in ecstasy, the lips are dumb, the eyes darken, hands and feet are numb, and the whole body is overwhelmed by waves of mysterious tremors. And the soul, the soul is submerged in You. If it were not for Your greatness, it seems a person could die of all this sweetness and love. “Leave me, Lord; I am a sinful man” (Lk 5:8). “I am not worthy ... just give the word” (Mt 8:8). “Who is like Yahweh, our God? ... He raises the poor from the dust” (Ps 112/113: 5,7).

My resolutions are the following: 1. to work harder and to make good use of every moment: to start working immediately, to avoid useless thoughts and distractions while working, to keep before me

---

<sup>1</sup> Cf., 2 Cor 12:2 where St. Paul describes his ecstasy.

the image of Jesus hard at work. 2. While working, to lift up my heart to God and remain in union with Him. 3. To mortify myself in the following manner: a) to use the discipline twice a week, on Wednesdays and Fridays; b) to make my morning examination of conscience by lying on the floor in the form of a cross as often as possible; c) to perform my duties as superior with greater diligence.

Whenever I noticed the faults and defects of my subjects, I would try to speak about them or about the opposing virtue, while commenting on our Constitutions or during spiritual reading, hoping that they would make note of it and correct their behavior. I would rarely confront the offender himself with his faults. This was due to a mistaken courtesy and kindness. I am now convinced that most of my subjects did not think of applying my comments to themselves. It is necessary to draw attention to their faults directly; only then do they pay attention. Therefore, I intend to overcome my imprudent, so-called gentleness and courtesy or, to put it more exactly, my own self-love, cowardice, and timidity and draw attention to each one's faults in a direct and straightforward manner so that they could correct them. I shall do this as kindly and gently as I can and only in private, not in the presence of others.

I intend to require monthly reports from each one and to make sure that they are done properly. Those who do not come to me of their own accord I shall have to summon or visit personally. The best course will be to use a list of questions and to go over them with each one. I am convinced that this method is good because some matter for discussion usually turns up. It is a good opportunity to counsel and instruct a person, to set him straight, and to help him change his ways. Therefore, I resolve to have the monthly reports made as thoroughly as possible in our house.

4. As for myself, I shall give my own report to my adviser and admonitor, Father Wiśniewski.<sup>1</sup> The superior needs someone to admonish and correct him, and especially to tell him the real truth. Can there be any greater service than this?

God, You know my weakness, strengthen me! O Blessed Virgin Mary, I commend myself to your protection.

---

<sup>1</sup> Marian Wiśniewski (1885-1967): had been Matulaitis's student at the Seminary in Kielce and in St. Petersburg; ordained in 1911, he joined the Marians in Fribourg that same year. Was Novice Master (1914 to 1918). After WWI, he returned to Poland and helped organize the Marians there. Later, he worked in various Marian missions in the USA, England, and Portugal. He became well known as a spiritual director and pastor.

## April 9

Yesterday and today I have been attentively reading this year's and last year's *Acta Apostolicae Sedis*,<sup>1</sup> and taking note of whatever might be interesting and useful to us. In the evening I spoke to the brothers about what I thought would be of interest to them.

God has given me a special grace. I have come to understand that from no other source than the Holy Father's various writings, addresses, letters, and activities approved by him can we come to know what the needs of the Church are, what maladies afflict mankind, which remedies are prescribed, what errors and unwholesome opinions are to be avoided, and also which truths should be especially emphasized—and presented to the people. Before, I would read only the encyclicals and rarely glance at the ordinary letters of the Holy Father.

How fortunate we are to have an infallible Teacher! The Holy Father's pronouncements and writings against the modernists<sup>2</sup> and Simonists<sup>3</sup> I have found most enlightening. Almost unconsciously a person can inhale, so to speak, certain theories which are not entirely tenable, even though they may be propagated under seemingly Catholic auspices. In such cases, since one may not be sufficiently informed about the issue, it is easy to be caught off guard. What a good thing it is that the Holy Father warns and instructs us, shows us where the danger lies. Thank you, Lord, that our Church is organized in this way. What a great grace is this gift of infallibility!

I am now determined to read not only the encyclicals, but also the Holy Father's addresses and letters, since they are such a good source of information about what we lack, what to avoid, and also which course to follow and what to pay attention to. It would be a good idea for one or two members of our Congregation to read the documents of the Holy See thoroughly and take note of where the Holy Father is directing his people and what he wants to guard us against. Then they could report on these things to the whole community for general

---

1 *Acts of the Apostolic See*: the official periodical of the Holy See and of Vatican City published in Latin. Founded by Pope Pius X in 1908.

2 In his encyclical *Pascendi*, made public Sept. 7, 1907, Pius X described modernism as a synthesis of all heresies. This was a general term used for certain rationalistic and agnostic attitudes toward religion characteristic of modern thought.

3 The followers of Claude Henri de Rouvroy, the Comte Saint-Simon (1760-1825). He had originated a theory and system of social reform that greatly influenced the development of French socialism. His *Nouveau Christianisme* (New Christianity), a religion for the industrial age, was censured by the Catholic Church.

discussion. In this manner we would truly be participating in the life of the Church, drinking deeply of her spirit to be able to respond to her needs and desires. From what other source can we draw in the true spirit of the Church if not from the papal encyclicals and other writings containing the precepts, directives, and admonitions of the Holy Father?

### *April 13*

We had our monthly day of recollection today. My resolutions are the same as those I made last time. I shall take care to start working as soon as I return to my room.

Saint Joseph, patron of the Church, look kindly upon our little family. Foster its growth and nurture it as you did the Holy Family at Nazareth. Teach us to love Jesus and Mary. Teach us to serve Jesus and Mary, to devote ourselves to them, and to live for them.

A few days ago I read that the Holy Father has given his approbation to the Canons Regular of the Immaculate Conception.<sup>1</sup> God gave me a special light that, among other things, we should combine our religious life and discipline with parish work. I have been turning this idea over in my mind for a long time. It has often occurred to me: why should we religious not take up parish work? What a promising field it is and how very important! Why not begin to develop our ministry in this field? But I was always rather unsure whether such work is really compatible with the duties of our religious life and also whether the Congregation for Religious would approve. Now all my doubts have disappeared.

The Holy Father has not only approved this way of life but has also indicated that he is pleased with it. Circumstances had already more or less forced us to accept parish work, but now we can be at peace and carry on boldly what we have begun. We must make it a general rule to serve our bishops whenever possible. Lord, help us to do this well.

---

<sup>1</sup> A religious community of priests whose Constitutions were ratified March 11, 1913. It was founded by Dom Adrian Grea in France in 1866. Its purpose was to combine religious life with parish work. It proved to be very successful in England, Canada, and Peru.

### *Summer of 1913*<sup>1</sup>

Resolutions from our annual retreat:

1. Duties toward God: while celebrating Mass, reading the Office, or saying other prayers, I shall try to concentrate on the words and what they mean (actual attention).

2. Duties toward my neighbor: continue writing the Instructions and also, if possible, prepare a retreat manual; make sure that my subjects perform what is prescribed in the Constitution and Instructions.

3. Duties to myself: to cultivate a spirit of prayer, to live in the presence of God, and to try to use my time well. My mortifications remain the same as before.

Have mercy on me, Lord! Have mercy on me, a sinner, for You are infinitely merciful! You will not scorn this crushed and broken heart! Put into me a new and constant spirit!<sup>2</sup>

---

<sup>1</sup> No date is given for this entry. The annual retreat probably took place in the summer during vacation.

<sup>2</sup> In the original these phrases are in Latin. They are taken from Psalm 50, the "Miserere"; cf., verses 1, 19, and 10

# 1914

*During the summer of 1913 (July-August) Father Matulaitis and two other Marians, Fathers Felix Kudirka and Julian Kazakas, left for the United States to found the first Marian mission in Chicago. Upon his return to Fribourg, Matulaitis often spoke and wrote of his favorable impressions of America, especially of the mixture of various nationalities living and working together in harmony. This was an ideal close to his heart. He now resumed his former tasks, but made only a single entry in his Journal, which was then interrupted for several years. By this time the Marian community had grown considerably and had moved into a larger house on the rue Grande Fontaine. Here they turned the most beautiful room in the house into a chapel dedicated it to Our Lady.*

## **February 23**

It has been a long while since I have written anything down in this notebook. I was immersed in my work and various other matters, especially in writing the Instructions. All my thoughts, even during meditation, turned in that direction. Thanks to the good God, I was able to accomplish a great deal. Whenever some good idea, insight, or inspiration came to me, I incorporated it into the Instructions. May God be thanked for everything: may everything be for His greater glory.

During this time, Lord, you allowed me to bear many crosses and granted me special graces. May You be praised a thousand times for it all! I especially give thanks to You, Lord, for the extraordinary favor bestowed on me one day during Holy Mass, as the organist chanted the "Gloria." Such wonderful, holy tremors passed through me and overwhelmed me: my eyes were dimmed, my body became rigid and seemed powerless, my soul was filled with an ineffable delight, an ineffable sweetness took possession of my whole being. How sweet You are, Lord! Who can put it into words? If You have condescended to console and comfort such an unworthy sinner as I, what then have Your



true servants, Your saints, experienced? O Lord, do not reject me, but have mercy on me. Permit me to be numbered among Your servants!

Yet another special favor has been granted us through the intercession of Our Blessed Lady: she protected us from Rafalovski<sup>1</sup> who, to all appearances, may have been a spy. My heart was in anguish. This Rafalovski pretended to want to convert to Catholicism from the Russian Orthodox faith and even to become a priest. On the one hand, I was afraid lest I turn a man away from the Church by showing my distrust, and on the other hand, I was apprehensive about allowing a wolf to mingle among the lambs and find his way into Catholic circles and institutions.

I placed the whole matter into the hands of the most Blessed Virgin of the Immaculate Conception. There is no doubt that it was through her intercession that I was able to detect Rafalovski's lies and get rid of him. O Blessed Virgin, I thank you! Since you have protected us so many times, be our protectress and patroness always!

Thank you, my gracious Lord, for all the crosses. Chastise and punish me as You will, but do not reject me. Forgive the follies of my youth and the sins of my past life. You are a God of surpassing mercy. Look down upon me, an unworthy creature, with Your merciful eyes and forgive me everything that I have done to offend You. Lord, You see my heart and You know that I love You and desire to love You more and more. If you should see a single vein in my body that is not throbbing with love of You, tear it out and destroy it!

I trust You completely, Lord. Strengthen my trust. In whom else can I hope, being so poor and miserable in spirit, if not in Your goodness, if not in the heart of your Beloved Son, filled with love and mercy; if not in the powerful intercession of the most Blessed Virgin Mary?

Lord, I firmly believe everything You have revealed and all the holy Catholic Church teaches. I believe everything contained in Sacred Scripture and Tradition. You see what is in my heart, Lord, and You know that from the very first moment of my priesthood I

---

<sup>1</sup> Vladimir Alexandrovich Rafalovski came to Fribourg Feb. 11, 1914, recommended by Fr. Kazimieras Matulaitis, pastor of the Lithuanian parish in London. Fr. George questioned him separately for two days, keeping him away from the novices. Convinced that he was an imposter, probably a Russian spy, Matulaitis took him to a hotel in town and sent word to Rome about him. This incident is recorded in the chronicle of the Marian house in Fribourg.

have never wanted to stray from Your revealed truth or from the teaching of Your holy Church—not even in the smallest matter. Strengthened by Your grace, I am ready to lay down my life for every revealed truth. Yet even in this respect, Lord, I feel that I am very culpable: “I can swear to their fervor for God, but their zeal is misguided” (Rom 10:2). Blinded by pride, I ventured into matters and activities which I had not properly studied, which I did not fully comprehend. I was mistaken and perhaps led others astray. Do not put your servant on trial (Ps 142/143:2), but have mercy on me and forgive me. Look upon my contrite heart and forgive me all my faults, all my indiscretions, every thoughtless word. Correct my errors, repair any scandal I may have given.



MARIJAMPOLE JOURNAL  
1918



# 1918

*In July of 1914, Matulaitis left Fribourg for Lithuania, where he had been invited to conduct a retreat for priests at Marijampole. In August war broke out and he found himself stranded, unable to return to Switzerland. He could get only as far as Warsaw, so he stayed there doing pastoral and charitable work and giving retreats. Warsaw was occupied by the Germans in the summer of 1915. In July, Archbishop Alexander Kakowski allowed Matulaitis to take over an abandoned Camaldolese monastery at Bielany, a suburb of Warsaw. Under Matulaitis's leadership, the Polish Marians set up their own monastery and novitiate. During the war years, they did pastoral work and looked after about two hundred war orphans. In the spring of 1918, Matulaitis got permission to go to Marijampole, since he was anxious to revive the Marian monastery there. He left Warsaw by train on March 1, stopping in the cities of Vilnius and Kaunas on the way to Marijampole. This first entry in his Journal since the summer of 1914 describes his activities from March to December of 1918.<sup>1</sup>*

After taking care of various matters that concerned our Congregation, I could now travel to Marijampole to establish our monastery there.<sup>2</sup> I had written to His Excellency, Bishop Karevičius<sup>3</sup> of Kaunas that I wanted to return to Lithuania. He provided me with a permit from the German authorities, something that was difficult to get at that time. I left Warsaw on March 1, 1918.

Although I had been told a great deal about the horrors and hardships of such a journey, traveling to Vilnius was not so bad. I rode third class and the railway car was almost empty. There were

---

<sup>1</sup> This entry is undated. It narrates events from March 1 to the end of December. Part of it may have been written in Marijampole where Matulaitis arrived March 14 and remained until November 29.

<sup>2</sup> It had been closed by the Russian czarist government in 1905, but when the government fell in 1917, the Lithuanian Marians in Fribourg began to return. A few were already there by the time Matulaitis arrived.

<sup>3</sup> Pranciskus Karevičius (1861-1945): Bishop of Kaunas (1914-1926). In 1926 he resigned, was made Titular Archbishop, and joined the Marians. He lived and worked at the monastery in Marijampole until his death.

only a few soldiers and some Jewish merchants. I arrived in Vilnius about seven o'clock in the evening and stayed with the Dolorist Brothers.<sup>1</sup> Then I called on His Excellency Monsignor Michalkiewicz,<sup>2</sup> the administrator of the diocese. He asked me if I had come to take over the administration of the diocese. At first I did not understand his question, but it became clear from my conversation with His Excellency that in Vilnius rumor had it that I would be appointed administrator of the diocese in place of Monsignor Michalkiewicz. He asked how it could be that the Archbishop of Warsaw had actually told me nothing of this. I said that I knew nothing about it and that I was going to Kaunas to give retreats and then on to Marijampole to found a monastery.

On this occasion, Monsignor Michalkiewicz explained to me why he had been forced to suspend the Lithuanian priests who had signed a memorandum delivered to the German authorities.<sup>3</sup> I did not understand very much of what he was talking about, since I had not heard anything of this incident.

On the following morning I left for Kaunas. Here I conducted one retreat for seminarians and two for lay people—one in Polish and the other in Lithuanian. The city was practically deserted; the refugees had not yet returned. However, there were German soldiers everywhere and all the signs were in German. From His Excellency Bishop Karevičius I learned that the German government primarily favored Canon Olšauskas<sup>4</sup> as a candidate for Bishop of

---

1 A Polish Religious Community for men: Sons of the Sorrowful Mother of God, popularly called the Dolorists. They were founded in Warsaw in 1880 and had a monastery in Vilnius. They conducted a trade school for underprivileged young men. Eventually many of them transferred to the Marians.

2 Kazimierz Michalkiewicz (1865-1940): born in Lithuania of a Lithuanian noble family; studied at the Vilnius Seminary and the Theological Academy of St. Petersburg; ordained in 1888. Worked in various parishes in Belorussia and Latvia; spoke Polish, Lithuanian, and Latvian. When Bishop Von Ropp was exiled, Pius X appointed Michalkiewicz administrator of the diocese of Vilnius and made him monsignor in 1908. He remained Administrator until June 1918 and was also a member of the Vilnius Cathedral Chapter. He now considered himself a Polish patriot.

3 In retaliation to a memorandum sent to the German Chancellor Bethmann-Hollweg on May 24, 1917, and signed by a number of prominent Poles, including Msgr. Michalkiewicz himself, a countermemorandum was sent by a group of Lithuanians on July 10, 1917. Among the signatories were five priests, four from the diocese of Vilnius. Since they were under his jurisdiction, Msgr. Michalkiewicz relieved them of their duties and suspended them for one month as a disciplinary measure. One of these suspended priests was Juozapan Kukta, a close friend of Matulaitis. There was quite a furor in Vilnius over all this because only the Lithuanian priests were disciplined, not the five Polish priests who had signed the Polish memorandum.

4 Konstantinas Olšauskas (1887-1933): had been exiled from Vilnius and was now working in Kaunas. He was active in the field of education and in social and charitable organizations. His candidacy was favored by the Lithuanian Council and by the Germans. He was unacceptable to the Vatican because of his militant stance.

Vilnius, while Monsignor Dambrauskas<sup>1</sup> was in second place. However, my own candidacy had also been proposed, supposedly by His Excellency Bishop Von Ropp<sup>2</sup> and some of the Polish bishops.<sup>3</sup>

I had to go to present myself to the German authorities. Von Altmann was in charge of matters pertaining to religion. He questioned me very thoroughly for quite a long time. I said I wanted to go to Marijampole and stay there. He said that the German government was not opposed to this. I added that I was a religious and intended to conduct a novitiate there. This I stated only in passing because I could easily gather from our conversation that the Germans had collected plenty of information about me. They were interested in me, since I was one of the proposed candidates for bishop. When I returned to pick up the travel permit, however, Von Altmann was unwilling to give it to me for fear that I had come to Lithuania from Warsaw to stir up trouble. In his attempt to deny me the permit, he tried various arguments: that I had to get written permission from the Bishop of Kielce; that the consent of the Bishop of Sejny was necessary; and also that I needed the approval of the Lithuanian Council<sup>4</sup> in order to found a religious institution. I replied that His Excellency the Bishop of Sejny had invited me and would gladly welcome me. Permission from the Bishop of Kielce was not necessary because, as a religious, I was responsible only to the Holy Father. The Lithuanian Council would not interfere in this matter because I was not introducing a new religious community. The Marian Congregation had existed in Marijampole before and now it was there again. Its members were reassembling after having been dispersed for a time. Then I demanded quite vehemently that he stop obstructing my trip to Marijampole. He replied that he would consult with His Excellency the Bishop of Kaunas and others. The next day, after speaking with the Bishop, Von Altmann issued a permit for fifteen days, adding that it could be extended by the authorities in Marijampole.

---

1 Alexandras Dambrauskas-Jakštas (1860-1938): worked in Kaunas as a professor, writer, and editor.

2 Eduard von Ropp (1851-1939): Bishop of Vilnius (1903-1907). Exiled by the Russian government, he lived in St. Petersburg and in Latvia until 1917, when he was appointed Archbishop of Mogilev.

3 Patriarch Władysław Zaleski and others. Nuncio Pacelli told the Lithuanian delegation which had approached him, that Matulaitis was more acceptable to the Vatican than the militant Olsauskas, who was constantly in conflict with both civil and ecclesiastical authorities.

4 The Lithuanian Council of twenty members with Antanas Smetona as its Chairman, was an executive body elected in 1917 in Vilnius. It declared the independence of Lithuania on February 16, 1918. Its mandate was to achieve actual independence and it was taking steps to do so. The Lithuanians were determined to recover Vilnius as their ancient capital and wanted a Lithuanian appointed bishop.



From the Bishop of Kaunas, I learned that he was enthusiastically endorsing my candidacy for Bishop of Vilnius both with the Lithuanian council and the German authorities. In every possible way I tried to convince him that I was needed by my Congregation and that I could serve the Church and society far better in this capacity; that no one else could do my work, while others were equally capable of being bishop. He finally promised me at least this much: that he would no longer support my candidacy, but would leave the matter to Divine Providence.

Having finished my work in Kaunas, I set out for Marijampole on, I think it was, March 14th. In Marijampole, I gave a retreat for high-school and seminary students and then I conducted one for lay people as well.

The situation in which I found our community in Marijampole was very difficult. There was a great deal of parish work to do as well as work with organizations such as the *Žiburys*<sup>1</sup> and others. All this had fallen upon the shoulders of Father Dvaranauskas<sup>2</sup> and, in part, on Father Novickas.<sup>3</sup> Father Smulkštys<sup>4</sup> is also very active and industrious. Some diocesan priests were staying at our monastery and there were constant visitors as well as priests' meetings. There was practically no free time.

During their meetings the priests would sometimes vehemently criticize the diocesan administration, especially since there was no seminary or chancery. When they got too heated up I tried to calm them down, reminding them of the requirements of Canon Law. They wanted me to agree to become rector of the seminary of Sejny, but I categorically refused. I had come to revive our Congregation and not for any other purpose.

The Bishop of Sejny<sup>5</sup> himself came to Marijampole. We succeeded in getting permission from the German authorities to

1 *Žiburys* (The beacon), a society founded in 1906, in Marijampole, for charitable and educational work. One of its main concerns was founding schools. During WW I, some of its members lived at the Marian monastery and resumed their work when the war ended.

2 Vincentas Dvaranauskas (1871-1966): Lithuanian priest, had studied at the Theological Academy of St. Petersburg with Matulaitis; ordained in 1899, he had worked in Lithuania for a time, entering the Marian novitiate in Fribourg in 1911, returned to Lithuania in 1917; pastor of St. Michael's church 1917-25; elected president of the *Žiburys* organization in 1918.

3 Justinas Novickas (Navickas): ordained 1909; entered the Marian novitiate in Fribourg 1911. Returned to Lithuania, appointed Novice Master of Lithuanian novitiate in Marijampole by Matulaitis in 1918.

4 Antanas Smulkštys, Lithuanian priest, writer and high-school teacher. Stayed at the monastery in Marijampole for a time, but did not join the Marians.

5 Antanas Karosas (1856-1947): Bishop of Sejny (1910-1920). Exiled to Russia during WW I, returned to his diocese in 1917 amid political unrest. Part of the diocese was in Lithuania, part in Poland, since the post-war borders had not been established. He reopened the diocesan Seminary in 1918, but it was closed again in 1919, when this area came under the control of the Polish army.

reopen the seminary, but only on condition that everything be conducted in Latin and Lithuanian. The Bishop, pressured by the priests, promised to organize the diocesan chancery.

Rome had categorically rejected the candidacy of Monsignor Olsauskas. However, the Germans tried to press the Vatican to accept the nomination and for this reason they exiled Monsignor Michalkiewicz.<sup>1</sup> Then the Lithuanian Council began to press my candidacy. As soon as I became aware of this, I went to Vilnius. I pointed out to Mr. Smetona<sup>2</sup> that I would most likely be more useful to the Church and to Society by remaining a simple religious; that religious communities were badly needed in our country and that if I were to leave, our Congregation would not survive. They could find other candidates for bishop. I also went to see Zechlin<sup>3</sup> in Kaunas. He was in charge of political activities at the time and I begged him not to have me appointed Bishop of Vilnius. In addition, I had written to Nuncio Pacelli<sup>4</sup> in Munich, explaining the difficult situation of our Congregation and requesting him to allow me to remain in Marijampole.

The Lithuanian Council sent Father Petrusis<sup>5</sup> and Father Purickis<sup>6</sup> to Marijampole to ascertain whether I was a genuine Lithuanian. Evidently the Council was seriously considering my candidacy. I had asked the brothers in Warsaw, Fribourg, and the United States to petition Rome pointing out the difficult situation of our Congregation as well as that, for the time being, I am very much needed here.

---

1 Exiled to the Maria Laach monastery in Germany for organizing a procession that turned into a political demonstration in June of 1918, Michalkiewicz returned in the fall of that year, but was no longer Administrator of the diocese. Msgr. Jan Hanusowicz was Administrator during the interim period before the appointment of a new Bishop of Vilnius.

2 Antanas Smetona (1874-1944): leading ideologist of the Lithuanian nationalist movement seeking Lithuanian independence; Chairman of the Lithuanian Council (1917-18); in 1919, elected first President of the Lithuanian Republic.

3 Dr. Erich Zechlin: head of the German foreign affairs department during the German occupation of Lithuania; after WW I became German ambassador to Lithuania.

4 Eugenio Pacelli (1876-1958): in 1917, consecrated archbishop and appointed Nuncio to Bavaria; in 1920, appointed nuncio to the German Reich.

5 Alfonsas Petrusis (1873-1928): graduate of the Theological Academy of St. Petersburg; ordained in 1899. Active in various Lithuanian educational and cultural projects in the diocese of Vilnius; in 1917, elected to the Lithuanian Council, served as its secretary. Member of the Lithuanian delegation that met with Nuncio Pacelli in Munich in 1918 urging that a Lithuanian be made bishop of Vilnius.

6 Juozapas Purickis (1883-1934): received master's degree in theology from the Theological Academy of St. Petersburg; ordained in 1912; obtained a doctorate in philosophy from University of Fribourg. Historian, political journalist, and eventually statesman; member of Lithuanian Council, sent to Berlin as its representative in 1918; appointed first ambassador to Germany in 1919.

The Bishop of Sejny went to Warsaw and with him I sent a letter to Monsignor Ratti,<sup>1</sup> the Apostolic Visitor appointed by the Holy See. I explained that our Congregation cannot do without me. Then, since the danger that I would become Bishop of Vilnius kept increasing, I decided to go to Munich to present the matter personally to His Excellency Nuncio Pacelli. The Lithuanian Council also asked me to inform the Nuncio that Monsignor Michalkiewicz was exiled to Germany through no fault of the Council or the Lithuanians and that there was great need for direct communication between the Lithuanian clergy and Rome. I did go to Munich,<sup>2</sup> but came away with the impression that the Holy Father was not likely to pay any attention to my explanations.

With God's help, we were able to find some candidates who wanted to enter our monastery in Marijampole. Refugee priests began to return from Russia. Many of them came through Marijampole and a few stayed in the monastery for some time. Gradually, we introduced spiritual reading at meals as well as readings and commentaries on the Constitutions and Instructions. Then we closed our doors to enforce the cloister. Soon the secular priests found lodgings in town, and little by little we began to live as religious.

Whenever I had the time, I worked on, and wrote up, the Constitutions for the Sisters of the Poor,<sup>3</sup> and Father Laukaitis translated them into Lithuanian. Somehow or other, I also managed to get the Sisters' life organized.

I think that now I shall be able to continue writing the Instructions for our Congregation. The brothers [Marians] from Warsaw had written that I could now work in peace, since there is no longer any danger that I would shortly be appointed bishop. But later on they wrote again, this time saying that, in fact, I had already been designated Bishop of Vilnius.

It must have been on October 22nd that the Rev. Professor Miłkowski brought me a telegram from Vilnius from His Excellency Msgr. A. Ratti, the Apostolic Visitor, which informed me that I had already been appointed Bishop of Vilnius and also, that if I tried to resign, the Holy Father would not accept my resignation. That night I could not sleep. I felt

---

1 Achille Ratti (1857-1939): appointed Apostolic Visitor in April 1918. His jurisdiction included Poland, Lithuania, and the other Baltic nations. He arrived in Warsaw in May, and the negotiations for the appointment of a bishop to the city of Vilnius continued through him, rather than Pacelli.

2 The meeting with Pacelli took place on September 2, 1918.

3 The Sisters of the Poor under the title of the Immaculate Conception of the Blessed Virgin Mary. The actual founding date was October 15, 1918. This was the first religious community for women founded in Lithuania. Their motherhouse was in Marijampole.

the full weight of the burden that had fallen upon me. It was a difficult time, but I had to make my peace with God's will.

From my conversation with Professor Miłkowski, I understood that the Polish clergy of Vilnius were none too pleased with my appointment,<sup>1</sup> although some were glad that I was coming. Soon the representatives of the Lithuanian Council, Father Petrulis and Mr. Vizbaras,<sup>2</sup> came to congratulate me. My friend, Father Kukta,<sup>3</sup> was with them as well. We had some discussion about the forthcoming consecration and installation. They wanted me to have the consecration in Vilnius and asked me to come as soon as I received the papal bull.

We also discussed the order of the speeches. I expressed the opinion that the first address should be in Polish, since Poles were in the majority in Vilnius. The Council delegates argued that I ought to speak in Lithuanian first, since this is the Lithuanian State and its Council requires it. I responded that I had not been appointed Bishop for the State, but, rather, for the people. My duty was to the people and to the Church; consequently, I must consider their needs. The Council delegates were not very pleased with my decision to speak in Polish first. They also wanted me to speak in Belorussian.<sup>4</sup> I agreed that the bull be read in Belorussian, but whether I would speak in Belorussian or not was a matter that I would decide after consulting with others. As a people, the Belorussians are not yet conscious of their national identity. But, in any case, I asked Father Tołoczko<sup>5</sup> to prepare a short speech.

I received word from Warsaw that the bull<sup>6</sup> might take several, even up to six months, to arrive. I calmed down somewhat and resumed my work. On November 5th, I left for Kaunas. I wanted to

1 On Oct. 18, 1918 the Vilnius Cathedral Chapter was informed of the appointment.

2 Kazimieras Vizbaras: a member of the Lithuanian Council; later became a minister in President Smetona's cabinet.

3 Juozapas Kukta (1873-1942): Matulaitis's close friend from their student days at the Theological Academy of St. Petersburg. After ordination in 1898, he was professor at the Vilnius Seminary; in 1902-1909 he worked in the diocesan chancery. He was active in the religious and cultural life of the Lithuanians in Vilnius. Appointed canon in 1917, he became the only Lithuanian member of the Vilnius Cathedral Chapter.

4 A people related to the Russians and Ukrainians ethnically and linguistically, but fighting for their own identity as a nation. The Belorussian National Council convened in Mińsk March 25, 1918, to proclaim Belorussia an independent republic, but the Red Army took over almost immediately and set up a communist government.

5 Władysław Tołoczko (1887-1952): a Belorussian priest, writer, and journalist, who wrote articles in Belorussian, Polish, and Lithuanian for the Vilnius press. He was a staunch supporter of Bishop Matulaitis and often defended him in the press.

6 Pope Benedict XV's bull appointing Matulaitis Bishop of Vilnius was dated October 23, 1918.

talk to Bishop Karevičius and also to attend the convention at the Center for Catholic Action.

On the way to Kaunas, Monsignor Wołodźko and Monsignor Uszyłło, representatives of the Vilnius Cathedral Chapter,<sup>1</sup> and I just missed each other. They found me in Kaunas and extended their congratulations on behalf of the Chapter. We discussed arrangements for the installation and the speeches. Again, I told them that I was determined, first of all, to address the Poles in Polish even though the Lithuanian Council delegates were pressing me to speak in Lithuanian first. I also said that I was, as yet, undecided about giving an address in Belorussian. Both representatives were very much opposed to my addressing the Belorussians. Monsignor Wołodźko was adamant. He said that there were no Belorussians in Vilnius; that they are merely a fiction created by the Germans, and so on. I pointed out that even the newspaper *Dziennik Wileński*,<sup>2</sup> which supports Polish interests, concedes that the Belorussians make up 17% of the population. In that case, would it not be worthwhile to show some consideration for them as well? Finally, I said that I was willing to leave all the decisions for the arrangements and consultation with the various delegations to the Chapter since it was the host and I would be coming as its guest. I asked them, as far as possible, to make peace among the delegations of the various nationalities and to create harmony among all. The Chapter delegates expressed the wish that I be consecrated in Vilnius.

### ***November 11***<sup>3</sup>

I received a telegram from His Excellency Monsignor Ratti instructing me to be consecrated immediately and to take up the administration of the diocese without waiting for the bull. Again I went to Kaunas to consult with Bishop Karevičius. I also wanted to go to Warsaw and see Ratti personally because it would be difficult to

---

1 Founded in 1387, at the same time as the cathedral. Its full membership was twelve: six monsignors and six canons. While Matulaitis was bishop, it had nine members. The six monsignors were Jan Hanusowicz, Vicar; Jan Sadowski, Dean; Adam Sawicki, Rector of the Cathedral Franciszek Wołodźko, Dean of Priests; Kazimierz Michalkiewicz, former Administrator; Jan Uszyłło, Rector of the Vilnius Seminary. The three canons were Karol Lubianiec, Vice-Rector of the Seminary; Juozapas Kutka; Lucjan Chalecki, Chancellor (1920-1925). The membership fluctuated in 1918-20 because of unstable conditions.

2 *Dziennik Wileński*; (*The Vilnius Daily*) a Polish newspaper, published in Vilnius from 1906. It expressed the views of the Polish National Democratic Party—Narodowa Demokracja (ND).

3 The events recorded are dated by the author, but it is not clear when the actual entries were made. It appears that they were made sometime later.

take over the administration of the diocese solely on the basis of the telegram: the Chapter might not agree to it. However, it turned out that the trains were going only as far as Białystok, and it was not clear whether one could travel any further.

I returned to Marijampole. There we decided that Father Dvaranauskas would go to Warsaw to bring back the necessary papers. He had a difficult journey, but he did bring back the documents. With the Bishop of Kaunas we made arrangements that I would be consecrated on the first of December and take up the administration of the Diocese<sup>1</sup> on the eighth of December, the feast of the Immaculate Conception.

It became clear that none of the other bishops would be able to attend the consecration. I had invited the Bishops of Mińsk and Sejny. The Bishop of Sejny<sup>2</sup> had gone to Łomża, while the Bishop of Mińsk could not come because, I think, he received my message only some five days after the consecration took place.<sup>3</sup>

I had been thinking about postponing the consecration, but I was overruled because it had already been announced in the churches throughout the Diocese of Vilnius. For these reasons, and also because we were likely to face yet more troubled times, I was advised against changing the dates of the consecration and installation. I agreed.

## ***November 29***

We left for Kaunas together with Fathers Dvaranauskas and Reklaitis.<sup>4</sup> The train to Vilkaviškis was already two hours late, and it stopped twice along the way. Consequently, we arrived in Kaunas so late that there was some doubt about whether my consecration would take place at all.

---

1 The episcopal consecration was to take place in the Cathedral of Kaunas, and eight days later Bishop Matulaitis was to make his formal entrance into the Cathedral and Diocese of Vilnius.

2 Bishop Karosas could not come because he had to attend the consecration of Romuald Jałbrzykowski on Nov. 30th in Łomża.

3. Bishop Zygmunt Łoziński had his own troubles, as the Red Army was converging on Mińsk.

4 Kazimieras Reklaitis (1887-1967), Matulaitis's close associate and fellow student at the Theological Academy of St. Petersburg, was professor at the Seminary there. Entered the Marian novitiate at Marijampole in 1918 and later held various responsible positions in the Congregation in Lithuania, the USA, and Rome.

## *November 30*

Monsignor Bajko<sup>1</sup> and Canon Lubianiec,<sup>2</sup> the Cathedral Chapter delegates, with the representative of the Vilnius clergy, Father Kretowicz,<sup>3</sup> arrived from Vilnius. Several more diocesan priests came as well. Monsignor Bajko said that some of the members of the nobility had been planning to attend but apparently had decided against it. They did not like the fact that my consecration was to be held in Kaunas. The representatives of the Lithuanian Council and other government officials were there too.

## *December 11* <sup>4</sup>

The consecration took place December 1st. It was performed by the Bishop of Kaunas [Karevičius], with Monsignor Bajko and Monsignor Dabrila<sup>5</sup> of Vilkaviškis assisting. The Bishops of Sejny and Mińsk as well as His Excellency Bishop O'Rourke, designated Bishop of Riga, were unable to come.

After the consecration, I was congratulated by various Lithuanian delegations and by a representative of one of the Polish girls' organizations. I listened to the various greetings and acknowledged them in Lithuanian. In my remarks I kept strictly to Christ's ideals and to pastoral topics so as not to offend anyone. Later on I also spoke in Polish. After everyone else, two representatives arrived from Lithuania Minor (Prussia). They were soldiers who extended their congratulations and also presented a petition expressing a desire to be reunited with Lithuania proper.

At about six o'clock in the evening, there was a dinner at the Kaunas Seminary. Again there were various speeches in Lithuanian and in Polish. I replied to each in turn, keeping to pastoral topics and reminding everyone that we must all remain faithful to the ideals of Jesus Christ.

<sup>1</sup> Karol Bajko (1859-1923): presided over the Vilnius Cathedral Chapter for a time in 1918, while Msgr. Hanusowicz was administrator of the diocese.

<sup>2</sup> Karol Lubianiec (1866-1942): completed his studies at the Vilnius Seminary and the Theological Academy of St. Petersburg, ordained 1898; an honorary canon and member of the Cathedral Chapter, professor and vice-rector of the Seminary. Director of Social Action in the diocese, he also headed various Polish social and charitable organizations; an active supporter of the Polish National Democratic Party.

<sup>3</sup> Jan Kretowicz: assistant to Msgr. Wołodźko, dean of priests; often acted as representative of the Polish priests of the diocese.

<sup>4</sup> Actual entry date uncertain: a series of events between Dec. 1 and 11 are recorded.

<sup>5</sup> Matas (Matthew) Dabrila (1846-1935): monsignor; ordained in 1869. Worked in various parishes in southern Lithuania in the Diocese of Sejny; 1890-1914—pastor and dean in the cathedral town of Vilkaviškis. During WW I was administrator of the Diocese of Sejny.

Of all the speeches, the one given by Father Tumas<sup>1</sup> impressed me the most. He said: “We have priests who are politicians, nationalists, social activists, and the like, but what we do not have is one who is both father and pastor. Whenever one of us needs to go to confession or make a retreat, there is no one to turn to and nowhere to go.” He expressed the hope that I would be the one to restore the ideals of the Church and to revive the Spirit of Christ.

The next day, together with Monsignor Bajko and Canon Lubianiec (Kretowicz was also there at first), we went over the arrangements for the installation once again. I said that I thought the papal bull ought to be read in Polish, Lithuanian, and Belorussian, but that I would speak first of all in Polish and later in Lithuanian. Both the Lithuanian Council and the Belorussians, the latter in writing, had urgently requested that there be something for the Belorussians. Since I do not know Belorussian and would not dare speak in it, I would at least like to have the bull read in Belorussian. Canon Lubianiec protested vehemently that there were no Belorussians, only a handful of people who have been assembled and bribed by the Germans to make trouble for the Polish population. Such a gesture on my part would not be well received by the Poles, and I would ruin my episcopal installation. Once more I reminded him that even the Polish daily *Dziennik Wileński* concedes that the Belorussians make up 17% of the population and thus it would only be fair to have the bull read in Belorussian.

I asked the Chapter to reconsider this matter carefully since I did not want to offend any part of my flock nor turn them against me or against the Church. I want to serve and be pastor to all without exception. I felt very sorry for this despised nation, and I wanted them to be aware that their bishop does not look down on them or on

---

<sup>1</sup> Juozas Tumas (1869-1933): a well-known Lithuanian priest, ordained in 1893; he had been active in promoting the underground Lithuanian press before WW I, was now working as a journalist and writer in Vilnius under the pen name “Vaižgantas.” He edited various Lithuanian newspapers from 1918 to 1920, then moved to Kaunas, where he lived and worked until his death in 1933.



their language. On the other hand, I did not want any rioting or scandals in church. And so, I again firmly expressed my opinion that the bull should be read in Belorussian and that the Chapter should reconsider the matter thoroughly. To the Chapter I delegated the responsibility of determining the order of the greetings given by the different delegations, since it was the host, and I, for my part, requested only that it try to make peace among the various national groups so that there would be no unpleasantness.

I stayed in Kaunas all week since it was awkward to return to Marijampole. I studied the ritual for the ceremonies. For two days I went to Panemune, to Father Staugaitis's<sup>1</sup> parish, where I could quietly prepare the addresses to be given at the installation in the Vilnius Cathedral.

From Vilnius I got word that the Poles wanted to use the occasion of my installation to stage a nationalist demonstration and that the Germans would not permit this under any circumstances. Rioting and bloodshed were likely to result. Because of this situation, I was advised to go to Vilnius not on the morning of December 8th, as planned, but on the previous evening by express train which arrives at six p.m. I wrote to Monsignor Michalkiewicz to investigate the matter and then advise me what to do. I suspected that political conflict was behind it all. Consequently, in spite of everything, I was determined to travel to Vilnius on the morning of December 8. That is what I did when I learned from the Chapter that no such situation existed in Vilnius. It seems that the Germans did not want me to go on the morning of the 8th. If I had traveled the previous evening, I was promised a separate compartment, but in the morning they did not give me one and I was barely able to get a train ticket.

Along the way I was greeted by the pastor of Lentvaris and his parishioners. When I arrived at the Vilnius train station, I was met by the representatives of the Cathedral Chapter, the Lithuanian Council,

---

<sup>1</sup> Justinas Staugaitis (1866-1943): had gone to school in Marijampole and attended the Seminary of Sejny. Ordained in 1890, he worked in various parishes in southern Lithuania and Poland. As curate in Marijampole in 1905-1906, he was one of the founders of the *Ziburys* society; in 1917 he was elected a member of the Lithuanian Council; in 1916-26, he was pastor of the church in Panemune, a small town outside Kaunas on the left bank of the Nemunas river. In 1926, he was consecrated bishop.

and the city government. We stopped at the Gate of Dawn Shrine.<sup>1</sup> Monsignor Wołodźko briefly addressed me at the chapel in Polish and, afterwards, we sang the Litany of the Blessed Virgin. There was quite a large gathering and they joined in as we sang: “We plead for your protection.” I spoke a few words in Polish.

I had received a letter from Prime Minister Voldemaras.<sup>2</sup> When we got to the sacristy, Monsignors Hanusowicz, Wołodźko, and I read the letter. Mr. Voldemaras demanded that the representatives of the Lithuanian Council and the state officials be given first place in the reception line. Otherwise, if the Chapter refused to allow this, they would decline to attend the ceremonies. He also requested that I address the Belorussians in church.

Monsignor Hanusowicz replied that the Chapter had unanimously decided not only that should there be no address in Belorussian, but that it was not necessary even to read the bull in that language, since there is not a single parish where it is used. If I should order it, the Belorussian text of the bull could be read, but an unpleasant incident would result. I answered that I was ready to comply with the decisions of the Chapter, since it was hosting this event and understands the situation better than I. For my part, I do not wish to be the cause of any disturbance.

Actually, it was not I who determined the order in which the various delegations were to address me—I had left that to the Chapter. I asked only that they would try to reconcile everyone and to avoid any unpleasantness. Monsignor Hanusowicz said that if the Lithuanian Council strongly insisted, their representatives could be given first place and that he would inform Canon Lubianiec. I requested that, if possible, the Lithuanian Council members be given priority.

---

1 One of the two most famous shrines of Mary in Lithuania. The chapel is built over one of the ancient city gates, and its miraculous Madonna has been venerated for centuries. In 1918, the pastor of the Gate of Dawn parish was Msgr. Franciszek Wołodźko, a member of the Cathedral Chapter.

2 Augustinas Voldemaras (1883-1942): Lithuanian historian and statesman. The first Prime Minister of independent Lithuania.

When I arrived at the Cathedral,<sup>1</sup> Monsignor Michalkiewicz met me at the door with a group of priests and spoke briefly in greeting. Having dressed in the bishop's robes, I began the usual ceremony of installation. A great many people had gathered; it was very crowded, and there was no room for all of them inside the church. I briefly addressed the priests in Latin from the bishop's throne. Then I spoke to the people from the pulpit: first in Polish, then in Lithuanian.

The canon who was assisting read the Gospel in Polish only. When I finished my sermon in Polish, I asked if the Gospel would also be read in Lithuanian, but he answered that such was not the custom here. It seemed to me that before the Lithuanian sermon the Gospel should also be read in Lithuanian. However, I passed over the matter in silence and began to speak in Lithuanian. I spoke<sup>2</sup> to the people with as much warmth and sincerity as I could. Both Poles and Lithuanians seemed satisfied.

After solemn Mass, as I was going out with Monsignor Hanusowicz, I repeated my request that the representatives of the Lithuanian Council and officials of State be given first place. I had a feeling that there would be some unpleasantness.

As I entered the bishop's residence, Monsignor Michalkiewicz met me with bread and salt.<sup>3</sup> The other monsignors and canons also arrived. The representatives and the various delegations were assembling in the reception rooms on the second floor.

As I was going in to breakfast, Canon Kukta came up to me and told me that if the Chapter agreed to allow the representatives of the Lithuanian Council to be the first to address me, they would come; otherwise, they would not. I replied that Monsignor Hanusowicz had assured me that he would not oppose such an arrangement. Then Canon Kukta sent a coachman to bring the Council representatives. When I sat down to breakfast, Canon Lubianiec came in and sharply protested against the request of the Lithuanian Council members to speak first. According to him, the arrangement had been for the

---

1 The first Cathedral of Vilnius was built in 1388, just after Lithuania accepted Christianity and subsequently rebuilt five times on the same site. The cathedral that Bishop Matulaitis entered had been remodeled in the neoclassical style by the architect Stuoka-Gucevicius in the late 19th century. It was famous for the baroque chapel dedicated to St. Casimir ("Kazimieras" in Lithuanian), containing his remains. On the roof were statues of the three saints to whom the cathedral was dedicated: St. Stanislaw, St. Helena, and St. Casimir. In 1921 Pope Benedict XV granted it the title of Basilica.

2 The text of this address is given in Appendix I.

3 An old Eastern European custom when welcoming a person.

Polish delegation to speak first, followed by the Lithuanians, and that this order should be preserved. I answered that, in my opinion, it was a matter of civil courtesy. In church I had spoken in Polish first, then in Lithuanian, since the Poles are in the majority. But the Lithuanian Council is, after all, a kind of government. The Holy Father had greeted it; in Munich, Nuncio Pacelli had negotiated with it;<sup>1</sup> the Germans had given it a certain measure of authority. Besides, it represented a significant part of the country. Consequently, it seemed to me that according to civil protocol, it should be given first place.

The other members of the Chapter said nothing against this, and Bishop O'Rourke<sup>2</sup> agreed with me. Canon Lubianiec then insisted that I immediately go to see the delegations, since they were waiting. It had been decided that I would meet with the delegations at two o'clock. However, I said that as soon as the representatives of the Lithuanian Council arrived, everything should be stopped and the Council members allowed to come in. Lubianiec said that perhaps it would be better if I received them separately in a little room. I replied that it would be better not to receive them at all than to insult them in this way.

The greetings began: first came the Polish representatives; afterward, the Lithuanian; and then, the Belorussian. Canon Lubianiec wanted me to reply to the Poles immediately after I had heard them out. Apparently, he wanted the Poles to be free to leave after I had spoken to them. But I said that I would reply to each group in turn, after I had heard all that the various delegations had to say.

To the best of my ability, I spoke sincerely first to the Poles, then to the Lithuanians, and finally to the Belorussians. I addressed the latter in Polish, since I did not know any Belorussian. I told them all that I had come to serve everyone equally, to love them all without exception and that in the relations between nations, as between

---

1 On March 24, 1918, three delegates appointed by the Lithuanian Council, headed by Fr. J. Staugaitis, presented a statement of Lithuanian independence to Nuncio Pacelli in Munich, requesting him to intercede with Pope Benedict XV to acknowledge Lithuania as an independent country.

2. Eduard O'Rourke had been designated Bishop of Riga (Latvia) but was not yet consecrated.

individuals, we must follow the moral principles of Christ. No one has the the right to hate, insult, or mistreat anyone. We must love one another equally, and so on.

The representatives of the Lithuanian Council did not arrive. As it turned out, there had been a misunderstanding. The coachman did not know what to do; he had waited for a while in front of the Council headquarters and then returned. None of the members of the Council had been at the Cathedral either, because the Chapter refused to reserve separate seats for them. They allowed them room only in the sanctuary with the representatives of the various associations and organizations.

I do not know why all these nationalist quarrels, prejudices, and hatreds never appeared to be so petty and despicable as they did today. It seemed to me that with even a minimum of good will and a conciliatory attitude it was possible to make peace with all in Christ. In this case, it appeared to me that the fault lay with certain priests. I learned that the Cathedral Chapter and the Polish clergy refuse to recognize the Lithuanian Council and the Lithuanian State. Later, I found out that for two weeks before the installation most of the talk and arguments in Vilnius centered around which language I would speak in first. If I dared to speak first in Lithuanian, as the Council had insisted, the Poles would have raised havoc in church and started riots. When I spoke in Polish first, they were satisfied.

The Polish citizens invited me to a lunch at two o'clock on December 9th. The Lithuanian Council also invited me to dinner the same day. When I asked what time the dinner was to be held, they replied that it was to be at six o'clock. I saw that I would be able to honor both invitations, so I accepted the Polish one as well. However, the Lithuanians then canceled their dinner. That evening the clergy gave a dinner for me at the seminary; there were many speeches.

The next day, I immediately called on the President of the Lithuanian Council, Mr. Antanas Smetona and his aides as well as all the Lithuanian ministers and prominent statesmen. In the evening the Council issued a formal complaint that the bull and sermon had not been given in Belorussian and that the representatives of the Council had not been assigned appropriate places. I received this note, which the Council had given to the administrator, Monsignor Hanusowicz, only in the early morning of December 9th, when the

secretary, Father Steckiewicz,<sup>1</sup> handed it to me. Thus, after the fact. That is what I explained to Prime Minister Voldemaras in Lithuanian and to the Belorussian National Council in Belorussian. Neither the Lithuanians, nor the Belorussians had been very happy with the arrangements for the installation, but they could see that it was not my fault. The Cathedral Chapter had been responsible for them and I, as their guest, had to accept their decisions.

At the luncheon with the Polish citizens they toasted my health in a way that put me on the spot. They expressed the hope that I would contribute to the rebirth of the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth. I replied that while I was living in Poland, I had served the Polish people with all my heart, and here I am determined to serve everyone as well. I told them that I did not know what the result of my work would be. Since I was a priest and bishop, I could preach only love, brotherhood, and unity to my people. It was my duty to make peace among them. As for political coalitions, these did not depend on me, nor were they in my power to bring about. The Poles seemed pleased with my words. There were many speeches, and one had to be careful not to say anything inappropriate.

The following day, the Christian Democrats<sup>2</sup> invited me to a dinner, and again there were speeches and I had to be very careful. I pointed out that it was not my place to interfere in politics and that it was my hope that I could best serve my country by teaching the people true moral principles and reminding them of the teaching of Christ.

Finally, the members of the Lithuanian Council and the government officials relented and invited me to a luncheon. Again, there were many speeches. The Lithuanians, Belorussians, Polish, and Jewish representatives as well as delegates from other political parties all spoke. I answered most of them in turn, then spoke to all of them together. I reminded them of the ideals and the teachings of Christ. Taking advantage of the occasion, I spoke briefly in defense

---

1 Juljan Steckiewicz (b. 1878): made honorary canon in 1917, while Msgr. Michalkiewicz was administrator. When Matulaitis was Bishop of Vilnius, he worked in the chancery office intermittently between 1918 and 1921.

2 A Lithuanian political party whose program tried to harmonize Catholic social principles with national aspirations. It held its first convention in Vilnius on November 20, 1918.

of the Catholic Faith. It looked as though everyone was pleased with my words: including the Jews, the Belorussians, and the Lithuanians. And so, God helped me to make peace with the Lithuanian Government once again. The Lithuanians were unhappy because of what had happened at the installation and were unsure about how I would relate to them. Now they calmed down.

During these days many priests and people came to call on me in the mornings. In the afternoons I visited some of the more prominent citizens of the city. The representatives of the various convents and monasteries came to present themselves as well. Upon their invitation, I went to visit the Sisters of Nazareth.<sup>1</sup> I was well received. The speeches were very much in the Polish national spirit. In response, I emphasized the importance and value of the Faith and of education in the life of the nation. I celebrated Mass for the Sisters on St. Stephen's day and gave a short homily. The girls and the little children made a pleasant impression on me. I resolved to respect the desires and aspirations of every nation insofar as they were not opposed to the teachings of our Faith. If the Poles wish to return to Warsaw, let them do so. That is not contrary to salvation, just as long as they love God and the Church.

### *December 15*

His Excellency O'Rourke's<sup>2</sup> consecration took place in Vilnius. I consecrated him, with the Bishop of Kaunas and Monsignor Michalkiewicz assisting. Bishop Łoziński<sup>3</sup> of Mińsk could not come because Mińsk has been occupied by the Bolsheviks.

---

1 The Sisters of the Holy Family at Nazareth, founded in Rome in 1875. They did educational and social work. The community had houses in Italy, Poland, France, England, Australia, and the USA. In Lithuania they were in Vilnius and Gardinas (Grodno).

2 Eduard O'Rourke (1876-1943): born in ethnographic Lithuania, he was of Irish descent. Ordained in 1907, he was spiritual director at the Kaunas Seminary for a time. As Bishop of Riga, he was not well received because of prevalent nationalist feeling and resigned in favor of a Latvian bishop.

3 Zygmunt Łoziński (1879-1932): Matulaitis's friend from the Theological Academy of St. Petersburg. In 1917, he became bishop of the newly created Diocese of Mińsk, predominantly Belorussian. He was unable to administer it properly because of constant persecution by the Bolsheviks. The Red Army took Mińsk on Dec. 11, 1918, and on Jan. 1, 1919, the Belorussian Soviet Socialist Republic was established.

## *December 16*

I invited the Bishop of Kaunas, the Bishop of Riga and Monsignor Michalkiewicz to come and see me. We discussed some current problems.

1) How should the clergy behave, faced with the fact that the Bolsheviks were drawing near: a) They should avoid politics in their sermons, speaking only of the teaching of Christ, but taking care to bring out those points which are attacked. b) They should put their funds and bank deposits in order because searches would be conducted. c) When asked to produce documents, the priests in Russia would hand over copies. d) In Russia the priests would have private contact with the Bolsheviks if that were necessary, but no official relations were maintained.

2) Both the Lithuanian Council and the Polish representative, Dr. Józef Ziemacki, approached me separately with requests for a Department of Theology. Both the Lithuanians and the Poles have each decided to found a university. Naturally, we do not need two Departments of Theology. The simplest way of clearing up the dispute is to have Latin as the language of instruction. The assembled diocesan administrators were of the opinion that we should take up this issue and found a Department of Theology. To do this, we have to contact the nuncio and discuss the subject with both the Lithuanian Council and the Polish representatives. Taking into consideration the present state of unrest in the city of Vilnius and the possibility of upheavals, I decided to set aside the question of the Theology Department for the time being.

3) We talked about reclaiming churches confiscated by the Russian government and about repossession of Church property in general.

4) We decided to send the people a joint pastoral letter, and I was delegated to draft it. I doubt whether this can be done in the present state of confusion.

5) We also agreed that our respective chanceries would send each other copies of any letters, directives, or other published material so that we could coordinate our work.

6) It is necessary to standardize the parish record books. Here in



Vilnius we have decided to make all entries in Latin. Sample copies of the parish registers are already in print.

7) We discussed the foundation of religious communities and also the giving of retreats, parish missions, and so on, but we must let things be for the present.

8) We need to have a consultation about how we will introduce the requirements of the new Code of Canon Law<sup>1</sup> into our daily lives.

At five o'clock on the same day I invited the priests of the city to discuss what we will do and how we will prepare the people for the coming of the Bolsheviks.

1) I briefly outlined what I had in mind: that they should emphasize the ideals of Christ in a positive way, taking care to bring out those matters of Faith that are under attack. Outright arguments and political controversies should be avoided in sermons and so on.

I listened to the priests' opinions about the current state of affairs and what measures we might take to prevent or minimize the various evils that can occur. Various methods were suggested: suitable sermons, brochures, leaflets, and appropriate articles in the newspapers; also to keep in touch with the faithful by visiting homes, especially at Christmas; good organization in the administration of the sacraments and encouraging the faithful to receive them and keep up their devotional practices. It would be a good idea to have question boxes so that the workers could be instructed, especially when in doubt, or when they had to respond to attacks on their faith.

2) We decided to have Masses of reparation in all the churches of Vilnius by turn, with appropriate sermons. I asked the dean to call the pastors together to determine the order of these Masses and topics for the sermons.

3) I announced that parish records were to be kept in Latin and that sample books were already in print.

---

<sup>1</sup> On May 27, 1917, Pope Benedict XV had introduced the new Code of Canon Law, effective May 19, 1918. The bishops were responsible for introducing it into their own dioceses.

4) I asked the priests that if they had any questions or topics they wished to discuss at these meetings, to present them to me in writing or drop them into my mailbox.

5) I reminded the priests to put their bank deposits in order as quickly as possible and also any cash they might have on hand.

In the city, unrest keeps growing. The Germans are getting ready to leave: I learned that by the second or fifth of January 1919 there would be no more Germans in Vilnius.

Various factions in the city have begun to compete for power. Many newspapers in various languages have appeared. It seems that six different groups are trying to get control of the city: the Lithuanian Council, the German Military Council, the Polish Committee, the Bolshevik Workers' Council, another Bolshevik committee, headed by Kapsukas<sup>1</sup> in the Vileika district, and the old municipal administration left by the Russians.

The Germans did not support any of these, nor were they handing out weapons. Finally, they turned the public buildings over to the Lithuanian Council, but it was unable to hold or defend them. The city itself they handed over to the old municipal administration, while at the same time expressing approval of the Bolshevik Council. Later, it became clear that the Germans had actually turned the city over to the Polish Legionnaires. The German policy was quite incredible: they managed to turn everyone against each other and then they took everything with them and left.

My own position was extremely difficult. Whatever one side approved of, the other opposed. It was impossible to please them. The cauldron was boiling over. I kept to the teaching of Christ and of the Church. It was obvious that the Poles and the Lithuanians were going their own way without much consideration for the needs of the Church.

The Bolsheviks organized workers' demonstrations directed particularly against the Germans, demanding that power be transferred to the Bolshevik Workers' Council.

---

<sup>1</sup> Vincas Mickevicius (Kapsukas): a leading Lithuanian Communist activist. On December 24, Moscow approved his Provisional Lithuanian Revolutionary Workers' Council designed to take over the city government.

## ***December 26***

On Christmas I celebrated midnight Mass and gave a homily. During the holidays I visited various Lithuanian and Polish institutions. On Christmas Eve I went to some of them for the traditional sharing of the Christmas wafer.<sup>1</sup>

## ***December 27***

A certain Stefan Mickiewicz, a Polish Commissar sent by the Polish Government in Warsaw, came to see me. He announced that the Polish Government had decided to occupy Lithuania, but that this did not necessarily mean annexation and that the country would be given the right to self-determination. He said that the Polish Legionnaires and the Polish Government would guarantee freedom for the Church and would equally defend the liberty of all nations.

I replied that I would not interfere in politics, but that when the Legionnaires arrived, we the clergy would concern ourselves with the salvation of their souls as with those of other people. I have always preached to the people on our need for unity, love, and brotherhood. That is my task as pastor.

## ***December 31***

I think it was on December 29th that Father Purickis sent a telegram in the name of the Lithuanian Mission in Berlin stating that the Germans would not hand Vilnius over to the Bolsheviks or the Poles and that I should reassure the people; also, that the Allies recognize the Lithuanian Council and that it will receive a loan of 100 million [marks]. I forwarded the telegram to the Lithuanian Council, suggesting that they publish it in their own name rather than in mine.

I have already been informed that the last passenger train will leave Vilnius on January 2nd at 12 o'clock and that all the Germans are getting out. The Lithuanian ministers and their staffs are also moving out, but the Lithuanian institutions will remain.

I preached a sermon to mark the end of the year.

---

<sup>1</sup> A Christmas custom observed by both Lithuanians and Poles. At the Christmas Eve supper those gathered together share with each other pieces of wafer, which is like Communion bread but not consecrated, wishing each other God's blessings at Christmas and during the coming year.

VILNIUS JOURNAL  
1919-1921



# 1919

*As the New Year dawned, Vilnius was in a state of turmoil. Although the Germans were leaving, there were still three major contenders for control of the city: the Bolsheviks, the Polish Legionnaires, and the Lithuanians. The Red Army had already taken Latvia and the Belorussian area around Mińsk and established Soviet Republics. The Red Army was converging on Vilnius from several directions. The Polish Legionnaires, a local force put together by a secret Polish military organization, attempted to take and defend the city, but held out only for a few days. The Lithuanian government had barely established itself in the historic capital when it was forced to leave because of the Bolshevik threat. Bishop Matulaitis had to govern his diocese<sup>1</sup> in the midst of all this unrest. Although the war was officially over, Vilnius remained in a state of war throughout 1919. Both the people and their bishop were suffering from hunger, uncertainty, and harassment. Matulaitis's main worry was to meet the spiritual needs of his flock, to defend the rights of the Church, and keep it functioning as various governments came and went.*

## **January 2**

At five o'clock in the afternoon of New Year's Day, the Polish Legionnaires took charge of the defense of the city. At Varnai Street they surrounded the Bolshevik Workers' Council.<sup>2</sup> Several Lithuanian Bolsheviks and many Jews were arrested. On January 2nd, surrounded and under heavy fire, the Workers' council was forced to surrender. Realizing that they would have to surrender, some of the men, I think it was six, committed suicide. There is unrest in the city—constant gunfire can be heard. General Mokrzecki, Commander of the Legionnaires, has declared a state of war.

---

<sup>1</sup> The Diocese of Vilnius covered about 80,600 sq. km. and included over a million Catholics. Part of it was in Lithuania; part, in Poland. Up to 1921, it was under the jurisdiction of the Metropolitan of Mogilev; from 1921-1926 it was under the Metropolitan of Warsaw. The people were of three major ethnic groups: Lithuanian, Polish, and Belorussian.

<sup>2</sup> The headquarters were surrounded while elections were being held. The leaders escaped, but many of the other members died. Six men shot themselves, but one remained alive and was taken prisoner. The Polish high command had decided to liquidate this Bolshevik center used for meetings and recruiting men for the Red Army.

Many priests are fleeing to Vilnius from the areas taken by the Bolsheviks. From their talk it is evident that the Bolsheviks are steadily approaching Vilnius: one division is moving from Daugavpils (Latvia) through Utena,<sup>1</sup> apparently headed for Kaunas; another had passed through Svencionys,<sup>2</sup> another through Asmena,<sup>3</sup> and yet another is heading for Lyda.<sup>4</sup>

It seems to me that the Legionnaires will not be able to hold Vilnius. They have needlessly antagonized people of opposing parties by their shooting, arrests, and so on. When the Bolsheviks arrive, they will doubtless take revenge—first of all on the priests, then on the Poles. Neither the Jews, nor the Lithuanians have joined the Legionnaires. If they cannot hold out against the Bolsheviks, the Legionnaires' campaign will only bring greater misfortune on the people of the city. They had counted on the support of the villages, but I found out from the refugee priests that the rural people are unwilling to fight. They say: "The Bolsheviks have nothing against us—they are against the landowners and the priests." The Poles are still hoping for reinforcements from Warsaw, but probably in vain, since one hears that Warsaw has neither weapons nor ammunition.

On January 2nd, the Lithuanian ministers and their staffs moved to Kaunas.<sup>5</sup> Most of the Germans have cleared out. Now they are holding only the railway station and the upper part of the city. There have been clashes between the Legionnaires and the German soldiers. In some places the Legionnaires tried to disarm the Germans, but the latter resisted, and a few Legionnaires were shot. The Polish population of Vilnius is in high spirits; they are collecting donations to support the Legionnaires and so on.

---

1 The Latvian city, Daugavpils, had already been taken by the Red Army and a division was approaching Vilnius from the north.

2 The town of Svencionys, 75 km northeast of Vilnius, is an important Lithuanian cultural center in eastern Lithuania. In 1919-20, it was contested by the Lithuanians, Bolsheviks, and Poles; several battles were fought here.

3 Asmena is southeast of Vilnius, near the Belorussian border.

4 Lyda is even further south, on the Lithuanian-Belorussian border.

5 The government of the Republic of Lithuania moved to Kaunas, the capital of independent Lithuania from 1919 to 1939.

### *January 3*

One of the Dolorist Brothers was sent to ask me whether it would be appropriate for the Brothers to join the Legionnaires so that the people would not look down on them saying—so many men, but they do not want to defend their country. I replied that they are absolutely forbidden to go to war because that is contrary to their religious vocation as well as against Canon Law and the spirit of the Church. As soon as hospitals are organized, they can go and minister to the sick and wounded if they want to.

A hot-headed pastor came running in to me to ask if he should allow hoisting a heavy machine gun up into the church steeple (this was on the 2nd of January). It would be very easy to open fire on the Bolshevik Workers' Council from that position and thus force them to surrender. I would not allow it. The House of God cannot be used for military purposes.

A priest sent by General Wejtko<sup>1</sup> arrived to discuss the question of appointing chaplains for the Legionnaires. General Wejtko requests that he (the same priest who had been sent) be made dean and that other chaplains be appointed only with his approval. I agreed, since we must be concerned with the salvation of every person, especially when he is in constant danger of death. I said that I would consent to appoint those chaplains who are willing to undertake this task.

### *January 4*

Several priests have arrived from areas occupied by the Bolsheviks. They report that the Bolsheviks are behaving with restraint, not harming anyone, punishing only thieves and robbers. They are paying well for whatever they receive or requisition from

---

<sup>1</sup> General Władysław Wejtko had been appointed to organize and command a defensive force made up of Lithuanians and Belorussians. Men were being recruited by the secret Polish Military Organization (*Polska Organizacja Wojskowa* — POW).



the people and are interested only in those priests who have collaborated with the Legionnaires. According to these reports, the Bolsheviks have apparently changed their way of behaving toward the people.

In the city one can still occasionally hear the sound of gunfire. The Legionnaires have been shooting it out with the Bolsheviks in the New Vilnia district, about eight miles outside Vilnius.

My secretary [Steckiewicz] came in and told me that the people are scandalized that at such a time the priests are not doing anything, not taking a stand. Perhaps they could support the Legionnaires in some concrete way. I answered that we must be careful. We have to look at the situation realistically. The Legionnaires will hardly be able to hold Vilnius. The Bolsheviks are advancing closer and closer and, no doubt, will take the city. The Legionnaires have not gained much support in the villages, not even in those that are mainly Polish. In my opinion, they are unlikely to get much support from Warsaw and are short of weapons and ammunition. Nor are the Jews joining in the struggle; they even oppose the Legionnaires. We have had all kinds of governments in Vilnius and can expect several more. It is better for the priests to remain calm, stop interfering in these conflicts and battles, and get on with the work of the Church and the salvation of souls.

## *January 5*

The Poles themselves are now saying that the Legionnaires will retreat toward Gardinas (Grodno).<sup>1</sup> Then, after reorganizing themselves into larger units, they will return to take Vilnius. In the meantime, they are forced to surrender the city to the Bolsheviks. Some of them have already marched out. In the evening the sound of heavy gunfire could be heard in the vicinity of Antakalnis.<sup>2</sup>

As the Germans moved out, they took all the locomotives and railway cars with them. The Legionnaires seized a completely empty

---

1 A much-contested city in the south, on the Nemunas River. When the Germans left, the Lithuanians claimed it as historically theirs and used it as an army base. The Poles occupied it in May 1919. Then the Bolsheviks took it in the summer of 1920. According to the Treaty of Brest-Litovsk, it was to be returned to Lithuania, but the Poles re-occupied and held it until 1939 when it became part of the Belorussian Soviet Socialist Republic.

2 Antakalnis is the oldest suburb of Vilnius outside the old city walls. It runs among the hills of the right bank of the Vilnele River, from which Vilnius gets its name. Its most striking landmark is the baroque Church of Sts. Peter and Paul.

railway station. On the 3rd and 4th of January trains were still running from Lentvaris to Kaunas. But on the 5th it was announced that from now on they will be running from Kaišiadorys.

Just before Christmas Father Vaitkevičius<sup>1</sup> arrived from Włocławek<sup>2</sup> by way of Warsaw. He had a very difficult and troublesome journey. I was very happy to see him. With one of my own at my side, I felt more at peace.

It has been very hard for me here in Vilnius. My path is truly strewn with thorns. In Polish society I was feared and distrusted: the Poles kept watching what I would do. Even while congratulating me at my installation, one Polish lady said she hoped I would be a real father, not a stepfather, to the Polish people. As for the Lithuanians, they were afraid that I might gravitate toward the Poles. It was difficult to see how I could please both.

The city is plagued with intense nationalistic hatreds. The Poles positively refuse to recognize either the Lithuanians or the Belorussians. They intend to take power into their own hands and are already doing so. On the other hand, the Lithuanians say that there are no real Poles here: the common people are Belorussian and there is no need to pay much attention to the Polish landowners and chauvinists. The leaders of the Belorussians, for their part, want something for their own people. However, the Belorussian people are ignorant and neglected, hardly conscious of their own national identity. In fact, if anyone tries to speak or preach to them in Belorussian, they object vehemently. As for the Jews, it appears that they are in sympathy with Russia and intend to join the Russians. In addition to these, there are all kinds of political factions and parties. The city is like a boiling cauldron, seething with hatred.

---

1 Juozas Vaitkevičius [Józef Wojtkiewicz in Polish] (1880-1949): came from the same part of Lithuania as Matulaitis and, like him, had studied at the Seminary of Warsaw; ordained in 1903. He received his doctorate in theology from the University of Fribourg and joined the Marians in 1911. He taught in Warsaw then at the Seminary in Włocławek from 1913-1918. He stayed with Bishop Matulaitis in Vilnius 1918-20 as his private secretary.

2 Włocławek was an important city in Poland on the Wistula River, about 100 mi. north of Warsaw. It was the seat of an old diocese and famous for its medieval cathedral. It also had a Seminary.

My friend Canon Kukta<sup>1</sup> helped me a great deal: he gave me some things that I needed for the house and managed to buy or procure whatever else was required. His was a truly brotherly heart. On my leaving Marijampole, the Marians also took care of my needs. Father Reklaitis and later Father Dvaranauskas came up here to help me get settled. Also, the Superior of the Sisters of the Poor<sup>2</sup> helped me organize my household as much as she could.

My workload was heavy, and I had many things to take care of. I often had to give speeches. I became worn out and exhausted. I could not sleep nights. But I was able to pray a great deal; God visited me with especially generous graces, comforted and strengthened me. How good is the Lord! Even if He sends crosses, He makes them sweet and bearable. Lord, how I love you! Punish and chastise me for my sins here on earth, only grant me your grace that I might love you more and more. I had promised to serve everyone equally, regardless of how many difficulties I had to face. Help me be faithful to my resolutions, O God!

On the evening of January 5th, small groups of Polish Legionnaires were strolling through the streets singing patriotic songs in Polish. They made a good deal of noise before they left, showing off to the people. Around eight o'clock in the evening gunfire could be heard in the city not far from my house, probably in Bernardine Street. At eight p.m. the Bolsheviks took the city. The Legionnaires retreated to Gardinas.

Before noon that same day, I had already spoken words of warning to a serious and level-headed Polish priest: "If the Legionnaires cannot hold out, their adventure will have unfortunate consequences and, clearly, they will have to retreat."

"How can that be?" asked the priest. "General Klinger<sup>3</sup> is a serious and intelligent person. He would not have begun such a campaign if there were no realistic hope of victory. It is true that the Legionnaires

1 Juozapas Kukta was an old resident of Vilnius; he had completed his Seminary training here in 1895. After ordination in St. Petersburg where he studied with Matulaitis, he returned to work in Vilnius. His first appointment was to the Gate of Dawn parish.

2 This was the community recently founded by Matulaitis, with its Motherhouse in Marijampole. As its first superior he had appointed one of the first sisters to join, Sister Petronele Uogintas (1885-1945).

3 Zygmunt Klinger had been appointed by Pilsudski as Chief of Staff for the Legionnaires in Vilnius. He had drawn up a plan for the defense of the city, but apparently General Wejtko disagreed with it. At any rate, the Polish leaders seriously underestimated the capability of the Red Army.

are not much of an army, but the Red Army is not much good either.” It appears that often people see only what they want to see.

The Legionnaires have taken themselves off, and their leaders, backers, and supporters have left with them. They behaved in a truly juvenile manner—as badly as possible. One does not even know how to describe this campaign of theirs. All they have accomplished by their arrests, attacks, shooting squads, and house arrests is to antagonize the people. They have angered and annoyed the Jews, the Lithuanians, the Belorussians, and, most of all, the Bolsheviks. They have succeeded in provoking the rage and revenge of the Bolsheviks against innocent people. It is sad that the Poles of the older generation supported, encouraged, and believed in the Legionnaires, drawing the young people in as well. What is even worse is that many Polish priests became involved. One could say that they created and formed the Legionnaires.

Here in Vilnius the priests are very much involved in politics. If it were not for them, the nobility could not do much on its own. Now many of the priests will probably have to flee, and they will bring down retributions on the Church and on the rest of the clergy. There is nothing worse than priests interfering in politics, especially here in Vilnius, where there are so many nationalities and parties. A priest must be father and pastor to everyone without exception. He cannot be a party man, or even worse, support political conspiracies. May God grant that this breed of priest-politician disappear from our beloved Church! Whenever I reflect on this, I cannot help thinking that one day the scourge of God will come to punish us priests for this.

### *January 6*

As soon as I got up early in the morning, I could see small groups of Red Army soldiers in the street. Apart from these, the street was deserted. Here and there a few devout women, prayerbooks in hand, could be seen going to church or coming home. A few men and women had stepped outside their gates and were looking around timidly, surprised by the change. Eventually more and more people ventured out into the street. But this was not yesterday’s crowd, and the street had a different look about it. Yesterday, the Legionnaires

had swaggered along the streets and many young people were strolling around, especially girls but also a number of ladies and gentlemen. It seemed as though the Jews had gone into hiding; once in a while one would go by, looking frightened. Most of the Poles had white eagles pinned on and seemed confident that now they were in power. Here and there some of the Legionnaires rode by in sleighs.

Today everything is different. The poor and working-class people, mostly Jews, have spilled out into the streets; young men and women have come out to greet the Red Army soldiers and are talking to them. Apparently, quite a few of the soldiers are Jewish, and the young people know some of them. The gentry have disappeared. Now the Red Army soldiers and the common people are riding around in sleighs. It looks like a different city. It is fairly quiet, but there are rumors of the arrests of some Legionnaires who had been in hiding.

I have been advised to get away somewhere or at least to move into another house. I have decided not to go anywhere. It will be as God wills. If it be God's will, they will arrest or even kill me—the way is the same everywhere. I do not feel that I have done anyone any harm or committed any crime, and so I am at peace. People say that the Bolsheviks are not behaving as they did at first; they are now treating people courteously and will so long as no one opposes them.

I celebrated high Mass at the Cathedral. It was filled with people.

## *January 7*

Everything was quiet. The Bolsheviks have announced their take-over in a humane manner.<sup>1</sup> Rumor has it that the Bolsheviks have arrested more than a dozen Legionnaires and are carrying out house searches among gentry suspected of having collaborated with the Legionnaires. It is said that the Legionnaires have retreated to Lentvaris, where some of them were disarmed by the Germans, but

---

<sup>1</sup> On Jan. 6 the Bolsheviks posted announcements in Lithuanian, Polish, and Russian that the Red Army had taken Vilnius and its government was now the Provisional Revolutionary Lithuanian Workers' Council.

that later they succeeded in coming to an agreement with the Germans who returned their weapons and took them to Białystok by rail. From there they were permitted to go to Poland. For the time being that is how the Legionnaires' campaign has ended. People are speculating about what they had been trying to achieve. Some thought they wanted to show the world that Vilnius is a Polish city. It was even announced that the Lithuanian Council and the Poles had come to an agreement and the Legionnaires had been allowed to operate in Lithuania, that Lithuania and Poland were now acting in concert. Another idea was that the Germans allowed the Legionnaires to mobilize and take control of Vilnius so that the unruly elements which irritated the Germans would thus be forced into the open and eliminated more easily. And yet again, it is rumored that the Germans wanted to create a demonstration for the benefit of the Allies to show they were acting justly and did not support the Bolsheviks.

### *January 8*

The Bolsheviks are solemnly burying their fallen comrades, both those killed by the Legionnaires and those who had committed suicide under siege. They buried them near the Cathedral, close to the spot where the monument to Catherine II<sup>1</sup> once stood. The bodies were carried through the streets all around the city. Quite a few people had gathered, mostly Jews. The Cathedral square and part of the street were crowded. A few speeches were addressed to the crowd in Lithuanian, Polish, and Russian. The speaker who addressed the crowd in Polish vehemently attacked the clergy. He said that the appearance of the Legionnaires had been the work of the priests and that everything that happened here is their fault.

The Bolshevik newspapers reported these events in a subdued manner, saying that although there was a natural desire to take revenge, they would not do so since there was no time for such things. It is better for the Red Army to continue its work of liberating

---

<sup>1</sup> Yekaterina in Russian; Empress of Russia (1762-1796). During her reign, in 1795, the Kingdom of Poland-Lithuania was finally partitioned. Lithuania became part of Russia, ruled by a Russian governor. This situation lasted until 1918, when Lithuania declared its independence. The statue of Catherine in the Vilnius Cathedral square was a hated symbol of oppression and had been demolished.

the working classes. The articles were well written and wise, since most people were afraid that the Bolsheviks were going to avenge the death of their comrades. That day was proclaimed a workers' holiday. Stores were closed and work stopped everywhere. Red flags were to be flown in all the houses.

I was informed that in their meetings<sup>1</sup> and discussions the Lithuanians were trying to find ways of getting along with the Bolsheviks. In general, they are criticizing the Lithuanian Council and the Government for allowing themselves to be made fools of by the Germans. The Germans kept making promises and then dragging their feet and never getting anything done. Now it is said that they have promised uniforms and weapons to equip 10,000 soldiers and also 100 million marks. It is too late now. It would hardly make sense for the Lithuanian Council to organize an army now. The Christian Democrats say that it would be better to use the money to solve the critical problem of land reform. Discontent is being expressed that the Lithuanian Council and Government left Vilnius and are now planning to move from Kaunas to Tilsit or Gardinas (Grodno). The Executive Committee of the Christian Democratic Party had announced that land owned by the State and the large estates should immediately be distributed among the farm workers and peasants with little or no land. It was up to the Constituent Assembly to decide on appropriate compensation. That was how they had hoped to forestall the Bolshevik reforms.

A delegation of several persons has been chosen to negotiate with the Bolsheviks. The Lithuanians have decided on the following: 1. not to oppose the Bolsheviks if they are ready to recognize Lithuania's independence and allow them to try to introduce their reforms; 2. to serve as officials in Bolshevik institutions so that people of other nationalities do not gain power in Lithuania; 3. to organize an army,<sup>2</sup> even if it means collaborating with the Bolsheviks. Some say that the Lithuanian Council has moved out in order to be able to negotiate with the Allies and to represent Lithuania in the West.

---

1 Two meetings had been held. On Jan. 6 several hundred Lithuanians met at the club "Ruta" and decided to send a delegation to speak with Vincas Mickevičius, head of the Bolshevik government. Fr. Tumas had taken part in these meetings and informed the bishop.

2 The Ministry of Defense of independent Lithuania had already issued an order on November 23, 1918, to recruit a volunteer army.

## *January 10*

The Bolsheviks have arrested Biržiška, Janulaitis, and the Jew Wygodski—that is, those ministers of the Lithuanian Government who are still in Vilnius.<sup>1</sup> They say that they will hold them for a few days and then release them. The Bolsheviks are demanding that they make a statement renouncing the Lithuanian Council and its activities. I have heard that some Poles have been arrested as well. Otherwise, everything is quiet and people have returned to their normal jobs. Later, I found out that they have also arrested Stašinskas.

## *February 10*

I have not written anything down because there was no time to do so.

After holding them awhile, the Bolsheviks have released the detained Council members. Only Mr. Stašinskas is still in prison.

The new government has begun to get organized and to secure its position. They have elected a new City Council. Of course, the elections were set up in such a way that only Communists could get into the Council. As a result, almost all those elected were Communists. Doctor Eidukevicius<sup>2</sup> is the new Chairman of the Council.

With the coming of the Bolsheviks, prices have gone up: a pound of bread has jumped from 60 kopeks to 5 rubles; a pound of butter — from 7 or 8 to 30 rubles, and so on. I have heard that in Vitebsk<sup>3</sup> a pound of butter costs between 60 and 70 rubles, while a pound of bread is 12 rubles. The people are complaining a good deal about these high prices. Factories have been closing down, and more and more people are out of work. Farm produce from the surrounding villages is no

---

1 Mykolas Biržiška was Minister of Education, Augustinas Janulaitis—Minister of the Interior, Jacob Wygodski—Representative for Jewish Affairs, Vladas Stašinskas—Minister of the Interior. All of them were soon released except Stašinskas who was held in various prisons for six months.

2 Pranas Eidukevičius (1869-1926): former member of the Lithuanian Social Democrats, who later joined the Communists. He had been Chairman of the Vilnius Workers' Council and escaped when it was attacked by the Legionnaires. Now he was head of the Bolshevik City Council.

3 Vitebsk: an important Belorussian city, an industrial and trade center, where many Lithuanian refugees stayed after WW I.



longer reaching the city. The farmers are afraid that their produce will be confiscated and do not want to go by those places where there are Bolshevik soldiers. According to what I have heard, the city people are very dissatisfied because of the high price of food. What is the use of raising the workers' daily wage by 12 to 20 rubles? Earlier you could buy 33 pounds of bread for 20 rubles; Now you can get only 4 pounds for the same price. The peasants expected to get some land from the Communists. But now that it is clear that the Bolsheviks will not allow the large estates to be broken up and have no intention of distributing land, they have cooled off towards them and are now beginning to grumble. And so, even the peasants are dissatisfied with the Bolsheviks, especially since they have begun to requisition food here and there.

The Bolsheviks have passed a Decree on Land Reform.<sup>1</sup> Church property and land and estates owned by the nobility have been proclaimed public property. This decree worries me, the Cathedral Chapter, and the other priests. As much as I could, I read up on Canon Law and various commentaries and interpretations concerning Church property so that I would not deviate in any way from the spirit and teaching of the Church. I consulted with the members of the Cathedral Chapter and also with those who had already experienced the Communist revolution in Russia about what we should do. On the advice of His Excellency Monsignor Michalkiewicz, I invited Mr. Wróblewski,<sup>2</sup> a well-known attorney in Vilnius and spoke with him about this matter. He undertook to draw up statutes for parish councils so that on, this basis, the parishioners could supervise Church property and defend it.

When the statutes had been completed, I invited Monsignors Michalkiewicz and Sadowski as well as Canons Maciejewicz<sup>3</sup> and Steckiewicz to a meeting which, of course, included Mr. Wróblewski and me. It became clear that the ownership and supervision of Church property would be transferred exclusively to the parish councils. The pastors

---

1 It was passed on Jan. 14, 1919, forbade the buying and selling of land, and nationalized estates, large farms, and Church property.

2 Tadeusz Wróblewski (1858-1925): A Polish attorney who lived and worked in Vilnius from 1891 to 1925. He had been exiled to Siberia and on his return continued to practice law, defending many Lithuanian political prisoners.

3 Stanisław Maciejewicz (1869-1940): a native of Vilnius, studied at the Vilnius Seminary and then at the Academy of St. Petersburg. In Vilnius, he worked as an educator and was also known as a journalist and supporter of the Polish National Democratic Party. He was a member of the Duma and later of the Polish Parliament.

were not even mentioned because, ostensibly, the Bolsheviks would not recognize any other type of association. After I had heard it out, I said that this was contrary to Canon Law and that I had no authority to approve such statutes or associations, nor could I give them to any priest.

Consequently, I decided that it would be better to put off this matter for a while, to wait and see what actually develops. As for me, wherever I could, I advised the priests that if the Bolsheviks should try to take over Church property, they ought to form parish councils to defend, but not to control it. I asked them to explain to the people that this property belongs to the parish and not to the pastor. Should the Bolsheviks confiscate parish property, the parishioners would have to find other means to support their priest and the church. With the loss of Church property, a new burden would fall on the shoulders of the parishioners. On many estates the Bolsheviks had already organized councils made up of farmhands and workers. But so far, they have not touched Church property anywhere.

I am even more concerned about the teaching of religion in the schools. As soon as they got here, the Bolsheviks began threatening to pass a decree according to which all religious symbols, religion as a subject and its teachers, the priests, would be banished from the schools. In some places they have already begun to carry this out. The people were incensed, and everywhere they vociferously demanded that religion cannot be abolished and that schools must remain as they are. They say that if religion and the priests are driven out of the schools, they will refuse to send their children. I heard that in one place (I think it was in the town of Svencionys) the Bolshevik Commissar replaced the Catholic principal of a secondary school with a Bolshevik who ran the school as he saw fit. When the older children saw what was going on, they went home, while the younger ones, forced into the school, started crying. Realizing that the school would soon cease to function, the Commissar restored the previous staff, and order returned to the school.

I told the priests that they should organize parents' committees at the schools; let the parents themselves defend their rights and demand that their children be taught religion. At the same time, I read everything I could get on this subject so that I would not transgress

Canon Law in any way or the teaching and spirit of the Church. I also investigated how the Church has handled the situation in other countries where the schools have been secularized and religion is no longer part of the curriculum.

The Catholic Society of Vilnius, both Polish and Lithuanian, was up in arms over the school issue. Both priests and lay people came to consult with me about what is to be done. The Polish teachers have split into two factions; the staunch Catholics have decided to demand unequivocally that the schools remain Catholic; the non-practicing Catholics and non-Catholics want to negotiate and compromise with the Bolsheviks. The Polish delegation came to see me, asking that I make peace among them and give them direction in this matter of preserving the Polish schools.

The lawyer Wróblewski also visited me to find out what I thought about the secularization of the schools. I have been told that at one time he appeared to be a zealous Catholic, who, it is said, even kissed priests' hands in public. Later, he became a radical Polish nationalist, a supporter of the National Democrats. Now, when other winds are blowing, he has joined the leftist party, the Social Democrats. He explained the difficult situation of the Polish schools. If they decide to submit to Bolshevik demands and do away with the teaching of religion altogether, the priests can protest and the parents can boycott the schools, saying that they are godless and so on. If they do not obey the Bolsheviks, the Polish schools will fall apart of their own accord because the Bolsheviks will refuse to fund them and may even confiscate their buildings and permits. With prices going up, teachers' salaries must be raised. But there are no funds. The students' tuition is already considerable and cannot be increased any more. In the secondary schools established by the Bolsheviks, the teachers are well paid and education is free. Without financial support the Polish schools will not be able to compete with the Bolshevik schools and will have to close. The students will be dispersed and eventually will come to the Bolshevik school if they want to get an education. If we support the Bolsheviks and maintain the Polish high schools, the children will be taught by competent teachers in the proper manner, while religion could be taught in some other building nearby.

I answered Mr. Wróblewski that I cannot allow religion to be banned in the schools. It is the parents' duty to protest this, and the teachers should bring out the fact that this would be detrimental from the educational standpoint. He asked me whether the Lithuanian parents intend to protest. I replied that, as far as I know, they do.

From my conversation with Mr. Wróblewski and other Polish delegates, it became clear that if I had told him that we, both the priests and lay Catholics, would boycott those schools where religion had been abolished, the Poles would have accused the Church and the clergy of undermining Polish society and the educational system. They would be busy accusing us, while the various groups of Polish socialists would have used the situation to attack the Church.

After Mr. Wróblewski had gone, Mr. Kościałkowski, the principal of the Boys' First Secondary School, came in. He is a good Catholic, but there are also non-Catholic teachers at his school. Then he went on to say much the same thing as Mr. Wróblewski. He requested that I issue some guidelines on the matter and try to reconcile the quarreling factions.

I answered him that my directives could only be those provided by the Church. 1) Catholic parents have both a duty and the right to demand that their children be educated in a Catholic spirit. I opened the book of Canon Law and read the appropriate article to the principal. 2) If the Bolsheviki decide to abolish religious instruction in the schools, the parents are obliged to protest. 3) In my opinion, the Catholic teachers should at least make a statement that, taking into account social values, the desires of both parents and children, as well as educational goals, religious instruction should remain. 4) I also said: "I cannot interfere with your negotiations with the Bolsheviks. Do what you can to ensure that the teaching of religion continues. But if the Bolsheviks abolish it by force, there is not much that you can do. Then we will see what this new secularized school will be like. If it becomes evident that these schools undermine and destroy religious faith, then it is obvious that Catholic parents cannot send their children to such institutions; and if they do so, the priests cannot give them absolution." 5) "You should not imagine," I told him, "that if the Bolsheviks give the secondary schools financial support, they will allow them to be conducted in a Catholic spirit as they have been up to now. If they give you money, they will want the

schools run as they see fit. I think that you will be replaced by another principal, a Bolshevik, who will run the school his own way.”

6) Such concessions and agreements with the Bolsheviks can be partially justified only in the event that they will have pulled out by summer so that the schools can somehow be saved until then. With the beginning of the new school year, things would have returned to normal. But if the Bolsheviks hold on for any time, sooner or later we Catholics will have to fight for our ideals. Very probably here, as in Russia, at the beginning of the new school year they will abolish all non-Bolshevik schools and will end religious education everywhere. 7) I added the following: “If necessary, I intend to issue a pastoral letter to the priests and Catholic parents reminding them what kind of schools should be conducted in Catholic countries and to what sort of schools parents can send their children with a clear conscience.”

Yesterday, Mr. Henryk Łukaszewski, the principal of the Vitebsk Polish secondary school, came to see me. He said that he had agreed to abolish religious education at his school, but the priest is giving religious instruction in an adjacent building. According to him, the children are studying religion with greater enthusiasm and are going to church more regularly than before. The Bolsheviks are now supporting the school financially. He was amazed that there was such a hulabaloo about the Bolshevik demands among Polish society here in Vilnius. It seemed to me that his talk was meant to reassure me, but the man appeared a suspicious character.

In the end, I saw that the staunch Catholics were determined to close the schools rather than to allow religious education to be thrown out. But it appeared that other teachers were willing to submit to the Bolsheviks and have the priests teach religion after class. I decided to wait and to observe further developments. The principal from the Vitebsk school added that, should the parents protest and show opposition, the Bolsheviks might arrest me just as they had arrested the Orthodox Bishop of Vitebsk. I answered him that in that case, I would go to prison. Throughout the conversation I could see that this man was on good terms with the Bolsheviks.

Later on, Father Jasiński, a teacher at one of the Polish secondary schools, came to ask me what should be done about those schools that have yielded to Bolshevik demands and have abolished religious instruction: should they be boycotted? I answered that it would be better to hold off on any boycott and just wait and see what happens.

If we boycott the schools, Polish society, especially the socialists, may accuse us priests of destroying their schools. But if these schools start to undermine religious faith, then, of course, parents will be forbidden to have their children attend them.

I had invited Father Tumas to come to see me and asked him whether it would be a good idea to go to the Commisar for Education, Vaclovas Biržiška,<sup>1</sup> and speak to him about this problem with the schools. Father Tumas had already gone to see the Commissar's brother, the principal of the Lithuanian secondary school, Mykolas Biržiška.<sup>2</sup> He said that the Commissar had come to discuss the school decree with him. Mykolas had warned him not to proclaim such a decree as yet because it would arouse the entire Catholic community against the Bolsheviks. Until now, thank God, the decree has not appeared.

During this period I prayed fervently that God would save us from all these dangers. Our Church had endured so much under czarist rule, and now we have new sufferings to bear—and these in the name of freedom of conscience. Lord, how strange this world is! The very people who had shouted and raged against the death penalty are now shooting and killing their arrested opponents. The same people who had so recently fought against censorship and restrictions on freedom of the press are now banning all newspapers with other points of view. If one dares to be published, they rush in to stifle its voice.<sup>3</sup> The very same people who had so passionately demanded freedom of speech, of assembly and association, now do not allow a person with a different opinion even to open his mouth. Also, they will not tolerate any other organization apart from their own. Those who had earlier so diligently proposed new voting ballots, first of all with four candidates and later with five or six, now reject all this and try to elect their own candidates against the will of the majority, frequently threatening people at gunpoint. Formerly they demanded equal rights for everyone, but now they recognize these rights only for their own supporters, a small group of people.

---

1 Vaclovas Biržiška (1884-1956): received a law degree from the University of St. Petersburg, had been in the Russian army and worked in Moscow. In 1919, he taught law for a time in Vilnius and for a short period served as Commissar for Education in the Kapsukas administration. In 1920, he moved to Kaunas.

2 Mykolas Biržiška (1882-1962): historian of Lithuanian literature and culture, also a prominent activist in the Lithuanian national revival in Vilnius. From 1915 to 1922 was principal of the first Lithuanian secondary school and representative of the Lithuanian government. He was a staunch admirer and ally of Bishop Matulaitis.

3 On February 8, 1919, the Bolsheviks banned all non-Communist Lithuanian, Polish, Jewish, and Russian newspapers published in Vilnius.

Truly, all this politicking is a terrible thing. How often the morality of the savage is applied here: if you steal my cow, that is bad, but if I steal yours, that is fine. Our beloved Church is often accused of intolerance and many complaints have been made. And yet, it seems to me that no one is more tolerant than a Catholic who truly loves God and his fellow man. Such a Catholic is most likely to be compassionate toward the offenses of others and to have pity on the offender.

Father Kiersnowski, the religion teacher at the First Polish Secondary School, came to see me. He said that the Polish teachers attended a meeting at Mr. Weclawski's, Chairman of the Polish Education Association. The teachers with socialist and progressive views did not come. At the meeting it was decided not to collaborate with the Bolsheviks, not to accept their subsidies, nor allow religious education to be taken out of the curriculum. They are determined that if all else fails, the schools should be closed. The following reasons were given: the Bolsheviks will not be in power for long, since the arrival of the Polish army is expected. When that happens, how will those who have collaborated with the Bolsheviks appear in the eyes of Polish society? Consequently, it was decided to boycott those schools which have submitted to the demands of the Bolsheviks and abolished religious instruction. Father Kiersnowski himself asked to be allowed to leave the school where he taught if it agrees to do away with religious education, even if he is permitted to teach religion in secret in some out of the way corner. I agreed.

Thus the Bolsheviks and their supporters failed to win the teachers and parents over to their side. Only a few of the parents went over to them. However, having failed to achieve anything significant in the public meetings, the Bolsheviks continue to pursue their own ends. They are trying to convince the more prominent parents not to harm Polish education and Polish schools, but to accept the conditions they have laid down. Some of the parents are beginning to be swayed by their arguments.

## *February 16*

During the past week I have had a great deal of work, trouble, and grief about Father Friedrich Muckermann's case. He is a Jesuit.<sup>1</sup>

The Catholic Church of St. Casimir<sup>2</sup> was seized, I think, in 1840, by the Russian government and turned into St. Nicholas Orthodox Church. After they occupied Vilnius, the Germans allowed the Lutheran soldiers to have their services there for some time. Then they turned the church over to the Catholic troops. Their chaplain was Father Muckermann. Our people remembered the church's Catholic past and also began to go to Mass there in ever greater numbers.

Father Muckermann, having learned some Polish, preached to the people in Polish. The Russian Orthodox clergy tried to get the church back. They petitioned the German government, but their efforts were in vain. Then they tried to take the church by force, but the people refused to let them in.

Just after I arrived in Vilnius, the Russian Orthodox Bishop<sup>3</sup> immediately sent me a request by one of his priests, then in person, that I order the church returned to the Orthodox people. I replied that the church had been built by Catholics and that, although confiscated by the Russian government, the people had always felt that it belonged to them and had taken this opportunity to get it back. As far as I was able to gauge the mood of the people, they would not let the church be taken away from them now. I advised the Orthodox Bishop not to interfere in this matter during such a period of tension because he could incite the Catholic masses against him. I said that I myself did not intend to get involved in this problem. The German authorities had taken possession of the church and they were still in

---

1 Friedrich Muckermann (1883-1946): A German Jesuit who worked in Vilnius from 1915-1919. Gifted as a preacher and in pastoral ministry, he was concerned with social reform and became involved in organizing the workers of Vilnius.

2 Begun in 1604 on the occasion of the canonization of St. Casimir, it was built by the Jesuits of Vilnius. In 1615, they built their residence next to it. The largest baroque church in Vilnius, it has a stormy history.

3 The author uses the Russian term "arkhierei," but we have substituted the more familiar term "bishop."



charge here.<sup>1</sup> Therefore, I told him that he would have to deal with them. In my opinion, in strict justice the church ought to be given back to the Catholics. He was not able to make any headway in this matter. The Bolsheviks also told him that the Orthodox have enough churches of their own and that this one had been taken away from the Catholics.

In the past the church belonged to the Jesuits.<sup>2</sup> I was very concerned that, once the Germans had gone, the Catholics would be forced out again. I asked Father Muckermann not to leave with the Germans, but to stay on here. If we succeeded in holding on to the church, the Jesuits could then reoccupy their residence. Father Muckermann was even appointed rector of the church by his superiors. Father Muckermann stayed behind, and I gave him another priest to help him. They celebrated the liturgy beautifully and church attendance soared.

When the Bolsheviks took over, everything came to a standstill, so to speak. Father Olszański,<sup>3</sup> who headed the Polish workers' associations, at first went into hiding. Father Muckermann came to consult with me whether something could be done for the workers. We were both interested in putting the building near the church to some good use. I advised him to find out if the Bolsheviks would hinder his work or were inclined to leave him alone, at least in the beginning. I asked Father Muckermann to be guided solely by Catholic principles and to do Catholic work, setting aside politics and nationalism. I told him that, as far as I could see, if he labored in a Catholic spirit, all would go well; the people had had enough of these nationalistic feuds. We both agreed that the thrust of his work would be purely religious, cultural, and economic.

To start, he called a meeting of the workers at five o'clock Sunday afternoon. A great many people came. Seeing this, he invited them into the vacant building near the church and began to organize

---

1 This was in December 1918. The Germans occupied Vilnius in 1915; in 1916, Kaiser Wilhelm II visited the Church of St. Casimir.

2 It was popularly known as the Jesuits' church, but had been a parish church since about 1749.

3 Ignacy Olszański (b. 1883): ordained in 1910, had a master's degree in theology; was known for social and cultural work in Vilnius. Later became a member of the Polish Parliament; made monsignor in 1924.

them. He named the new organization St. Casimir's Association of Christian Workers.<sup>1</sup> People began to sign up in droves. To assist Father Muckermann, I assigned Father Petrovski,<sup>2</sup> a Belorussian capable of speaking to the masses and familiar with social action.

The very poorest people, regardless of nationality, started to join the association. In a short time over nine thousand men and women had signed up. Father Olszański was not happy with all this and came to see me several times complaining that his own work was being disrupted. After looking into the matter and consulting with a few knowledgeable priests, I called in Fathers Olszański, Muckermann, and Canon Lubianiec, Director of Social Action in the diocese. I asked both of them to present their case. I decided that both could continue their work and that their different fields of endeavor do not interfere with one another. Father Olszański could continue his present work of organizing and directing the professional associations and his cultural work, while Father Muckermann could go on with his religious, cultural, and economic work, supporting Father Olszański's professional associations. And so the dispute was settled.

Father Muckermann had come up with the idea of publishing a small newspaper and had begun to organize a cooperative. The Bolsheviks did not like this. When the first issue of the newspaper appeared, they immediately confiscated it. As for Father Muckermann himself, they sent two militiamen at midnight and told him to get out of Vilnius within twenty-four hours. This occurred Sunday night, February 9th. I got news of it very early next morning. Father Muckermann himself arrived soon afterwards with Canon Ellert,<sup>3</sup> pastor of St. John's Church, the parish in which St. Casimir's is located, and also the Duchess Grudzinska. We discussed what was to be done.

Father Muckermann wanted to remain in hiding in Vilnius for a while until he could put his affairs in order. We agreed that the Workers' Association should continue as before with the assistance

---

1 Fr. Muckermann started this workers' union with the Polish title "Liga Robotnicza św. Kazimierza" with Bishop Matulaitis' approval. It improved the workers' living conditions by organizing cooperatives giving them access to food and other necessities. Msgr. I. Olszański's workers' union called "Związek Robotników Chrześcijańskich" had become too political.

2 Fr. Michael Pjatrovski (Petrovski in Lithuanian, Piotrowski in Polish) was actually Belorussian, ordained in 1912 and then working in social action ministry.

3 Juliusz Alojzy Ellert (1966-1925, ordained 1889) was an honorary canon and pastor of St. John's Church in Vilnius from 1913.

of Father Petrovski. The executive committee of the Workers' Association would take charge of the church and of the work already begun there under the supervision of Canon Ellert.

When the people got wind of the Bolsheviks' intention to exile Father Muckermann from Vilnius, they started to gather in St. Casimir's Church. Father Muckermann also went in to say good-bye to the people and to give a short sermon. As he was about to leave the church, the people would not let him go, saying that they would never allow him to be deported.

There was a crowd of people outside the church as well as inside. Trying to break up the crowd, some Jewish militiamen fired a few shots into the air. It is said that one of the bullets struck a church window. The crowd became enraged, got hold of the militiamen, disarmed them, and handed them over to the Red Army. The people considered this shooting incident to be a provocation on the part of the Jews. Besides, on Saturday and Sunday some Jewish girls had already been seen scattering leaflets about and even posting them on the church doors. These leaflets were directed against Father Muckermann.

When the Bolshevik authorities became aware of the people's increasing resentment against the Jews, they removed the Jewish militia from the streets around the church and replaced them with Red Army men. The Bolsheviks declared that they would punish those who fired the shots. But it turned out that not all of the Red Army men were loyal to the government. Some of them were saying that they would not let the people be harmed, nor would they allow the Jews to take advantage of the Christians. Apparently, the Bolshevik leaders heard about this and sent the disloyal groups of soldiers out of the city. The church was surrounded by Polish soldiers, considered more trustworthy. They allowed people to leave the church, but would not let anyone go in.

The people kept sending delegations to the Bolshevik authorities asking them to let Father Muckermann go free and remain in the city. The railroad workers as well as the electricians were determined to go on strike. Both individuals and workers' delegations kept coming to see me about Father Muckermann. All the Catholics of the city were up in arms. I did what I could to save Father Muckermann. That

Monday, through the good offices of Canon Kukta, I persuaded Mrs. Vileišis,<sup>1</sup> the doctor's wife, to go see Mickevičius-Kapsukas<sup>2</sup> and Liutkevičius<sup>3</sup> about this problem, since she had been a close associate of Kapsukas and had once saved him from prison and death. However, she was not able to do anything. On Tuesday, I sent the priests Lubianiec and Maciejewicz to the Jewish Rabbi asking him to restrain his group so as not to provoke and antagonize our people. Otherwise, the Jews might be attacked. I said that I would pacify my own people as well. Then I sent Father Tumas with a letter to Kapsukas. I wrote that Father Muckermann had stayed behind at my request; that he was not engaged in any kind of spying; that he had organized the Workers' Association at the request of many working people. He was not involved in any political activities whatever and acted with my authorization and knowledge. I requested that Kapsukas free the priest and thus reassure the people. I also asked Father Tumas to explain in person that the Catholics were incensed about the deportation of Father Muckermann and now are angry at the Jews. Kapsukas answered that he could not leave Father Muckermann here and that they would continue to keep the church surrounded until the people and Father Muckermann surrendered, but they would not harm either him or the people in any way and so on.

Some women broke through the Red Army ranks and brought food to the people held inside the church. The Bolsheviks cut the power lines so the church would not have any light. The people remained in the church day and night; they kept a vigil and prayed with Father Muckermann.

At 4:30 a.m. on Wednesday, the Red Army soldiers broke into the church, started shooting at the ceiling, scattered the people, and arrested Father Muckermann by force. The people, especially the women, tried to defend the priest and refused to give him up. The soldiers behaved brutally. They pushed and shoved Father Muckermann around and some of the women were also roughly

---

1 Emilija Jašmantas (1861-1935): wife of physician Antanas Vileišis; both were well known in Vilnius as Lithuanian patriots and were active in promoting the Lithuanian press and the Lithuanian language, especially in the churches of Vilnius.

2 Vincas Mickevičius used the pen name Kapsukas since he began writing for the underground Lithuanian press in 1898. From 1905, he was involved in various underground activities in Vilnius, editing Lithuanian newspapers and organizing workers' strikes for which he was sentenced and imprisoned several times. At that time, he was a Social Democrat, not yet a Communist; he became a Communist in 1917, while working in St. Petersburg.

3 Gabrys Liutkevičius (1880-1926): an attorney by profession, he had left the Social Democrats to join the Bolsheviks. In Mickevičius's administration, he was the executive director of the Bolshevik Revolutionary Council.

treated. They even tore the hair of several women. Bodies were battered, bruised, and swollen.

They took Father Muckermann away in an automobile, ostensibly to the George Hotel. Then they arrested a number of people and took them to the former Lithuanian Council building. They released some of the detainees after they had picked out the ones who seemed better educated and locked these up in the Lukiškiai Prison,<sup>1</sup> where even now over a dozen women are jailed. Among them is the Duchess Grudzinska, a very devout Russian Catholic who converted from the Orthodox Faith.

The Bolsheviks have locked the church and the building which housed the Christian Workers' Association and posted guards around it. A search was conducted: the floor boards were ripped up and some books were taken. When I learned of all this, I sent Father Tumas with a letter to Kapsukas asking that he return the keys of the church and allow the people to pray there. I requested that Father Tumas personally inquire about the whereabouts of Father Muckermann and that he, as well as all those who had been arrested, be released. Kapsukas promised to return the keys and the church itself. He also said that the people would be released after they had been questioned, but that Father Muckermann would not be set free.

Later I received a letter from Kapsukas saying that Father Muckermann had been taken to a prison in Mińsk and that he would be tried there very soon. Attached to the letter were a few words from Father Muckermann—at least, something that had been taken down as having been said by him. Kapsukas claimed that the soldiers had not mistreated him when they escorted him out of the church, and he asked me to pacify the people. This had to be done because, Kapsukas added, someone had started a rumor that the Bolsheviks had murdered Father Muckermann.

On Thursday some of the members of the executive Committee of the Workers' Association came to see me asking what they should do: leave Vilnius or stay? I calmed them down and told them to stay

---

1. This notorious prison was built in 1898-1903, when Lithuania was under Czarist rule. It faces Lukiškiai square in the old part of Vilnius on the left bank of the Neris River. The rebels of the uprising against Russian rule in 1863 were executed in this square, the future site of the prison. During the Russian, German, Polish, and Bolshevik occupations many Lithuanians were imprisoned and died here.

in the city, but not to sleep in their own rooms for a while to avoid being arrested, at least until the situation was clear. Father Petrovski, Father Muckermann's assistant, was also there. I advised them to hold a meeting of the executive committee and to decide upon a course of action. I kept reassuring all the people who came to me telling them not to be afraid, not to go anywhere, and that nothing terrible was likely to happen. I had a certain amount of confidence in what Kapsukas had told Father Tumas.

The executive committee had a meeting at Father Ellert's place. It turned out that the funds of the Workers' Association had not been lost. At the meeting it was decided to send a new delegation to the Bolshevik authorities to demand the release of those arrested. Thursday morning these representatives stopped in to see me before going to speak to the Bolsheviks. There were several people, both men and women. I reassured them and told them that on Sunday I would speak to the people myself. Also, I would give them another priest. They asked for Father Petrovski. I encouraged them to continue their efforts and not lose heart; I would help them as much as I could. I felt very sorry for these poor people who were being persecuted and harassed.

Having finished the day's work, in the evening I sat down to compose a letter to the Catholics of Vilnius. I wanted it to be read in all the churches of the city on Sunday. It was difficult to write. I had to say that the Catholic workers were being harassed and that they had the right to demand what was rightfully theirs. At the same time, I had to be careful that the Bolshevik government not find fault with anything or make it out to be counter-revolutionary. On the one hand, I had to reassure and calm the people so there would be no riots or bloodshed, and, on the other hand, I had to make an effort not to depress the people or make them lose hope. I could not make it seem as if I were simply telling them to give in and suffer, allowing everyone to ride roughshod over them. Somehow, with the help of God, I managed to compose the letter. Then I looked it over and decided that it still sounded depressing and so I changed a few things.

On Friday morning I invited Father Vailokaitis<sup>1</sup> over to read him the letter. Then I called together Father Lubianiec, Maciejewicz, Kretowicz, and Steckiewicz and read it to them. They thought that some things should be omitted. I deferred to their opinion, crossed out some things, and turned it over to the printer. Even though the Bolsheviks had taken over the printing presses and requisitioned the paper, we succeeded in finding some people who took the responsibility for getting the letter printed. On Friday evening I translated the letter into Lithuanian, since I had written the original in Polish.

When we were discussing the letter, Father Maciejewicz had taken a very radical stance: he wanted me to perform a solemn reconsecration of St. Casimir's Church so people would realize that it had been desecrated. He wanted the procession to be a kind of demonstration. I replied that, in my opinion, no reconsecration was necessary because there had been no loss of life and that it was not a good idea to have a demonstration, since the Bolsheviks had just passed a decree forbidding public meetings of more than five people. A demonstration would end in riots and bloodshed. The other priests agreed with me. In general, I have noticed that here in Vilnius some priests immediately want to use various incidents as an excuse for staging national and political demonstrations. A bishop must be very careful in this respect. There are those who want to increase tensions and arouse the people's emotions until they reach the breaking point.

On Saturday (February 15th)<sup>2</sup> they printed my letter separately in Polish and in Lithuanian. I did not have it published in Belorussian, since that language is not used in any of the churches in Vilnius. The Lithuanian version of the letter was badly done. Father Janusevičius,<sup>3</sup> my second secretary, read the proofs, but, not being familiar with the language, he did a poor job. Unfortunately, they had not sent me a copy before printing.

In some parts of the city<sup>4</sup> Red Army soldiers have beaten up some Jews and urged the people to join them and also to point out Jewish

---

1 Juozapas Vailokaitis (1880-1953): a graduate of the Theological Academy of St. Petersburg, ordained in 1905. From 1907 to 1910 he edited a Lithuanian weekly paper that spoke out against Russian rule in Lithuania. During WW I, he worked in St. Petersburg organizing and helping the Lithuanian refugees there. On his return to Vilnius, he established the Lithuanian Catholic Workers' Organization founded in St. Petersburg.

2 This first pastoral letter was actually dated February 16, 1919, the date of the Sunday when it was to be read in the churches.

3 Jurgis Janusevičius worked as notary at the chancery from 1914. He was Lithuanian, but did not know the language very well.

4 The old part of the city called *Užupis* in Lithuanian and *Zarzecze* in Polish.

homes. Thank God, our Catholic people would not listen to the soldiers. Although they were angry with the Jews, still they refused to attack them.

On Saturday Count Łubieński came by and announced that a nobleman, a trustworthy person, was going to Warsaw. Perhaps I would like to send some message. I asked him to send this person in to me so I could speak to him face to face. Count Łubieński advised me not to issue a pastoral letter so that I would not depress the people. He thought that the people would not kill any Jews; if anyone kills them, it would be the Bolshevik soldiers. Another Polish priest was also of the opinion that it would be better not to risk any message in writing and might be imprudent for me to speak to the workers in person on Sunday. Then a Lithuanian priest came rushing in and said that I should not issue a letter nor talk to the workers because the Bolsheviks might arrest me, while the Polish nationalists would probably use the occasion to involve me in some political intrigue and get me imprisoned. I refused to be influenced by either of them, as I could see that they were concerned only with politics. In my opinion, when there is danger, it is unseemly for a bishop to hide behind other people; he has to stand forth. The good shepherd lays down his life for his sheep. That bishop is to be pitied who allows anyone and everyone to get hold of his coat tails to sway him in any direction they please; to use his person, with all sorts of high-sounding arguments, to achieve their own objectives. But it seems that God and my Guardian Angel are watching, protecting, and helping me.

During the past few days the Bolshevik newspapers have been printing all kinds of material against the Church, the Faith, and Christian morality. Apparently, they are preparing the people and making it easier for themselves to effect a separation of Church and State.

On Saturday, February 15th, the Bolshevik press announced that there would be a Polish workers' meeting on the following topic: "The Workers and the Catholic Church." I sent a message to Father Tumas asking him to be so good as to attend the meeting and to report to me what was said against the Church and the Catholic Faith.



I also sent my servant, Andrius Meciunas.<sup>1</sup> The meeting was not a success for the Bolsheviks: the people would not let them touch the Church or the Faith; they protested by coughing, clearing their throats, and shouting. The Catholic workers also spoke up in defense of the Church and their Faith. About 90% of those who attended the meeting were good Catholics and only about 10% were supporters of the Bolsheviks.

I heard that they held another meeting on Sunday for the delegates of the farm workers who had gathered. But they got nowhere with these people as well. Apparently, the Bolsheviks themselves have realized that such meetings to discredit the Faith will not be very effective, since the Bolshevik press has not said a word about the purpose of these gatherings. In their reports about the arrest of Father Muckermann they lied, perhaps to calm the people, saying that I had promised to send two of my own delegates to persuade Father Muckermann and the people with him to surrender, but that I had not kept my promise.

On Sunday my pastoral letter was read in all the churches of Vilnius and some copies were distributed to the people. In some places my letter was posted on the church doors, but later it was torn off.

Father Tumas came to see me early in the morning to tell me what charges the Bolshevik speakers had brought against the Church and the Faith during the meeting. I had also collected the accusations that had been put forth in the Bolshevik press. I was determined to refute them and to show how groundless they were in the sermon that I was about to preach. I intended to explain and to prove the value, the importance, and the power of religious belief in social life.

I had told the workers that, in place of Father Muckermann who had been arrested, I would preach to them at four o'clock Sunday afternoon at St. Casimir's Church if that were possible, and if not, then at the Cathedral. Since the Bolsheviks were still guarding St. Casimir's Church and would not permit anyone inside, the crowd

---

<sup>1</sup> A young man of Lithuanian descent who was Bishop Matulaitis's personal attendant from 1918 to 1922. He came from the famous parish of Raduń, 80 km. south of Vilnius where the Lithuanians and Poles had been battling over which language should be used in church. Andrius worked in an orphanage in Vilnius during WW I and knew his way around the city, besides being able to speak Lithuanian, Polish, Belorussian, and Russian. He met Bishop Matulaitis soon after he came to Vilnius and was invited to join his household. He also wanted to join the Marians as a brother.

moved on to the Cathedral. It was packed full and there was a great crush of people crowding at the doors and along the walls. It was said that several thousand had gathered.

After vespers I went up into the pulpit and spoke for a whole hour. I explained what the faith meant and whose authority it rested upon; who the Church's Teacher was and who they were who dared to attack Him. Can science change or replace faith? Can improved living conditions and material progress make a person perfect and sinless? No, I said, they cannot, if the faith does not change his heart and create the Kingdom of God in his soul. Are the Church and the clergy always on the side of the rich, of the oppressors? The teaching of Christ raised the dignity of man, influenced the family and society. If only our present society were permeated by the Ten Commandments. The popes have stood up for the working people and have called the world to universal peace. Has the Church been teaching us to look only toward heaven, without showing us how to live in this world? What is this saying worth: "The Church won't give you a ruble?" And what does it mean that all authority is from God? But do the oppressors of the people come from God? And so on. Finally, I encouraged the people to remain loyal to their Faith, to the Church, and to their spiritual leaders.

After the sermon, I added a few words about the arrest and exile of Father Muckermann, explaining that I had done my best to defend and intercede for Father Muckermann, but that nothing had helped. I asked them to live in peace with all the citizens of the city and not to participate in any riots, and so on. I encouraged them not to lose heart because of the unfortunate incidents of the past few days, but to continue the work they had begun. I told them that I would give them another priest to help them and that I myself would serve them in any way I could. Then I asked them to gather in the building where they used to come to discuss the business of their organization.

After the sermon, the people sang the hymn: "Holy God" and also the psalm "God is our refuge and our strength."<sup>1</sup> We ended with Benediction of the Blessed Sacrament. The people's spirits were lifted, their faith strengthened, and their loyalty to the Church renewed. After that they gathered in the building next to St. Casimir's

---

1 Psalm 46.

Church. From the executive Committee they learned that the treasury and all the funds they had contributed were untouched. Those who had assembled decided to send another delegation to demand 1) the removal of the guard from St. Casimir's Church and that it be reopened to the faithful; 2) the release from prison of all those who had been arrested in the church; 3) the return of Father Muckermann. Another demand was raised: that those who dared to open fire inside the church would be punished. However, the participants of the meeting decided to forgive them for the sake of Jesus crucified.

It was unlikely that either my letter or my sermon would go over well with the Bolsheviks. If they wanted to do so, they could easily find some pretext to arrest me. When I returned from the church, I took care of some of the more important matters, made provision for the administration of the diocese and also who should take responsibility for our Congregation in the event that I should be imprisoned. I entrusted Father Vaitkevičius with these papers and placed myself in the hands of Providence.

When the Bolsheviks took over, destroying all semblance of order and disrupting the normal course of life, nothing much could be done in the diocese. A kind of depression, anxiety, and boredom came over me. Now that the real struggle has begun, I feel a new flow of energy, of power entering me. I feel as if I had begun to live anew. An inexpressible desire to defend, to suffer for, and to devote myself entirely to our beloved Church overpowers me. Although I did not mention the Bolsheviks by name, I spoke out against them directly, boldly, and unflinchingly, demonstrating the error and fallacy of their philosophy. It was apparent that the people understood very well what I wanted to say; they listened attentively and seemed to take heed of everything I said. May God be praised and may His holy Church, our beloved Mother, be exalted.

### *February 17*

On their way to the Bolshevik authorities, the Christian Workers' delegates stopped in to see me at 10 o'clock in the morning. They asked me if there was a possibility that they would be arrested. I replied: "Of course, they can arrest you. They can arrest me as well, but one still has to do what is right." They calmed down and went off.

They went around the various Bolshevik agencies and finally got to see Camrade Eidukevičius himself. He told them that the church would be returned, the guards removed, and the arrested persons released after questioning. He also said that I should appoint another priest as rector of the Church of St. Casimir and send my own representatives to repossess the church. The delegates came back to see me at about two o'clock.

I received a letter from His Excellency the Bishop of Mińsk, who reported which priests from my diocese had taken refuge there and mentioned some other matters.

After a talk with Canon Ellert, I appointed him Rector of St. Casimir's, since the church is in his parish. I told Father Charucki, a refugee from the Diocese of Mogilev, and also Father Petrvoski to say Mass there and to hold other services. I appointed four workers as caretakers for the church and delegated them, with Father Ellert, to take the church back from the Bolsheviks. It seems that Father Muckermann, after consulting with me, with the help of the workers, had removed what had been built by the Russians. I told them to continue this work. The good that has come out of all this is that St. Casimir's Church has been returned to the Catholics.

As soon as I came to Vilnius, I immediately advised the clergy wherever I could, that, with the help of the people, they could reclaim those churches which were traditionally Catholic, but had been confiscated by the Russian government. This should be done wisely and reasonably. I empowered the priests to reconsecrate the churches and to hold services there. In this way the Catholics recovered many of their former churches—some with the permission of the German authorities and others after the Germans left and before the Bolsheviks arrived. Perhaps God will grant that these churches will stay Catholic. They have even begun to establish parishes around those churches which had been reclaimed under Monsignors Michalkiewicz and Hanusowicz and are now under my own administration.

### *February 18*

As soon as I was able to, I wrote a letter to His Excellency the Bishop of Mińsk. I asked him to make use of my refugee priests as he

saw fit, and, if possible, to provide for the needs of the neglected parishes of my own diocese bordering on his by sending his own priests there and empowering them to perform their duties in my name. I also asked him to find out whether Father Muckermann was imprisoned in Mińsk and to look after him.

I also wrote up an official document for the municipal authorities about the reopening of St. Casimir's Church and gave it to the workers who had been appointed caretakers so they would hand it to Dr. Eidukevičius.

Sister Rodziewicz, a member of the Congregation of the Holy Angels, came in to see me. These sisters conduct two infants' and children's homes. One of them has a chapel where Mass is sometimes said, while the other has a chapel and a chaplain as well—an eighty-year-old priest, Father Obolewicz. The Bolshevik officials do not like this: they are demanding that the chapels be abolished and the priest turned out, ostensibly because the children need more room. The old priest has been chaplain there for eleven years. I told her not to turn the priest out on her own. Let the Bolsheviks throw him out. If they do so, I will find a place for him.

In the evening a rather peculiar person came to see me. He told me that his name was Kairys and that he was a relative or close acquaintance of Bishop von Ropp and had lived near him and his aunts. He said that he had gathered up the courage to come and talk to me about the events of the past few days. He claimed to be a good Catholic who could not tolerate the way the Bolsheviks were undermining the Church and the Faith. He said that it would be a good idea for me to send some young priests dressed as laymen to all the Bolshevik meetings to stand up and speak out in defense of the Church.

This person looked suspicious. He did not greet me the way good Catholics are accustomed to greet their bishop. In addressing me, he said "Mr. Pastor."<sup>1</sup> Then, realizing his mistake, he said "Father Pastor" and finally "Father Bishop." He spoke Polish, but poorly. It

---

<sup>1</sup> Kairys addressed Bishop Matulaitis as "panie proboszczu", then as "ksieże proboszczu", and finally as "ksieże biskupie". From this Matulaitis gathered that Kairys was probably a non believer and a Bolshevik. Kairys is a Lithuanian name meaning "leftist".

did not appear that this was a person who had close contact with priests and bishops. It seemed to me that he was very interested in what I thought of the Bolsheviks. When I asked him what he did, he answered that he was working for the Bolsheviks as an economics instructor.

When I understood what sort of person I was dealing with, I began to give him a sermon on the Bolsheviks, pointing out some of their unworthy and inhuman behavior. I told him that we priests do not interfere in politics, but that we would defend the Church, our Faith, and freedom of conscience with all our might. I pointed out to him that the Bolsheviks had incited the people against them by their vicious behavior. If they start throwing religious education out of the schools, they will incite the people against them even more. Mr. Kairys was also interested in my attitude toward Jews. I said that I am doing what I can to prevent a massacre of the Jews and that the Catholics obey me, even though several times the Red Army soldiers have tried to provoke them to turn on the Jews and beat them up.

I told this gentleman many things. I wanted to frighten him properly so the Bolsheviks would not dare to take religious education out of the schools. I asked him to report to the Bolsheviks all that I had told him. Mr. Kairys rushed out the door without having achieved very much.<sup>1</sup> I shall have to start preaching to such people about death and judgment, according to the example of St. Ignatius. “Be as cunning as serpents, yet as harmless as doves” (Mt 10:16). I parted with this gentleman most courteously, but it seemed to me that he had been sent on purpose by the Bolsheviks.

When I heard that some of the Lithuanian priests had been arrested by the Bolsheviks, I asked Canon Kukta if this were true. It turned out that the Bolsheviks had indeed arrested Father Vailokaitis<sup>2</sup> and Father Dogelis.<sup>3</sup> From other sources I learned that Mrs. Bortkevičius,<sup>4</sup> a well-known Socialist leader, has also been thrown in jail. The priests may have been arrested partly because of the

---

<sup>1</sup> Here Matulaitis uses a colloquial Lithuanian expression: literally, “went away hungry,” but actually meaning that the person did not get what he was after.

<sup>2</sup> On Feb. 16 the Populist Union which had organized held a concert in Vilnius to celebrate the first anniversary of Lithuanian independence. Fr. Vailokaitis may have been arrested because of this.

<sup>3</sup> Povilas Dogelis (1877-1951): an active and popular Lithuanian priest who worked with young people. He was imprisoned several times.

<sup>4</sup> She was the wife of the engineer Jonas Bortkevičius and a prominent member of the Peasant Populist Party. She edited and promoted Lithuanian language publications and helped political prisoners.

Lithuanian Catholic Populist Union which Father Vailokaitis had begun to organize. However, the Bolsheviks are holding all those arrested as hostages. They have sent their representatives to Kaunas demanding that the Lithuanian Council release the Bolshevik prisoners, then they, in turn, will release Fathers Vailokaitis, Dogelis, and the others. It has been decided to send food to the prisoners. At the moment it is not possible to get them out of prison. They are held in Lukiškiai.

Father Galaune<sup>1</sup> (Holovnia), the pastor of Jieznas, had also been brought to prison in Vilnius. They suspected him of organizing Lithuanian officers and of being their chaplain. Father Galaune has already been released. Saliewicz, the pastor of Kolbininkai, has been taken to New Vilnia and from there transported to Mińsk. It seems that he preached a sermon against the Bolsheviks and, in general, they disapproved of his activities. I have heard that he has already been released and has returned home.

### *February 19*

Father Skroudys<sup>2</sup> from Aukstadvaris came by to see me. He has been appointed pastor there in place of Father Slamas.<sup>3</sup> After he had been there awhile, he had this to report. Father Slamas was doing very well until a certain Ekert came out against him and informed on him. Formerly this Ekert considered himself a Pole, but when the Lithuanian council was in power, he became a Lithuanian, and now he has joined the Bolsheviks.

Otherwise, everything is quiet. The pastor is very much involved in maintaining the local trade school and even supporting it out of his own pocket, since he cannot get any funds from the Lithuanian Council. He is even paying the teachers' salaries. At present it would be difficult for Father Slamas to move out because the Bolsheviks would not allow him to take anything with him. As for Skruodys himself, he cannot stay

---

1 Jonas Galaune (1876-1951): pastor of Jieznas (1910-1928); Lithuanian patriot and activist. Feb. 10-13, 1919, the Lithuanian and Bolshevik armies fought near Jieznas and the Bolsheviks were forced to retreat. Fr. Galaune was arrested and sentenced to death, but later released.

2 Jonas Skroudys (1882-1935): completed his studies at the Academy of St. Petersburg, was ordained in 1907. Before WW I, he worked with Lithuanian refugees in the Caucasus and returned to Vilnius in 1918.

3 Stanislovas Slamas (b. 1866): Lithuanian priest, ordained in 1898. Wherever he worked, he promoted the use of the Lithuanian language and provided his parishioners with Lithuanian prayerbooks. In 1919, he was pastor of Aukstadvaris, a spot contested by the Poles, Lithuanians, and Bolsheviks. He was informed against, later arrested and imprisoned, but soon released. From 1924 to 1940 he was pastor of Inturke.

on, since he has no income. Everything is very expensive. The people have buried many things underground to hide them from the Bolsheviks. That is why it is impossible to get anything. Only the old pastor is able to manage to support himself because he has some income.

Under the Bolsheviks such difficulties are common. It is almost impossible to transfer priests. After conferring with my secretary, I decided to leave Father Slamas in Aukstadvaris. For the time being, Father Skruodys will remain in Vilnius for medical treatment, since he has an ear infection.

The people of Aukstadvaris are still very ignorant and confused. Among themselves they speak Lithuanian, but are unwilling to do so with the clergy. They have been persuaded that they are Poles.

Father Brazys,<sup>1</sup> one of the priests suspended because of the famous memorandum, came to see me as well. I had heard that Father Brazys had been extremely upset because of the suspension. He had become depressed and could not work. Being an artistic person, he was very sensitive. I consoled him and encouraged him to continue his work. I promised to make good use of him as soon as possible. I could see that he left in high spirits, his face was radiant.

Among other things, I had learned earlier that Father Bakšys,<sup>2</sup> also one of the suspended priests, was still staying in Vilnius without proper authorization. I asked him to go to Merkine where he had been assigned. He obeyed and is now working there. I still have not seen Father Varnas<sup>3</sup> from Kaišiadorys. I asked him to come to Vilnius as soon as possible. I told the dean of priests that Father Varnas can stay there as pastor for the time being, since there is no other alternative right now. However, it will be necessary to legalize his stay there so that everything would be in order.

Father Feliks Kaczmarek<sup>4</sup> of Wiśniewo asked me for some relief for his parishioners. Both the Russian and German trenches passed

1 Theodoras Brazys (1870-1939): had studied church music in Germany and was appointed professor at the Vilnius Seminary in 1907 by Bishop Ropp. He also conducted the Vilnius Cathedral choir and orchestra and had composed numerous pieces of church music. In 1917, he was suspended for one month by Msgr. Michalkiewicz for signing the famous memorandum. He left the Seminary and went out into the countryside to collect folk songs. Bishop Matulaitis allowed him to continue this work. In 1923, he was invited to lecture at the Kaunas Seminary, and in 1924 he began to lecture in the Theology Department of the University of Kaunas.

2 Juozas Bakšys (1884-1925): a Lithuanian priest imprisoned by the Germans in 1916, then suspended by Msgr. Michalkiewicz in 1917. In Merkine, he founded and directed a secondary school.

3 Alfonsas Varnas (1884-1944): another one of the suspended priests. Apparently he had not yet been reinstated as pastor after the suspension.

4 Feliks Kaczmarek (b. 1887): ordained in 1910; during WW I he was pastor of Wisniewo or Vyšniavas, as it was called in Lithuanian, a town 86 km southeast of Vilnius. The front passed through this area, and the church and most of the town were destroyed.



through his parish. Only a few villages were left intact; the others were destroyed. The people are living in shelters dug in the ground, and many are dying of starvation and typhoid. I told him that the parish council should petition the Bolsheviki for aid. I could see no other way to help them. Right now it is very difficult to collect donations anywhere. He said that the Bolsheviki are not giving them anything. They are simply seizing everything that is still left. I advised him to try to obtain food and money in other places.

O my God, how much people have to suffer on account of this miserable and wasteful war! In Wiszniewo, the Bolsheviki have already issued their decree on the separation of Church and State.

Father Miłkowski,<sup>1</sup> the seminary professor, came to see me. I asked him to help Father Piotrowski with his youth work. I begged him to be guided solely by Catholic principles, as Father Muckermann had been. We began to talk about nationalism. He is Polish, and, as far as I know, an unbiased and God-fearing person. I complained that there were many chauvinist priests here, Poles as well as Lithuanians, but very few truly Catholic priests.

Some priests think that they can get the people to board the nationalist wagon and then drive them into the Church that way. But in most cases, the wagon falls apart and does not bring the people into the Church. It is better to get into the Catholic wagon in the first place and drive straight to Church. Father Muckermann's work here in Vilnius was a good example. He attracted a great many people. If it suits them, lay people can make good use of religion, of the priests, and the Church itself to promote their political objectives. But when there is a need to defend the Church and the Catholic Faith, then these same people excuse themselves very politely and retreat to the sidelines. This matter of the Polish schools here in Vilnius is a good instance of this. In the past, when it was necessary to protect the Polish character of the schools against the Germans, the lay people sided with the priests. It is better not to have any schools at all than to have the children subjected to German influence. Now that we have to take a stand for religious education in the schools against the demands of the Bolsheviki, these same teachers have

---

1 Stanislaw Miłkowski taught Patrology, World History, and the Polish language at the Vilnius Seminary.

split up into factions and are thinking of submitting to the Bolsheviks. They say that if we insist on keeping religious education at all costs, we can lose the Polish schools and that would be detrimental to nationalism. Thank God that some of the nationalist priests have become aware of this themselves.

According to Father Miłkowski, the seminary is at fault for promoting this unhealthy nationalism among the priests. The seminary should be reorganized. Persons in positions of authority, especially the inspector, have a very narrow view of things, perhaps not so much from ill will as from ignorance. In the past, being of Lithuanian descent was seen as a danger to Catholicism at the seminary. Now, the national feeling of the Belorussians is regarded in the same way. The seminarians are aware of this and try to conceal their nationality. Consequently, their character deteriorates. Later, they become the most ardent nationalists. It is necessary to recognize all nationalities, to honor and nurture all of them equally. But then, he added, if the seminary did not foster the spirit of Polish nationalism, it would not receive financial support from the community.

I replied that, in my opinion, every seminarian should learn Polish, since that language is essential for every priest in this area, where there are so many Poles. In addition, the Lithuanians can study their own language, and the Belorussians theirs. He said that it would be a good thing if everyone also learned Lithuanian as well so that priests could be transferred and appointed to various parishes without having to take language into account. I replied that I would not require this. For me, it is much more important that a priest leave the seminary with a truly Catholic and apostolic heart, that he be determined to serve and to meet the needs of all his flock without exception. Then, if necessary, he will learn another language. It means nothing that some priests know several languages if they use them for their own political purposes and for the good of their political party rather than for the salvation and welfare of the people. The importance of a Catholic and apostolic spirit can be seen, once again, in the example of the same Father Muckermann. Although he was German, he learned Polish. Although relations between the Polish and the German nations were at their worst,

still he was able to draw people. Truly, it was God who sent me this Father Muckermann to show me how to oppose unhealthy nationalism.

### ***February 20***

A nun came from Mińsk to report on behalf of Bishop Łoziński that Fr. Muckermann is in prison there and is provided with food. They were going to shoot him, but now he is still waiting for his trial, which is supposed to take place in Vilnius. The representatives of the Christian Workers must collect as many signatures as possible, and the workers should also defend the priest in court. I immediately sent the sister to the executive committee of the Christian Workers' Association to report all this. Then another messenger from Mińsk arrived, who said roughly the same thing, but added that the trial would be in Mińsk. In the evening the workers held a meeting and decided to send their own delegates to Mińsk to look into the situation.

### ***February 23***

It was the first anniversary of the recruitment and formation of the Red Army in Russia. The Bolsheviks organized a celebration to commemorate this event. According to local custom, the Bolshevik soldiers and some ordinary people as well paraded through the streets, then assembled in the Cathedral square. A number of speeches were made. Aside from the soldiers, there were very few people, mostly Jews. Hardly any Christians could be seen. In the afternoon, lectures were given in various places. Few Christians attended. In the building allotted to the Lithuanians, only some Jews and a few girls had gathered out of curiosity just to see what would happen. I received reports from various sources that whenever the Church or the Faith were mentioned, the people protested against the speakers. In the face of danger, the people defended as best they could what they valued most—their Faith.

## February 27

I cannot remember what day it was that the seminary professor Father Reiny<sup>1</sup> and later Father Bieliauskas<sup>2</sup> came to ask me about what they should do. The Bolsheviks were looking for them to arrest them: should they stay or flee? “Do whatever you think best,” I told them. “If I were in your situation, I would not run away.” They decided to stay.

The Bolsheviks have already arrested Father Reiny and taken him to prison.<sup>3</sup> I have heard that Mr. Liudas Gira<sup>4</sup> and Mrs. Bortkevičius are also imprisoned. The Bolsheviks threatened to arrest some other prominent Lithuanians as well. Yesterday they allowed the priests to celebrate Mass in prison. We sent them the things they needed.

A representative of the Workers’ Organization who had gone to Mińsk in connection with Father Muckermann’s<sup>5</sup> case, also stopped by to see me. The trial would definitely be held in Mińsk within a few days. The workers’ delegates should be there, and also perhaps some priest would consent to defend Father Muckermann. I decided that Father Cikoto<sup>6</sup> from Molodechno should go and that the workers should send their own delegates. In other respects, Father Muckermann does not need anything; the local Catholics are looking after him.

Father Cikoto, a nationally conscious Belorussian who graduated from the Theological Academy of St. Petersburg, asked me to grant him leave from his parish to live and work in Mińsk. The work of the Belorussian Catholics and of the whole national movement was centered there. He wanted to work among his own people. In addition, while living near the Mińsk seminary, he wanted to reflect more deeply upon his own life. “Why not in Vilnius?” I asked him. He complained that Belorussians cannot stand it here. Their fellow priests look down on them, despise, and even persecute them. He had already suffered a great deal because, when His

1 Mečislovas Reiny (1884-1953): a graduate of Vilnius Seminary and of the Theological Academy of St. Petersburg where he had been one of Matulaitis’s students. Ordained in 1907, he studied abroad and received a doctorate in philosophy, also studied psychology, apologetics et al. One of the best-educated and prominent members of the Lithuanian clergy, he was professor of philosophy at Vilnius Seminary from 1916 and played a leading role in various Catholic cultural and political organizations.

2 Pranciskus Bieliauskas: a curate at the Vilnius Cathedral since 1911 and a well-known Lithuanian activist.

3 Arrested February 22, Reiny was held in various prisons for five months, then released.

4 Lithuanian poet, active in Lithuanian social and political life.

5 Sentenced and imprisoned in Mińsk for nine months, released by the efforts of the international Red Cross. Returned to Germany, edited the Catholic magazine *Der Gral* until forced to leave because of opposition to Hitler. Died in Switzerland in 1946.

6 Andrei Cikoto (1891-1952): graduate of Vilnius Seminary and Theological Academy of St. Petersburg; ordained 1914. From 1918 to 1919 he was pastor at Molodechno; from 1919 to 1920 he taught dogmatic theology at the Seminary in Mińsk.

Excellency Bishop von Ropp was visiting that part of the diocese, he had dared to preach a sermon in Belorussian at the Bishop's request. He also recalled his seminary days when one of the Polish priests in authority warned him not to join inappropriate parties and spoke against the *Belarus*, a harmless newspaper published in the Catholic spirit. In a word, here in Vilnius to be a Belorussian is considered a terrible crime. In Mińsk, it is more peaceful and one can work for the Belorussians. The Bishop of Mińsk [Łoziński] boldly addressed the people in the cathedral in the Belorussian language. He experienced a good deal of unpleasantness from the Polish part of the flock because of this, but managed to pacify them with another sermon.

I spoke with this priest for a while about the Belorussian question. I told him that I was a Catholic bishop, that I wanted to serve everyone equally, and that I would make every effort to do so, looking after the spiritual needs of all my people without exception. Everyone is the same to me: Belorussians, Poles, and Lithuanians. However, since here in Vilnius national matters are very sensitive and regarded in a strange and peculiar manner, one has to be careful. I said that I was not only not opposed to the Belorussian renaissance, but that I was willing to support it so that it would stay on the right track.

These were the conditions that I laid down: 1) that they pursue their national interests in a Catholic manner; 2) that the priests not lose themselves in the Belorussian movement to the detriment of their spiritual life and its needs and that they give good example; 3) that I be informed about what the Belorussians are doing. I advised them to try to improve the spiritual life of their people and that religious communities for men and women could be founded. I promised to help them in this work.

I went on to say that I was not interested in nationalism as such, but that I would support the Belorussian movement for these reasons. 1) I can see that the Belorussian people are ignorant; they do not know their catechism nor how to go to confession and would learn these things best in their native language. 2) The Belorussians are reviving, becoming more aware and more active; if the clergy and the Catholics do not direct this movement into the proper channels, it will lose direction and turn against the Church. 3) The purpose of the Church is not to teach languages, but rather to save people by means of the language they understand. 4) When the Belorussians do

become nationally conscious, they would eventually come to resent the Church if it attempted to suppress their national identity. 5) We should also try to approach the Orthodox Belorussians and former Uniates, but we can reach them only by preaching the word of God in Belorussian. The Belorussian priests should see this as their duty and their vocation.

I agreed to let Father Cikoto go to Mińsk and appointed Father Drabas to take his place.

Father Żuk,<sup>1</sup> a Belorussian from Lebedziewo, told me about his impoverished and difficult situation. The real pastor, Father Zapaszyk, is ill, I think with tuberculosis, and unable to work. However, he still lives in the rectory and controls the property and finances of the parish. Father Żuk does all the parish work and lives on the estate in a farmhand's hut, and now the Bolshevik committee has thrown him out of there as well. They have robbed him and left him homeless. I begged him to put up with it as well as he could. Right now, nothing much can be done—such are the times. He asked if later on I would transfer him somewhere else because the Orthodox Belorussians are very angry with him. I promised to do so.

Then he asked me if he could teach the children in Belorussian, since they do not understand any other language. He asked about this because in the past it was not allowed. Priests who dared teach the children in Belorussian were punished and transferred to Polish parishes. He also wanted to know if he could use Belorussian when he taught religion in the schools. I could not see how it could be done otherwise. Then he asked if he might preach in Belorussian. I replied: "I leave this to your own discretion. But kindly take care that there are no riots in church and that the Polish parishioners also get their due." All the people go to confession in Belorussian.

Once and for all we have to settle this matter of the Belorussian language. Imagine acting in such an uncatholic way. This problem he understood only in the light of the unjust behavior and persecution practiced by the Russians. They refused to recognize the Belorussian language. To them it was merely a dialect, while the real Belorussian language had to be Russian. They would not allow anyone to speak Belorussian, only Russian. To keep the Russian language out of the

---

<sup>1</sup> Another of the younger Belorussian priests trying to carry out his pastoral ministry and faced with a difficult problem: using the language of the people meant risking ecclesiastical censure. The town of Lebedziewo was mostly Belorussian; Southeast of Vilnius, it had once been Lithuanian. It had a Roman Catholic and an Orthodox Church.

churches, the priests began to preach in Polish. By its unjust behavior the Russian government ultimately contributed to the loss of national identity by the Belorussian people.

I was informed that my pastoral letter to the people of Vilnius had not been read at the Church of All Saints<sup>1</sup> on February 16th. It seems that Father Dyakowski<sup>2</sup> found the letter deficient in Polish patriotism and consequently not worth reading. Besides, it did not condemn the Bolsheviks vehemently enough. For some time I have been told that Father Dyakowski is an ardent Polish nationalist and activist involved in politics up to his neck. I asked a reliable person whether my letter had been read to the people. It seems that it had not.

On February 24th I asked Father Wołodźko if my pastoral letter had been read in all the churches. He said that he had given instructions that it be read after every Mass. I then told him about All Saints' parish and asked him to look into the matter. Yesterday he reported that he had confronted the pastor himself, who admitted that he had not read the letter. The Dean excused him saying that he had received copies of the letter too late. "When did he get them?" I asked. "Saturday evening," answered Wołodźko. "Then there was enough time to read it on Sunday," I said. The Dean went on to say that the pastor received only a hundred copies of the letter and that there was no instruction that it be read aloud. He thought that he was supposed only to hand out the printed copies to the people. But before high Mass on Sunday began, some of the copies had disappeared.

I did not like these excuses, and the Dean did not convince me at all. He then asked me if I would be punishing Father Dyakowski. I replied that I would not. "Could he come in person to apologize?" suggested the Dean. "Why not?" I replied. The Dean then inquired whether I wanted him to read the letter this Sunday. "No," I responded. "The immediate occasion of the letter was the plight of Father Muckermann. Now that is all over with and there is no reason to read the letter."

---

1 All Saints parish was one of the largest in Vilnius and was often the scene of nationalistic conflict between Poles and Lithuanians.

2 Napoleon Dyakowski (1874-1920); pastor of All Saints parish. He was of Lithuanian origin but considered himself a Polish patriot. He was given to organizing public demonstrations of a political nature.

I told my secretary about this incident, including how the Reverend Dean Wołodźko tried to justify Father Dyakowski. “They are trying to pin the blame on you,” I said to my secretary, “because you did not add a note that the letter was to be read aloud to the people when you sent out the copies.” The secretary [Steckiewicz] replied that everyone else had understood that the letter was to be read aloud and did so. The absence of a note was no excuse. Perhaps there is something else behind all this.

Today, Father Dyakowski came to see me in person. He apologized and excused himself, saying that it was the wind or whatever that had blown away the copies of the letter and mixed everything up. I did not want him to continue talking nonsense and getting even more confused, and so I began to question him about other things. He boasted that he was planning to organize a protest against the Bolsheviks who were having a convention.<sup>1</sup> When the Bolsheviks decided to unite Lithuania and Belorussia into a single Soviet Republic, he called the people together and they were determined to protest. They had composed a declaration of protest, and he asked me if he should arrange that this declaration be published abroad. I told him not to do so. The Bolsheviks would then have an excuse to harass the people.

In my opinion, he would have done better to stick to Church matters and to stay away from politics. I have heard that this Father Dyakowski comes from a Lithuanian parish and knows the Lithuanian language. When Monsignor Michalkiewicz was administrator of the diocese, he had asked Dyakowski to follow the Lithuanian newspapers and report to him on what was being printed.

This little incident is an indication to what extent some of the Vilnius clergy are immersed in politics. And if anyone dares to interfere with their political activities, they simply ignore him, even if it means disobeying their bishop. Here in Vilnius such priests are in the majority. I had been warned previously that if I attempted to administer the Diocese in a Catholic manner, regardless of

---

<sup>1</sup> The Lithuanian Communist Party held its second convention in Vilnius on February 24, 1919. As directed by Lenin, it passed a resolution to unite the newly created Soviet Republics of Belorussia and Lithuania. The union was announced on February 27, and the new Republic was called *Lit-Bel*. This fiction was short-lived, but it was an uncanny omen.



nationalistic interests (especially those of the Polish nationalists), I would be faced with the resistance and insubordination of the clergy. This has proved to be true.

This incident made me very sad. Although trivial in itself, it indicates the spirit of the persons I am dealing with. Whom can I trust and rely on? Where am I to get truly Catholic priests? You yourself, Lord, deign to heal and restore the spirit of these priests, for it is poisoned by the evils of nationalism and political intrigue.

I did not punish this priest. I think it will be enough for him to realize that I know and am aware of what is going on. The rest I will leave up to his conscience and to the Lord God. When Dyakowski came to see me previously, he always gave me the impression that he was very busy, that he was an important and active priest. From his talk I was given to understand that what he was really trying to communicate was this: "I am a pastor in my own right, and I am doing my job. I am not very interested in what the bishop may have to say, nor do I have time to consult with him." But when he appeared today, he looked uncomfortable, as if he had been found out. Perhaps God allowed this to happen to humble him a little. I commend him to Divine Providence.

Jan Malecki, an optician and a very devout man, came to complain about the Sodality of the Blessed Virgin Mary, headed by Father Zadawski, spiritual director of the seminarians. He told the members of the Sodality that its work has priority over both school and home. Since he often uses the members of the Sodality for his own projects, this conflicts with the children's other duties and causes confusion at home. He added that this priest also uses the confessional to further his nationalistic objectives. It seems that the priest persuaded this man's daughter to stop going to confession to a Lithuanian priest as she had been doing up to now.

I cannot tell how much truth there is in what this gentleman related to me. Nevertheless, it appears that not all Poles approve of the political activities of the priests. Even the lay people would prefer to have Catholic priests. Here in Vilnius it is becoming evident how everywhere the spirit of the clergy is infected with nationalism.

On February 23 two men from the parish of Ratnycia<sup>1</sup> came to see me. They asked permission to build a small church in the village of Pervalkai. The pastors of both Ratnycia and Druskininkai are in favor. I agreed and gave permission. I asked Father Bernotas, the pastor of Ratnycia, to supervise the work until a priest was assigned.

It is significant that these two men did not dare speak to me in Lithuanian. They inquired among the servants how they should address me. How could one possibly address such an eminent person in Lithuanian? I encouraged these poor people by taking the initiative and speaking to them in Lithuanian. I asked them to please be seated, then I inquired what was new in their part of the country and how they were doing. Their faces lit up and, when they left, they were very happy that the bishop is not at all snobbish. From their speech it was evident that the Lithuanians in Ratnycia have taken to using Belorussian expressions. They are ignorant and ashamed of their own language. The last name of both of these people was Tartakis.

On the morning of February 24th I visited the seminary<sup>2</sup> and sat in on the first two lectures: Holy Scripture<sup>3</sup> and Moral Theology.<sup>4</sup> It appears that the professors lecture and examine the students only in Polish. However, I noticed that they were using Latin textbooks. I shall have to find out if these seminarians know any Latin. Earlier, I used to hear the priests complain that everything at the seminary had been polonized and that only the Polish language was used; even Latin had been discarded.

On the 26th and the 27th the Bolsheviks conducted searches and closed many shops. They even searched private homes looking for stores of food and other useful things like clothing, shoes, harnesses, and so on. Yesterday, the city seemed deserted and looked empty. Today, many shops have opened and more people are walking about in the streets.

1 Ratnycia: a small town in southern Lithuania, 3 km from the resort town of Druskininkai. The people were Lithuanian and Belorussian.

2 The Vilnius Seminary was an old and venerable institution founded in 1582. It had a stormy history, as did Vilnius itself. Before WW I, it flourished under Bishop Ropp in 1903-1907; he allowed both Lithuanian and Polish to be taught, while the regular courses were taught in Latin. Then there were 150 seminarians, half of whom were Lithuanian. After 1912, the situation changed and the number of Lithuanians decreased. During the war the Seminary was closed for a time, but then reopened. It now had a seven-year program, but was plagued by nationalist conflict and financial difficulties, and the general instability affected the work of the professors.

3 Taught by the rector himself, Canon Jan Uszyłło.

4 Taught by Father Antoni Cichoński.

## February 28

At 5:30 in the morning, a girl brought me a note from Father Tumas asking me to bring him the sacraments, since he was seriously ill with brain fever. If I could not come, I should send Father Vaitkevičius.

After celebrating Mass for the Polish servant girls<sup>1</sup> at St. Casimir's Chapel in the Cathedral at 6 o'clock, I went straight to the patient, carrying Our Lord. He made his confession very sincerely and devoutly. He did not want to receive Communion lying in bed and so, with the help of my server, knelt down. After I gave him Holy Communion, I talked to him for a while. It was evident that his imagination was overstimulated and his head ached; he was constantly holding his head with his hands and seemed very weak. I felt sorry for him. He is a talented writer, and his stories are very picturesque.<sup>2</sup> Aside from certain weaknesses, Tumas is a very decent and good priest, a man with a pure soul, an idealist who loves his country passionately and is devoted to it with his whole heart. Perhaps he has become too involved in nationalistic movements and secular concerns. Actually, he was ill with typhoid, not with brain fever. God grant that he may get well again.

## March 2

Last week Father Vaitkevičius conducted a three-day retreat for the girls in the care of the Sisters of St. Mary Magdalene, and this week he gave a five-day retreat to the Sisters themselves. He told me about the situation there. It seems that chauvinism has reared its ugly head there as well. One day, right after Benediction, the girls began to sing "God save Poland,"<sup>3</sup> but they started too high and it petered out.

I am very unhappy about the introduction of these nationalistic songs and other secular matters into church services here in Vilnius. *Ne sacris misceantur profana* (The secular should not be mixed in with the sacred.)

---

1 Members of the Society of St. Zita, a Catholic organization for working girls. It helped country girls who came to the cities to work, usually as servant girls in the houses of the rich. In 1912, the Vilnius Society split into separate branches for Polish and Lithuanian girls.

2 Journalism immersed him in current politics, while Matulaitis encouraged him to continue to develop his real talent, which was writing fiction. He had already published several works of fiction about the war and Lithuania's rise to freedom. He was a great admirer of Matulaitis and wrote a series of articles about him that show genuine understanding and spiritual depth.

3 The famous Polish religious anthem which starts with the words "Boże coś Polskę..."

God will not permit this to go unpunished. If the wind should change, we may yet hear them singing “The Red Banner”<sup>1</sup> in church. There has already been such an incident at the Włocławek Cathedral, where after a religious service some young fellows started up the song “Konopnicki’s Troops,” directed against the Germans. The organ barely drowned out the singers’ voices.

One of the sisters complained about her superior, who came from Poland and was an ardent Polish patriot. She is educating the girls in a spirit of unhealthy nationalism. The sisters of St. Mary Magdalene take in fallen girls to help them straighten out their lives and also accept decent girls who are poor. As a rule they never take their girls out to public functions and even the Sisters’ Constitutions do not allow this. However, both the superior and the girls took part in the famous Corpus Christi procession, which the Poles of Vilnius turned into a political demonstration and because of which Monsignor Michalkiewicz was exiled by the Germans.<sup>2</sup>

That sister also complained that during her novitiate in Kraków, the other novices would often make fun of her and call her names like “detestable Lithuanian.” They hurt her feelings. She herself was Polish and did not know a word of Lithuanian, although she had been born and grew up in Vilnius. That was why she could never get along with the Polish Sisters who came from Poland.

The evil that results from this unhealthy nationalism is evident everywhere. I also noticed it when visiting the institutions of which Sister Czarnowska is in charge. She belongs to the Sisters of the Holy Family at Nazareth. I have not come across such chauvinism even in Poland. It is partly due to the persecution practiced by the Russian government; it created this fanatical nationalist sensitivity and chauvinism, which is unsound nevertheless. Fathers Kuleszo<sup>3</sup> and Chomski<sup>4</sup> have considerable influence on the Sisters of St. Mary Magdalene, while Father Lubianiec has a similar influence on the Nazarenes.

1 A Communist song.

2 The procession took place June 21, 1918, and was organized by Msgr. Michalkiewicz; patriotic speeches and songs turned it into a political demonstration. The Germans arrested Michalkiewicz and exiled him to the Maria Laach monastery in Germany. He returned to Vilnius in the autumn of 1918.

3 Adam Kuleszo (1881-1952): a graduate of the Theological Academy of St. Petersburg, ordained in 1904; long-term pastor of the Church of the Holy Spirit, popularly called the Dominican church. He taught religion in various Polish high schools and was an active supporter of the Polish National Democratic Party.

4 Leopold Chomski (1885-1982): attended Vilnius Seminary and the Theological Academy of St. Petersburg; ordained in 1910. From 1919 to 1931, he was chaplain of the prestigious Polish boys high school named after Sigismund Augustus, ruler of Lithuania and Poland. He was also a professor at Vilnius Seminary.

Today, March 2nd, the Bolsheviks released eighteen persons who had been arrested at St. Casimir's Church in connection with Father Muckermann. Miss Grudzinska is still in prison.

### *March 3*

Father Cijunaitis,<sup>1</sup> pastor of Vievis (Jewje), came to consult with me about various matters. During the war his parish was a battleground with a trench running right through it and as a result was practically devastated. The people go begging for bread from the Lithuanians in Kaunas. It is an ethnically mixed parish: some of the people still speak Lithuanian, but many have become polonized or assimilated into the Belorussians. This is not surprising, considering that Cijunaitis is only the second Lithuanian pastor sent to work there. Father Radusis preceded him; he was Lithuanian. In the past, only Polish priests had been assigned to this parish. But now, while begging among the people in Kaunas, the parishioners have gone back to their native tongue. For a while some Polish Legionnaires stayed in the parish. They tore down the Lithuanian sign on the the Lithuanian Children's Home, but when the pastor scolded and shamed them, they apologized for their bad behavior. The Lithuanian children are taught catechism in Lithuanian, while those who speak Polish are taught in Polish. The pastor had even begun to preach in Lithuanian, something that had not been done before.

Father Cijunaitis himself comes from the famous parish of Joniskis.<sup>2</sup> There used to be a pastor there by the name of Petrowski, who tried to polonize and denationalize the people with furious energy. He would not allow little children to receive their First Communion until they had learned Polish. Father Cijunaitis's parents told him how they had gone to learn their catechism in Polish from the ages of eight to eighteen before the pastor would allow them to receive First Communion. They were pure Lithuanians and did not know any Polish. Indeed, it is evident that in the

---

<sup>1</sup> Matas (Matthew Cijunaitis) (1886-1955): attended Vilnius Seminary, ordained in 1909. A capable and dedicated pastor, eventually he became canon and one of Bishop Kukta's assistants in Kaisiadorys in 1926.

<sup>2</sup> Joniskis: a town in northwestern Lithuania; under czarist rule, Joniškis was governed by a Russian, Count Zubov, but the Lithuanian people resisted and caused so much trouble that the Russian government was forced to grant it self-rule. The parish is very old, founded in 1522.

past the pastors of this diocese were more concerned with teaching the people Polish than with their salvation.

From many people I have heard that it was the custom in this diocese to appoint priests to Lithuanian parishes who did not know a word of Lithuanian. For many years these priests would work there as pastors without bothering to learn the language. For example, in Daugai<sup>1</sup> almost everything in the parish was conducted in Polish until as late as 1904.

### ***March 4***

On the feast of St. Casimir, I celebrated solemn high Mass at the Cathedral and conducted Vespers at St. Casimir's Church. There I preached a sermon for the workers.

This church has been restored by the efforts and even the financial contributions of the workers. Now that the Russians are gone, they will continue to keep the church functioning. They have already taken pains to remove a Russian construction—"the Royal Gates." Many people came for Benediction.

### ***March 8***

I sat in on some of the lectures at the seminary. I noticed that some professors arrived late for class or left early without finishing the lecture. Still others miss class entirely. At two o'clock I could barely find one professor giving a lecture. The others were absent because this was the first day after a break of several days, and so—"Prima lectio aut brevis aut nulla" (The first lecture should either be short or omitted). Gradually I shall have to bring order into the seminary.

---

<sup>1</sup> Daugai: a town in southern Lithuania, in the Diocese of Vilnius, the site of one of the oldest Lithuanian parishes in the country. The first church was built by Vytautas the Great in 1393, only a few years after Lithuania accepted Christianity. He himself had an estate there. In 1919, the town was the scene of battles between the Lithuanian army and the Bolsheviks and Poles in the struggle to maintain Lithuanian independence.

## ***March 10-22***

Whenever I could, I again attended the lectures at the seminary. I noticed that some of the teachers came to class unprepared. The professor who taught Canon Law<sup>1</sup> simply paraphrased the text of the Codex in Polish. I found the same professor in a fourth-year course translating the homilies of the Church Fathers from the breviary with the seminarians. The students were translating some parts rather poorly, while the professor, trying to correct them, made mistakes himself.

I visited yet another professor<sup>2</sup> in a second-year course who was translating a letter of St. Ignatius with the seminarians. Here too, the students were doing a poor job, while the professor did not correct them or corrected them inadequately. However, I noticed that this was a gifted teacher, with real talent. The lecture of the Church History professor<sup>3</sup> was very dry and boring; most of the time he was reading from his notes. Then I happened upon another class where he was actually dictating notes to seventh-year seminarians about the Renaissance, but I could see that he was good at examining the students.

No courses are being given in algebra, physics, geometry, and cosmography. Engineer Szopa, who is supposed to be teaching these subjects, is a well-known Polish nationalist and activist and has fled to Warsaw with the Legionnaires. It is difficult to find another teacher. For these subjects I had thought of bringing in the priest Dr. Steponavicius, pastor of Sameliškiai, but this could not be done because of the war. I would prefer to have well-qualified priests teach all the subjects at the seminary.

After speaking with Father Vaitkevičius, Father Kraujalis,<sup>4</sup> and the Rector (Canon Uszyło), I decided that, for the time being, Father Vaitkevičius will teach physics and geometry, and Father Kraujalis — algebra and cosmography. Father Kraujalis and Puciata<sup>5</sup> divided

---

1 Canon Karol Lubianiec.

2 Probably Fr. Stanislaw Miłkowski, who taught Patrology.

3 Fr. Zygmunt Lewicki.

4 Petras Kraujalis (1882-1933) a graduate of the Theological Academy of St. Petersburg, ordained in 1908. He taught at the Seminary until his death. He was known as an educator and a journalist.

5 Leon Puciata (1884-1943): a Polish priest, ordained in 1911. He had doctorates in theology and philosophy. Later, he also lectured at the University of Vilnius and was pastor of St. Anne's Church.

between them the courses taught by Father Reinys,<sup>1</sup> who has been imprisoned by the Bolsheviks, but this proved too much for them, especially since Father Kraujalis has also taken on algebra and cosmography. In the meantime, I assigned Father Skruodys, who is presently recuperating in Vilnius, to teach the Lithuanian language, and I also took the two courses on theodicy from Father Puciata and gave them to Father Vaitkevičius. Up to now, the seminarians have wasted a great deal of time because they were not getting all their courses. Their room and board is very expensive right now and besides, the days are flying by irretrievably.

Father Puciata is a good-man, a learned priest. He is gifted and a good lecturer, but it turns out without much willpower. He misses many of his lectures and is often late. Now, taking advantage of the rumors that the Bolsheviks are going to arrest quite a few priests, he has ostensibly gone into hiding and has stopped coming to the seminary. I called him in and told him that if he found it too difficult to to go on teaching, he could give at least the philosophy course to Father Vaitkevičius. He then apologized for shirking his duties. I warned him not to miss classes. Now Father Puciata comes to all his lectures. I wonder how long that will last?

Finally, the seminarians have all their courses and will not be wasting precious time. Many of them are still unable to come back after their Christmas break, especially from the areas around Balstogė and Gardinas, which are occupied by the Legionnaires and the Germans. Some of them, afraid of being drafted into the Bolshevik army, obtained the rector's permission to go to that part of Lithuania which is governed by the Lithuanian Council.

And so, with God's help, I have settled at least some problems about the lectures at the seminary. I have heard that lack of order and discipline is evident, but have not yet had a chance to investigate this. I sent Father Vaitkevičius to teach at the seminary not only because there was no one else to send, but also so he would become familiar with the situation from the inside and afterwards help me make the needed

---

1 He taught various philosophy courses.



improvements. Right now, my greatest concern is to build up the seminary, to make it truly Catholic, and to sweep away the rot of all this nationalism and chauvinism. My greatest desire is that when they graduate, the seminarians leave with the heart and spirit of a true priest-apostle; that they wish to serve the people of all nations equally, like Saint Paul. I have observed that nationalistic chauvinism is a disease that afflicts the priests of this diocese and is affecting the seminary as well.

### ***March 12***

At 6:30 in the evening of March 11th I gave a retreat conference to the Lithuanians at St. Nicholas Church. On March 12th at 6:30 in the morning I spoke to the Polish members of the Third Order at the Dominican Church. Then at 6:30 in the evening I spoke to the Polish servant girls at the Bernardine Church.<sup>1</sup>

On March 12th, a Lithuanian, apparently a well-educated man and a good Catholic, came to tell me about the sad situation at the parish of Vidiškiai.<sup>2</sup> The pastor there is an old and slovenly man. He is not doing anything himself, nor will he let anyone else work there. During his sermons he keeps shouting: “My children, educate and improve yourselves!” Nothing, however, comes of this. The church is built of brick, but is sadly neglected: the windows are broken, and during the entire winter there is no glass in the windows. The pastor won’t put in new windows and won’t let anyone else replace them either. The doors are broken and do not shut properly, and the roof has holes in it. During the winter the people gathering in the church cannot bear the cold and so they go to neighboring parishes.

I promised to investigate the matter and to do something about it as soon as I could. May God grant a change in the times and give us

---

1 One of the oldest churches in Vilnius, built in 1500-1513 for the Franciscan Friars of the strict observance and dedicated to St. Francis and St. Bernardine, reformer and second founder of the Franciscans. Hence, the church was popularly called the Church of the Bernardines.

2 A small town near Kaunas, where in 1851 the famous Bishop Valančius found a decayed wooden church. A new brick church was built in the neo-classical style in 1853 and dedicated by Bishop Valančius in 1856.

peace. Now it is impossible to communicate with anyone or to find out what is going on.

### ***March 13***

Three delegates from Idolta, in the parish of Druja,<sup>1</sup> came to see me. They asked me to let them start a new parish. There is a small chapel in Idolta, and they are planning to build a rectory soon. After conferring with my secretary, I gave them permission to have a mission at Idolta for the time being and promised to let them have a real parish as soon as I could arrange everything as required by Canon Law.

One of the men spoke broken Polish, but it was very awkward for them—probably as difficult as Belorussian is for me. The other two kept silent. Realizing that they were true Belorussians, I asked them to talk in “simple speech,”<sup>2</sup> that is, in Belorussian. The men changed completely: their faces lit up; they became talkative, jovial, and uninhibited. I asked them to tell me about their troubles and worries. I learned that Father Bolich teaches catechism in Belorussian and preaches in Polish and Belorussian by turns. “Which language do you prefer; which is easier to understand,” I asked them. “The simple speech, of course” (i.e., Belorussian), they replied. I told them not to be ashamed of their own language because it was just as much God-given as Russian, Polish, or Lithuanian. I blessed these people and let them to go home, telling them to give my greetings to their pastor and fellow parishioners. They left elated.

After all, everyone prefers to speak his own language. And here the Polish nationalist priests are adamantly trying to convince us that the Belorussians understand Polish perfectly well and do not like to be spoken to in Belorussian and so on. I can see that I must learn Belorussian myself as soon as possible.

A priest, Father Lubianiec, vice-rector of the seminary, had told me yesterday that a certain Mr. Dybowski, an engineer and mathematician,

---

<sup>1</sup> Druja: a Belorussian town near the northeastern border of Lithuania with Belorussia. At this time it belonged to the diocese of Vilnius. Soon Bishop Matulaitis would permit the Marians to open a monastery there and also a convent for Belorussian sisters.

<sup>2</sup> The original is “po prostemu,” which may be translated as “common” or “simple” speech.

would come to see me today. He told me who this man was and the purpose of his visit. The Poles do not want to conduct important matters behind my back.

Today this gentleman came to introduce himself. He has been appointed Commander for the City of Vilnius by the Polish Government. The Poles have a secret military organization here and even some of the Bolshevik soldiers have promised to join. Their purpose is to defend the city against robbers and vandals. When the Bolsheviks pull out, they intend to take power not only in the city itself, but in outlying areas as well. They do not propose to engage in politics nor to determine who will control the city. Their purpose is simply to maintain order and to protect the city from looters. If necessary, they even intend to disarm the Bolsheviks. I inquired whether the Lithuanians had been consulted. He said that they had, but had not come to an agreement. Later, I found out why. It appears that the Lithuanians asked them if they are prepared to recognize independent Lithuania, with Vilnius as its capital. When they refused, the Lithuanians would not consent to join them.

From his talk, I understood that this gentleman expected the Polish Legionnaires to arrive from Lida very soon. Later, it turned out that only a small group of Polish soldiers showed up near Lyda, while in Vilnius rumor had it that some 10,000 Polish troops are marching toward Vilnius from Lyda.

This gentleman added that he considered it his duty to inform me about what is going on in the city so I would not be surprised later. He reported that the Bolsheviks intend to arrest me on their way out of Vilnius, but that they, the Polish officers, will protect me. They have prepared a shelter—a safe house—for me. I thanked him for his kindness and consideration. This man said that the Bolsheviks will, in fact, be leaving Vilnius on the 23rd of March and advised me to go into hiding the last two or three days before this happens. Then he asked me to bless him and his efforts.

For a while we spoke about relations among the major nationalities here in Vilnius: the Lithuanians, Poles, and Belorussians. I mentioned Switzerland as a place where people live together in exemplary harmony, respecting one another as equals and

working together for the common good of their country. Here, on the other hand, people do not even want to recognize each other's existence: the Belorussians cannot even be mentioned in some quarters. We cannot go on living like this, nor can we hope to achieve anything worthwhile. Finally, I told this gentleman: "I have not interfered up to now, nor do I intend to do so in the future. A bishop must be bishop for all; he must serve everyone equally. My position here is very complicated. Moreover, I must be cautious, since my flock are divided on the question of who will control Vilnius because each faction wants it for themselves. Generally speaking, I can only be grateful for the efforts of those who are determined to protect the people from disorder, lawlessness, and looting."

I also advised the man to be cautious himself. I told him that for several weeks now I have been hearing how the Polish forces are trying to get organized. The Bolsheviks, I added, are aware of this as well. Consequently, the Poles should not needlessly draw misfortune down upon themselves and others. Just as the Polish Legionnaires' previous attempt to take Vilnius seemed to me a trivial venture, so now this ostensibly underground operation conducted by the Polish forces bodes ill for the people. The Bolsheviks will very likely uncover the operation and fill the prisons, especially since these officers are making too much noise. This is not serious work, but merely the fantasy of hotheads and dreamers. The man then said that he had already selected those persons who would take power in the city and in the entire country. He also told me that he was very anxious lest the Germans seize Vilnius. He did not mention the Lithuanians. In reply, I said that I thought it not very important who takes the city temporarily. Its ultimate fate depends on what the Peace Conference in Paris decides. Then I added that, as far as I am concerned, I do not intend to leave or to go into hiding. I have advised others not to flee, nor do I myself intend to go anywhere. Let it be as God wills. So many people are suffering in prison, and I too will suffer if I am arrested.

## **March 14**

Father Kuleszo, pastor of the Dominican Church, came rushing in to try to convince me that I should leave for Maišiagala.<sup>1</sup> He said that the Bolsheviks are really determined to arrest me, him, Father Lubianiec and Father Songin.<sup>2</sup> He said that he even had horses ready to take me to Maišiagala.

“And what are you going to do?” I asked him. “Are you going to flee as well?”

“No,” he answered.

“Then why are you trying to convince me to leave?”

“Your Excellency is another matter. The whole diocese needs you.”

“It needs my example as well. If I should leave or go into hiding, God knows what may happen in the city. Some unruly persons may take advantage of this to incite the people and bring great calamity down upon them. No, I have no intention of going anywhere. Such behavior is not fitting for a bishop. If they do arrest me, a hole will not open up in the earth because of it. God will provide for the diocese in my absence.”

Throughout the day various good-hearted people kept coming in to warn me to leave, to go and hide somewhere, for the Bolsheviks would most certainly arrest me. Late in the evening Father Miłkowski, a seminary professor, came running in to report that he had come at the request of certain noblemen to warn me that tonight the Bolsheviks will really come to arrest me. After saying the rosary, I went to bed completely at peace. First of all, though, I took care of all my papers and documents and assigned someone to administer the diocese in case I should be imprisoned.

## **March 15**

Two Lithuanian representatives came to report the ostensibly reliable news that on the 20th of this month the Lithuanian Army would occupy Vilnius and to confer about how to receive and greet the victorious

---

<sup>1</sup> Mejszagola - a town in eastern Lithuania, 25 km northwest of Vilnius. A royal estate and fortress are located there, the fortress part of an ancient system of defense for Vilnius, the capital city.

<sup>2</sup> Jozef Songin: an honorary canon, who, with Father Maciejewicz, was a regular contributor to the Polish paper *Dziennik Wileński*. He was also one of the supporters of the National Democratic Party with Kuleszo, Lubianiec, Maciejewicz, and others.

troops. They wanted me to participate in the festivities as well. They suggested the following order of ceremonies: first, they planned to greet the Lithuanian Commander of the Armed Forces with bread and salt; afterwards, everyone would proceed to the Cathedral. They asked me if I would agree to celebrate Mass, to address the people, and to give my blessing. From the Cathedral they would go to the Gates of Dawn. Here too, they wanted me to say the litany with the people and speak a few words. From there everyone would go to the Hill of Gediminas<sup>1</sup> to raise the flag.

I asked that the Lithuanians not involve me in any political ceremonies or demonstrations. They should not forget that I am here in Vilnius to serve everyone, not only Lithuanians but also the Poles and the Belorussians and that, above all, I am obliged to look after whatever concerns the Church.

I told them the following:

1) In my opinion, organizing the demonstration should be left to those who will actually occupy Vilnius. Who knows if there will be time for demonstrations; perhaps it may be imperative to press forward or to defend themselves.

2) If the Lithuanians do take Vilnius, it would be better if they did not imitate others by making a great hullabaloo, but rather, start to work, to organize some means of saving the people from starvation. If the Poles do not join in, demonstrations will simply antagonize them and make the work all the more difficult for the Lithuanians.

3) It is not demonstrations, but steady and serious work, establishing various institutions, taking over commerce and industry, and the like that will make Vilnius a Lithuanian city.

4) The fate of our country, and especially of Vilnius, is not yet clear and will be decided by the Paris Peace Conference. Only when things become stabilized, will what needs to be done become evident. In the meantime, as bishop I must be careful not to insult or needlessly offend any part of my flock. I cannot live for the moment, but must look to the future. What would have happened if I had

---

<sup>1</sup> A hill rising behind the Cathedral upon which a brick tower has been restored as a reminder of the Upper Castle, which once stood there and was used by Gediminas (ca. 1275-1341), founder of Vilnius. He also founded the dynasty that ruled Lithuania until the 16th century.

listened to the Lithuanian Council and done what they were pressing me to do? Perhaps I would have had to pack my bags and leave Vilnius for Kaunas together with the members of the Council or even go to Tilsit.

5) I would be willing to participate in the festivities only if the Poles and Belorussians also consent to do so.

Then I told them that since I did not want to take sole responsibility, I would invite the Lithuanian priests and confer with them about what is to be done. I promised to give them an answer in the evening.

At three o'clock in the afternoon I convened the Lithuanian priests and explained the matter to them. We agreed not to decide anything definitely but to wait and see how things turn out. Naturally, they all agreed that the Church cannot turn people away. If the Lithuanians wish it, we will have to hold a service for them. But if they want to turn a sacred celebration into a political tool, then it is clear that it would be inappropriate for the bishop to participate.

Besides, I had also put the following question to these representatives: "What would you have me do and what order of ceremonies would you suggest for me if the Polish Legionnaires should take Vilnius first?" They answered that such a thing was impossible.

I also asked the Lithuanian priests not to involve me in politics and to protect me against those who want to do so; I should be allowed to go on with my pastoral work. That is enough work for me; I am capable and able to manage it all.

My God, my God! How difficult is the bishop's position here! Everyone is pushing and pulling him every which way. Both the Poles and the Lithuanians want to harness him to their own political bandwagon. Both are trying to drag him down into this political morass. O God, help me to stay clear of this quicksand.

I received word that the Lithuanians agree to make final arrangements for the celebration only after Vilnius has been taken.

### ***March 16***

I had instructed the rector of the seminary to send me seventh-year seminarians one by one to serve my Mass. I wanted to get to know them better and to learn more about the situation at the seminary.

Sztafinski, who is a deacon and a nationally conscious Belorussian, came today. He is from the Sokółka deanery and attended secondary school in Gardinas (Grodno), where he belonged to a youth group supervised by Father Hryniewicz, a Belorussian. I asked him if there were many Belorussians in the senior year. He said that he did not know. The Belorussians do not own up. They hide their nationality because they are afraid of being persecuted. Normally, especially in the lower courses, not many seminarians admit to being Belorussian, but after receiving major orders, some do own up that they are Belorussian. In the past they would do so only after they had gone to the Theological Academy of St. Petersburg. Meanwhile, other Belorussians do not admit their nationality even after graduating from the seminary. They remain Poles because they are afraid of antagonizing the authorities. From a national point of view, the situation at the seminary is very difficult. Those who present themselves as Belorussians are treated with disdain.

I asked him if it were true that when the list of students is drawn up, the Belorussians are forced to sign up as Poles. He said that it was so. There were two courageous fellows who signed up as Belorussians, but they had to pay for it. One of them was expelled, but perhaps for some other reason as well.

The Polish paper *Dziennik Wileński* [The Vilnius Daily] had announced that out of more than twenty ordained seminarians, only two were Lithuanian and all the rest were Poles. Since there were many Belorussians, they demanded that the newspaper correct the error, but it refused. Sztafinski said that he did not know very much about this incident, since he had been at the seminary in Zhitomir<sup>1</sup> (Żytomierz in Polish) at the time.

He related how the Polish priests of the Sokolka deanery conspired against the Belorussians and make every effort to Polonize them. The Germans had established about forty schools for the Belorussian people. The priests boycotted them, urging the parents not to send their children. The priests would not teach catechism in these

---

<sup>1</sup> An important industrial and cultural center of the Ukraine; it had its own cathedral and Seminary. It had been the ancient seat of the Latin-rite bishops of Kiev.



schools. When the Germans forced the parents to send their children to school and gave them Belorussian catechisms, the priests tried to convince the parents and the children that these catechisms were not approved by the proper authorities and were not Catholic. However, in spite of all this, the national consciousness of the Belorussians is rising; now there are groups of nationally conscious Belorussian young people.

This seminarian went on to tell me that at the Zhitomir Seminary the Poles also hate the Ukrainians and are agitating against them. One seminarian dared to admit outright that he was Ukrainian; however, this courageous fellow suffered because of it. They try to convince the that only Poles are real Catholics. One priest, a Polish Jesuit, during a retreat at the seminary, spoke very unfavorably about the Union,<sup>1</sup> actually disparaging it. He urged the seminarians to use only the Polish language.

Sztafinski had the opportunity to stay in the rural parishes of the Ukraine and to meet with Catholic people. Usually they addressed him in Ukrainian and only a few spoke Polish. However, boycotting the Ukrainian language in the churches destroys the possibility of converting the Ukrainian Orthodox.

I told the seminarian how in Switzerland and elsewhere the priests serve all the people regardless of national differences. I encouraged him and others to serve everyone equally after they left the seminary. For my part, I said that I would never despise anyone because of his language or nationality. My only wish is that each of them should have an apostle's heart and spirit. I am ready to support the good efforts of every nation and am happy to see that the work is progressing, that each nation is thriving, and that people adhere to the Church. It is my duty to see that the work of each priest continues along the paths directed and outlined by the Church.

They have been continually trying to intimidate me with talk that the Bolsheviks will arrest and exile me. I have now become accustomed to such talk.

---

<sup>1</sup> Probably a reference to the Union of Brest in 1596, when a Church synod held in Brest [Brześć in Polish] (Belorussia) proclaimed the union of the Orthodox and the Roman Catholic Church. This union encompassed only the territory of Lithuania and Poland. Several joint dioceses were formed under the leadership of the Metropolitan of Kiev. Large numbers of these Orthodox believers came into union with the Catholic Church and were known as "Uniates".

### ***March 17***

The Seminarian Alexander Hanusewicz was here today to serve Mass. At first he was reluctant to admit openly that he was a Belorussian, but later he got up enough courage to do so. He is from Alsenai, where he taught the children catechism there for several years. It is extremely difficult to teach the children anything in Polish, since they are used to speaking Belorussian.

So there we are. And the dean of Asmena had told me that this was a completely Polish parish.

### ***March 18***

The seminarian Butrimowicz, a Belorussian aware of his national identity, came to serve Mass. He has been working with Belorussian youth groups. Everyone in his family is a nationally conscious Belorussian. I questioned him about the lectures he attends and whether he can understand what the professors are saying.

A certain young man who called himself Fromm came to see me. He claimed to have participated in the Lutoslawski case in Russia; afterwards he worked for the Bolsheviks under an assumed name. However, the Bolsheviks began to watch him and spy on him, so he had to flee. Now he is still in hiding. He requested assistance and also asked me to point out the whereabouts of the Polish Committee.<sup>1</sup>

This man appeared to be a spy or an intelligence agent. I told him that I could not help him very much, since I did not have anything myself. "You can stop in at the office, and Father Steckiewicz will give you something so you would not die of starvation," I said. "As for the Polish Committee, I cannot point it out to you because, as far as I know, there is no such thing. When the Bolsheviks took over, the more prominent Poles fled the country and went into hiding."

---

<sup>1</sup> Probably the underground Polish Military Organization—*Polska Organizacja Wojskowa* or the *POW*.

He asked me to recommend someone to whom he could go for assistance. After giving it some thought, I directed him to the attorney Wróblewski, well-known and an activist. It seemed to me that this would do him no harm, since he had left the Social Democratic Party and was working for the Bolsheviks. And, after all, even the newspapers had published this information. And so, this fellow took off, not having unearthed very much.

### ***March 19***

Today is the feast of St. Joseph, Patron of the Church. I celebrated a solemn high Mass at the Cathedral. When I returned home,<sup>1</sup> I found an order from the Bolsheviks to move my quarters from the second to the third floor and to leave all the furniture and belongings behind. I was permitted to take only my bed. They gave me three days to move out. I thought this over and conferred with others about what I should do. It is impossible to live on the third floor: the furnaces do not work, and there is no way of heating those large rooms with high ceilings. There is no furniture, nor is there enough room for everyone.

I decided that if I am forced out, I would move to the seminary and leave Father Joseph [Vaitkevičius] with the servants and the maid to keep an eye on the house and furniture. I resolved not to leave on my own until they throw me out. Let the people know that I was evicted from my house by force.

### ***March 22***

The rumor that I was being forced out of my house quickly spread throughout the city. Since I did not want riots and unrest breaking out, perhaps even worse ones than in Father Muckermann's case, I decided to make an effort to get the order canceled. I begged Father Kukta to go to Mrs. Vileišis with the notice. She gave it to a Lithuanian young woman she knew who was working for the Bolsheviks. She, in turn, handed it over to Mr. Pozela and Kapsukas

---

<sup>1</sup> The house in which Matulaitis lived during the time he was bishop was a three-story Renaissance-style building on the street leading to the Vilnius Cathedral and quite close to it. The chancery offices were on the first floor, the bishop's quarters were on the second, and the top floor was vacant. At the side of the house was an iron gate entered from the street and opened into an inner courtyard.

on March 20th. They expressed their disapproval and said that they would try to have it canceled.

On March 21st a Bolshevik came to inform me that probably they would not take the house, since it would be awkward to evict a bishop. "For me personally," I said, "it is not such a big problem to move out and go elsewhere, but as bishop I have certain responsibilities and need a place where I can attend to them. If you evict me, you will turn the Catholic people against you and may have even greater difficulties than with Father Muckermann. There is no doubt that the foreign press will also report that you have behaved badly toward a Catholic bishop."

On the morning of March 22nd I received a notice that the former order had been canceled. Thank God that everything ended so well. However, since I do not really trust the Bolsheviks, I had already moved my things. About two o'clock at night the Bolsheviks pounded on the gates and tried to get in, but the woman on night duty would not let them in and told them to come in the daytime. They cursed and swore, then took themselves off.

During the past few days, a Lithuanian airplane appeared over the city dropping leaflets. Some of these were very clever and amusing, especially those directed against the Red Army. This is a new way of conducting warfare, and it seems to be having an effect.

The Bolsheviks have arrested and imprisoned a number of people during the past few days. They arrested a group of Polish ladies, claiming to have uncovered an organization called the *Liga Patriotek* [League of Patriotic Women], whose purpose is to prepare for the coming of the Polish Legionnaires and to assist the secret Polish Military Organization. It seems that the Bolsheviks have also arrested about thirty of the wealthiest Jews, including Mr. Michał Meyszłowicz and then his wife as well. They have confiscated several tens of thousands of rubles from him.

The whole city is in a state of expectation, waiting for the appearance of an army to fight the Bolsheviks. The Poles are hoping for the Polish Legionnaires, while the Lithuanians expect their own army. It is remarkable that the Poles never mention the Lithuanian Army. When referring to the Lithuanian front, they speak only of the Germans and the Poles. Nor do the Bolsheviks make any mention of

the Lithuanian soldiers. Everywhere there is evidence of nationalistic prejudice.

On March 20th Jonas Vaišnora, a nationally conscious Lithuanian from Ezerenai, came to serve Mass. He attended secondary school in St. Petersburg. When he entered the seminary, he did not know a word of Polish and told me how much he had suffered because of his not knowing Polish. The first time he came to the seminary, he asked the doorman in Russian where he might find the Rector and if he could see him. The astonished doorman asked him if he were Catholic. Vaišnora said that he was and that he wanted to enter the seminary. The doorman shook his head doubtfully, wondering if he would be accepted without knowing any Polish. He was accepted, but he also had a lot of difficulty until he learned Polish. Naturally, when he had to write essays in Polish, he wrote practically nothing. The professor would give him a zero cubed ( $0^3$ ) and humiliate him.

They put him in a room with several Polish roommates who would make fun of him and mock him cruelly. Unable to put up with this, he went to the Inspector to complain and asked that he be placed with a friend who had promised to teach him Polish. The Inspector refused to let him room with this seminarian. He said: “You knew that this is a Polish seminary, and if you didn’t know any Polish, you should have gone to Kaunas. So now you just have to put up with it.”

Realizing that here in Vilnius they would, in the end, simply label him a Lithuanian fanatic and expel him from the seminary, he decided to move to Kaunas. He went to the Rector and told him everything quite openly. The Rector consoled him and retained him in the seminary. After he learned Polish, he no longer had as much trouble.

When I asked him how many Lithuanians there were in the seventh year, he answered that there are two admitted Lithuanians and three more who probably enrolled as Poles. It seems that in the past if a Lithuanian knew Polish when he entered the seminary, he would usually sign up as a Pole in order to avoid problems and not be persecuted for his so-called “Lithuanian mania.”<sup>1</sup>

---

<sup>1</sup> Literally *litwomania*, a special term coined by the more chauvinistic Poles to label those Lithuanians who insisted on using their own language or who engaged in any activities on behalf of Lithuania as a separate and independent nation.

I questioned him whether he is able to understand the lectures and if they are of any use to him. Usually, I made it a point to ask each seminarian to tell me something about life at the seminary so I could get a better idea about the situation there.

On March 21st Alexander Syczewski, who hails from the Naugardukas<sup>1</sup> area, served Mass. When I asked if he was a Belorussian, he answered that he could be whatever anyone wanted him to be—a Belorussian or a Pole. It was clear that he did not dare commit himself to any nationality.

These are trivial things, but they do reveal the educational methods of the seminary.

On March 22nd Leonas Eidimtas, who comes from Plunge, was here to serve Mass. He also was reluctant to say outright what nationality he belonged to, but admitted only that he knew both Polish and Lithuanian. In fact, he spoke Lithuanian very well. He is a real Samogitian,<sup>2</sup> but at the seminary he did not dare own up to being Lithuanian. This educational policy is unsound and harmful to the development of a person's character.

I told them all: "Look here; after all, you can be whatever nationality you want to be, but you should have the heart of a priest-apostle and when you are assigned to a parish, you must serve the people with dedication, adapting yourself to them and not forcing them to learn an unknown language according to your own preferences. Jesus has sent us to teach the Faith and to proclaim the Gospel, not to teach languages. Jesus has commanded us to work for the salvation of the people, not to pursue national politics by exploiting their ignorance and blindness."

In questioning the other seminarians, I took note of the fact that the seminary lacks proper discipline. For example, there is no spiritual reading during the evening meal and they do not eat at the same time, but whenever they wish. During the noonday meal there is often no reading as well; servants wait at table rather than the seminarians themselves, and so on. I have tried to acquaint myself thoroughly with

---

1 Nowogródek in Polish

2 Northwestern part of Lithuania: *Žemaitija*; noted for its patriotism, conservatism, and certain regional distinctions in speech and dress.

life at the seminary so that, with God's help, I might be able to reorganize and restore everything as it should be. I am especially anxious to make the seminary truly Catholic so it would produce priests who are apostles determined to serve everyone equally, without despising or discriminating against any nation, but rather supporting the good efforts of each and guiding the people toward the Kingdom of God and not somewhere else—into all kinds of political intrigues.

I had written to His Excellency the Apostolic Visitor<sup>1</sup> in Warsaw to send me the necessary authorization to act, while the present situation continues and military action goes on making it impossible to contact the Holy See. On March 19, I received wide powers for myself and the neighboring bishops.

### ***March 23***

Making use of the authorization I was given, today I placed the Lord Jesus in the Blessed Sacrament in my little chapel. Now it will be more peaceful, pleasant, and homelike to live under the same roof with our beloved Savior; now we shall be able to visit him frequently in the Blessed Sacrament.

We introduced a schedule in keeping with religious life quite a while ago.<sup>2</sup> We usually rise at 5 o'clock; meditation is at 5:30, then I say Mass, and after me, Father Joseph. The servants and the cook listen to the points given for meditation and usually receive Communion during my Mass. We have evening prayer together in the chapel whenever we can, right after supper. I give the points for meditation, and we make our examination of conscience.

Whenever I can, I visit the seminary and read Canon Law to acquaint myself with how seminaries should be conducted according

---

<sup>1</sup> Achille Ratti and Bishop Matulaitis had probably not met yet, but they corresponded regularly. A number of these letters have been preserved. They were not sent through the mail but delivered personally by trustworthy persons.

<sup>2</sup> At this time Matulaitis's household consisted of himself and Father Vaitkevičius, Jonas Varzaitis, and Andrius Meciunas, both of whom were serving the Bishop. The cook, Marijona Minkstaite, was probably a member of a secret religious community. Since they were all religious, they were willing to conform to a schedule characteristic of religious life.

to the latest directives from the Holy See. I shall have to read certain books on this subject. I am also preparing material for the deans' meeting which I shall hold as soon as possible. I should also begin putting the religious communities in order and the parishes as well, but it is impossible to do everything at once.

Father Raštutis,<sup>1</sup> who belongs to the Diocese of Kaunas, came to see me. He is returning from Oranenburg with his children's home—107 persons in all. He hopes to stay in Vilnius<sup>2</sup> at least for a time. At present it is not possible to move the the children across the front lines; everything may be confiscated. I gave them the necessary permission to celebrate Mass and hear confessions.

### ***March 24***

Today another Bolshevik spy or intelligence agent—a very suspicious character in any event, stopped in to see me. He even brought an introductory letter from Father Baliulis, the Dean of Vitebsk. Father Baliulis refers to him as a good friend. Once Father Matulaitis sent me a similar “friend”<sup>3</sup> to Fribourg from London. After I investigated him, this “friend” of his turned out to be a real con artist and spy.

This gentlemen called himself Michał Zadkiewicz, originally a Pole, formerly of the Orthodox faith, but converted to Catholicism about two years ago. In Petrograd he became acquainted with the Jesuit Father Bartwarowski and had entered the Jesuit novitiate. However, when the Revolution broke out, he had no choice but to join the Bolsheviks. Now he has a responsible position with them and is commissar of a department dealing with foreign affairs. He can travel across all the front lines and hand out permits to others if necessary. Having conferred with Bishops von Ropp, Łoziński and Fathers Baliulis and Hergett, he is determined, while working for the Bolsheviks, to do good for the Church wherever he can and to accomplish a genuine revolution in the relations of the Bolsheviks with

---

1 Nikodemus Raštutis (1881-1947): a Lithuanian priest ordained in 1903. Since 1915 he had been well known for his work among Lithuanians in the Vilnius area, for which he was exiled to Russia. During WW I he worked with Lithuanian refugees and had been caring for war orphans. When the war was over, he obtained several railway cars and transported the entire orphanage to Vilnius.

2 The orphanage was housed just outside Vilnius, at Trinapolis, the summer residence of the bishops of Vilnius. Matulaitis gave his permission and the Bolsheviks also allowed it. The orphanage remained at Trinapolis until 1925.

3 A reference to the Rafalovski incident in 1914; Father Kazimieras Matulaitis was pastor of St. Casimir's Church in London.



the Church and also obtain a decree of complete freedom for the Church. In the meantime, he could invite the Jesuits from Kraków to come to work somewhere in Russia. And he went on to tell me a lot of other things.

It seemed to me that he was especially interested in the Jesuits and wanted to find out if there were any around here. He also wanted to know my opinion of the Bolsheviks and their relations with the Church. He was still a young man, clean-shaven and very adroit. He gave the impression of being much-traveled and boasted of having been practically everywhere. His features and speech were similar to those of a Jew. Besides, he was much given to boasting and bragging about his position. He came with Father Lubianiec, the Seminary Inspector, who, apparently, believed Father Baliulis's recommendation.

I told this gentleman and commissar more or less the following: "If you give the Church real freedom I, of course, will be very happy and will naturally make use of it, since the present situation is intolerable. Now is not the time to invite the Jesuit Fathers here or to Russia. First, let us have peace and tranquillity, then we can evaluate the situation in which the Church finds itself and decide what to do."

He had also said, and perhaps this is what he was really after, that the Bolshevik government wanted to establish relations with the Holy See with the help of Bishops von Ropp and Łoziński. He asked me if I would like to contribute to this effort. Besides, he said, would it not be better if we delegated a layman, namely him, to deal with matters concerning the Holy See. I answered that, in my opinion, there was no need to search for new ways to communicate with Rome. If the Bolshevik government wants to do so, it can request that the Holy Father send his representative here, as Monsignor Ratti is in Warsaw and Archbishop Pacelli in München. Then we, the bishops, would have direct communication with Rome and would not need to delegate anyone. At this time I cannot join in the effort on which you say you have agreed with Bishops Ropp and Łoziński. I would have to see them and confer with them myself. It seems to me that it would be desirable to wait for better times."

This gentleman also asked me if I wished to send a letter to Bishop Ropp through him. I answered: "Thank you for your kind intentions,

Sir. Since the normal flow of life has stopped, there is not much to write. And finally, if you, Sir, really intend to do some good for the Church and are able to do so, go ahead and do it. We shall be very pleased and God will reward you.” He assured me that the Bolshevik government would most certainly change its behavior toward the Church and would give the Church complete freedom.

He could speak some Polish, but asked that he be allowed to speak French or Russian. Since Father Lubianiec said that he preferred Russian, that is the language we used. I could not tell exactly what he wanted from me. Perhaps he had some other plans. This much is clear: he is no Jesuit novice and probably not even a Catholic. Later he appeared elsewhere in the city and spoke to some of the priests, ostensibly looking for me and for Father Lubianiec. When I tried to find out what he had been saying, it appeared that he had said one thing to some people and something else to others. My God, my God, how careful one has to be here.

Today at four o’clock in the afternoon I gave a conference to the educated ladies on the topic: “What Is Holiness.” I spoke in Polish. Father Joseph [Vaitkevičius] will give the rest of the talks, although I may deliver one more myself.

### ***March 25***

The seminarian Francis Cibulskis, a nationally conscious Lithuanian from Kaišiadorys, came to serve Mass. When he entered the seminary, he hardly knew any Polish. If he had, he would probably have signed up as a Pole for fear of being rejected during the examinations. It seems that before the examinations everyone had to state his nationality, and all were of the opinion that Belorussians or Lithuanians are not desired at the seminary unless there is a shortage of Poles. Being aware of this, many Belorussians and Lithuanians sign up as Poles out of fear.

While studying at the seminary, he had experienced a good deal of unpleasantness from his fellow seminarians because of his nationality. They kept nagging him for signing up as a Lithuanian although his last name was Polish.

During the past year, the professor of World History, Father Miłkowski, kept going on and on about the Polish-Lithuanian Union<sup>1</sup> in practically every lecture, until all the seminarians were sick of it. But he is not doing it this year. Last year the inspector, Father Lubianiec, during his lectures on Canon Law attacked the Lithuanians vehemently. He would get worked up and red in the face while bitterly reproaching the Lithuanians. Once, he even delivered a sermon against the Lithuanian Council. This year he is no longer doing it. The seminarians feel that since the arrival of the new bishop, the nationality issue has died down.

Last year too, one of the Polish seminarians went around all the rooms selling pins with the Polish eagle, and this was done with the approval of the authorities. Everyone, including the Belorussians and Lithuanians, had to buy them. If you didn't buy one, you were labeled an enemy of the Poles. The inspector permitted the Poles to bring Polish calendars into the seminary, but would not let the Lithuanians bring Lithuanian ones. It is not allowed to speak Lithuanian or Belorussian in public: that is immediately scorned and rebuked.

I asked him if it were true that last year the Belorussians were being forced to sign up as Poles. He said it was. When the Germans demanded a list of seminarians by nationality, it seems that about forty seminarians had signed up as Belorussians. The Father Inspector was very upset when he heard of this and went around the rooms himself making a second list and trying to convince the seminarians that they should sign up as Poles for the good of the Church. Only one or two courageous fellows did not agree to be registered as Poles and remained Belorussians. One of them has been dismissed. But it is not clear if it was for something else. Nevertheless, the Belorussians are reviving and becoming more active.

I told Cibulskis that I would not discriminate against anyone on account of their nationality or language. Let all the nations praise

---

<sup>1</sup> Refers to the Union of Lublin in 1569, which declared that Poland and Lithuania were to be one nation with one ruler. It did not succeed in welding the two nations together, since Lithuania would not give up its autonomy and retained home rule.

God in their own language. Since he himself had experienced how unpleasant it is to be persecuted, I urged him always to try to be just and to have a truly apostolic heart to serve all people equally.

I asked him if he could understand what the professors were talking about and if the material was of use to him. He spoke well of Father Reinys's lectures and those of some of the others. The Inspector, Father Lubianiec, often comes to class unprepared and seems to be concerned only about his own institution [*Ochronka*]. He often misses class or comes in late and leaves before the bell. Now that the bishop has been dropping in, it is a fact that the professors come to class better prepared and are more conscientious in giving their lectures.

Since the general opinion is that life at the Vilnius Seminary is intolerable for Lithuanians and that they are expelled from the seminary because of their so-called "Lithuanian fanaticism," that is, for no reason at all or for some trivial cause, he himself had been thinking of studying at the Kaunas Seminary. However, the Lithuanian priests discouraged him from doing so and sent him on to Vilnius.<sup>1</sup>

I asked him how his studies were coming along, what he is good at, and so on. His studies are about average. The seminarians like Professors Savickas, Kraujalis, and Reinys because they are friendly to everyone. Professor Cichoński is a good teacher, but is harsh and keeps aloof from the students. Also, they do not like Professor Chomski very much. They are satisfied with the lectures and conferences given by the spiritual director.

This seminarian made some interesting comments: that there should be freedom of language and nationality at the seminary; that everyone should be treated equally and fairly; that the seminarians should learn to respect, accept, and love one another so that, when they leave the seminary, they would be able to serve everyone equally without discriminating against anyone. As things are now, a seminarian's

---

<sup>1</sup> Since Cibulskis was from the city of Kaišiadorys, he belonged to the Diocese of Vilnius and should study at the diocesan Seminary. Besides, there was a shortage of Lithuanian priests in the Vilnius area.

heart becomes filled with bitterness and rancor and he takes his hate with him when he leaves, wanting to get back at those who have become his enemies.

### ***March 28***

In the afternoon I gave a retreat conference to the ladies on following Christ.

Yesterday, the seminarian Gaspar Wołodkiewicz, a nationally conscious Belorussian, served Mass. His complaints and opinions were much the same as those of other Belorussians.

### ***April 28***

I have not written anything down in this notebook for a whole month because I had taken my notes out of the house and hidden them. I was afraid that if the Bolsheviks searched my house, they would be found and used for evil purposes. In general, I had given various papers and documents to certain trustworthy persons so they would take them away and hide them.

Now I can only jot down some of the more important things as I recall them. This whole period was very stormy and turbulent. For me it was a time of sorrow and heartache, a time to strain the efforts of mind, will, and nerves to the utmost, and a time of fervent prayer as well.

On March 30th at 5:30 in the morning, I heard the doorbell ring. The young brothers and Father Joseph were praying in the chapel, while I was in my room getting ready to go say Mass and give a sermon at the Charity Chapel at the request of the Worshippers of the Blessed Sacrament. I went down and answered the door myself. In the doorway I encountered the same Bolshevik who had once come to the house and demanded that I move out of my apartment. He now announced that the commissar who was supposed to occupy my quarters had returned from Moscow and was at the train station. He would soon be coming here with his friends—seven persons in two cars. I must make room for him immediately. I replied that the former Bolshevik order directing me to give up my living quarters in favor of the commissar has now been revoked by the housing agency. He replied that, since today was a holiday, the man in charge of the

housing agency, Comrade Abramov, would not be there. Consequently, for the time being at least, I must admit those who have come from Moscow until they can find suitable accommodations. This Bolshevnik had already moved into my yard with an automobile full of gasoline canisters and other things.

The commissar himself arrived soon afterward. I showed him the notice that the former Bolshevnik decision had been revoked and that he had been given other accommodations. He said that he could ignore the notice and asked that I would allow him to come into the house temporarily. I warned him that forcing themselves into the bishop's house would not go down well with the people and that riots might result. I said: "Sirs, you have the authority to do whatever you want. I cannot do anything about it. You are forcing me out of my residence and I shall leave the house entirely, but I do not advise you to stay here. I know the Catholic people, and they will not tolerate this. There will be a disturbance."

As I left to go out to say Mass, I asked everyone inside to remain calm and, if the Bolsheviks should return, to let them into the waiting room if they were absolutely determined to get inside. I had already conferred with Father Joseph, and we had agreed that I would move into the seminary should the Bolsheviks get in here by force, while he would remain in the house with the two brothers to keep an eye on things.

When I came back after Mass at about 11:30, I found the stairs and the entrance hall filled with people. Both the Poles and the Lithuanians had rushed in to defend the bishop's residence, sensing that the Bolsheviks were trying to seize it. Seven of these Bolsheviks had already arrived—five men and two women. The people had become even more enraged because of these women. Apparently, they suspected that they were of questionable character and were forcing themselves into the bishop's house to desecrate it. Sensing that a large crowd was gathering, the Bolshevik men left the house and only the two women stayed behind. The people who had assembled into the waiting room spoke many harsh and bitter words to them. When I walked into the house, the people told me that they would never let the Bolsheviks occupy the bishop's house or yard. This house belongs to all the Catholics and they are the owners, so no one has the right

to move in here without their knowledge and approval. As more and more people gathered, I asked them to remain calm.

After some time, the people said that they wanted to confer with me. I went out to them and explained what had happened. I advised them to send representatives to the Bolshevik authorities. At my request, the people began to disperse. As soon as they had gone away, the selfsame Bolsheviks came roaring in by car. Once again I asked them to find living quarters somewhere else so as not to antagonize the people. I added: "While we are standing here talking, the people will most likely start coming back again, because I know that certain persons are keeping an eye on my house and will not let you stay here." And, in fact, a crowd of people began to gather once more.

The Bolsheviks left without gaining anything. They tried to get into the house a third time that afternoon, but when the people again began to gather, they finally left and did not return that day. They were angry and had told my cook and servants: "We'll have our own way here, and in any case, your 'popas'<sup>1</sup> won't be here very long."

That same day the Bolsheviks passed a decree<sup>2</sup> completely abolishing religious education in the schools. The priests were forbidden to set foot in the schools even to teach secular subjects. In those educational institutions that had received financial support from the Bolsheviks, the priests were not given last month's salary either for teaching religion or any other subject.

The people, enraged by the attempt to evict the bishop from his house, threatened to go on strike and stop the railroad and the electric plant. They discussed the possibility of collecting signatures and sending delegates to the Bolshevik authorities.

Once again I put my papers in order and assigned someone to administer the diocese in case the Bolsheviks arrested me. I was prepared for the eventuality that I may be imprisoned. The Bolsheviks who had come to the house would not give their names even when I asked them.

---

1 Russian slang for Orthodox priest.

2 The Decree on Education was issued on March 24th, making grammar school education compulsory, abolishing religious education and all schools supported by religious organizations of any kind, forbidding priests to teach in the schools.

On March 31st the people's delegates who were determined to go to the Bolshevik authorities to protect me from being evicted came to see me. They discussed how to proceed: it was dangerous for the delegates to go by themselves, since they could be arrested when they got there; presenting the paper with the signatures was also risky because those who had signed would be exposed to repercussions. I told them that they should go and speak out calmly and politely. Both the Lithuanians and the Poles had sent letters of protest to the Bolsheviks, signed with false names.

Right after the people's delegates, a Bolshevik spy or provocateur came in. He called himself Ołdak<sup>1</sup> and said that he was a prison warden. He had heard everything I said to the people in the reception room. Fortunately, I had been careful.

This Ołdak, the prison warden, had been here before, ostensibly because he felt sorry for the prisoners. He suggested that I appeal to the people to send them bedding, clothes, and food. According to him, it would be easy to free some of the prisoners, especially the priests. He added that there was no reason why the people should not rise up against the Bolsheviks and drive them out with clubs and sticks. I told him that it would be difficult to send food and clothing since none was to be had in the city. People were starving. And even if something could be sent, it would probably not reach those for whom it was intended. I have no money to pay for the prisoners' ransom and even if someone were able to ransom them, what good would that do? They can arrest the same people again, adding several more to their number. Then I added: "Why do they detain innocent people if they cannot provide for them?"

As for staging a revolt, that would be a disaster. The Bolsheviks are armed and could easily put down unarmed people. That is why I am continually trying to calm the people, telling them to suffer patiently. However, I believe that a government that is based solely on weapons and violence cannot continue for very long.

Ołdak spoke to me in German, inserting a Russian word here and there. I suspect that he is a secularized Jew.

---

<sup>1</sup> J. Ołdak belonged to the Commissars' Council of the Lithuanian-Belorussian Republic set up by the Bolsheviks in February of 1919.



When I was alone, I reflected on the best way of dealing with such spies and provocateurs. Perhaps it would be better simply to refuse to let them in and leave it at that. However, I decided it would be best to see them and to speak to them politely. Let them learn how things stand directly from me, the primary source. Then they will know the facts and will settle down more quickly. Otherwise, they are likely to think all sorts of things and collect all kinds of false information about me during their spying expeditions.

In the afternoon another Bolshevik, Jupavich, a Russian student, came with a friend who did not give his name but said he was Polish. I asked for their papers. This Jupavich showed me an authorization that he had been sent by the Housing Agency to question me about whether I had incited the people against the Bolsheviks or had urged the railroad workers to go on strike. When I explained what had actually happened, they calmed down and went away.

Later that afternoon I gave the first retreat conference for educated men in the seminary chapel on the purpose and destiny of man. I spoke in Polish.

At ten in the evening (about 12:05 Bolshevik time), four or five Bolsheviks arrived. Ostensibly bringing me a telegram, they tried to break in through the gates. But the gates had been bolted with a log, and the woman of the night duty would not let them in, saying that if they had a message, they could hand it in through the crack. They kept banging on the gate and cursing for a long time. I lay down without undressing, thinking that they would be back in greater force and would surely break into my room to arrest me. After waking up at three o'clock, I undressed and lay down properly. The rest of the night passed quietly.

On April 1st the Bolsheviks began strictly to enforce the school decree. Now the problem of the schools has arisen in all its significance and gravity. What are we to do to oppose this pernicious action taken by the Bolsheviks? Once again, I began reading whatever I could find about what the Church has decided and how it has acted in similar instances. I also consulted with various people.

In the afternoon I gave a conference on sin to the educated men. The other conferences, both for men and women, were given by Father Joseph, as on former occasions.

On April 2nd two delegates from the Polish Committee for Education [*Komitet Edukacyjny*—Węclawski and Dmochowski—

were here. They asked me what I intended to do about the schools. I replied that I am following the whole matter very closely. My opinion is as follows: 1) I do not believe that the question of whether the financial support offered by the Bolsheviks is to be accepted or not is really the most important one. The Bolsheviks will not allow any private schools to exist at all and intend to bring all educational institutions under their jurisdiction. Consequently, whether one takes money from them or not, the schools will still be under their control. 2) The parents must protest as vigorously as possible against the Bolshevik conspiracy to abolish religion from the schools. 3) It would be helpful if the teachers would also make a statement, orally or in writing, against the Bolshevik decree from an educational point of view. 4) If they really start to abolish religious instruction in the schools and will not allow priests to provide it, then the children should not be allowed to attend school. They will not miss very much. The delegates said that the Bolsheviks have threatened to confiscate libraries and educational equipment both in the Lithuanian and the Polish schools if there is any resistance. I answered: "They cannot take those things very far. When the situation changes, you can recover the school property." Both delegates expressed their doubts about whether the Bolsheviks will be able to hold out in Vilnius for very long.

Today, the Bolsheviks finally moved out of my yard. They took their automobile, the gasoline canisters, and other things. They were angry and threatened to take revenge.

Today, I also gave a conference to the seminarians. I gave them one every day during the entire retreat: four in all.

The priests in charge of religious education came to discuss the school situation. I gave them various directives and pressed them to have the parents come out in protest as soon as possible.

On April 3rd, this same Bolshevik, Ołdak, the prison warden, came to see me again. He told me nothing new, nor did he learn anything from me. I found out from Father Żarnowski, whom I had appointed to care for prisoners as much as the Bolsheviks would allow him to, that this same Ołdak had visited him as well. When he came to me, he pretended to be a Lutheran, but he told Father Żarnowski that he was a Catholic.

Yesterday evening the Bolsheviks arrested Jonas Verzaitis, my brother and servant, as he was walking along the street, coming home from evening classes. Near the Gate of Dawn shrine a woman handed me a note from him. He is suspected of spying for me. It turned out that the evening classes, the so-called high school courses, had been organized by the Bolsheviks to train agitators. Consequently, the Bolsheviks could not understand why the bishop would send one of his own people to attend them. But perhaps the Bolsheviks wanted to take revenge in general, especially because the people had driven them out of my house.

It is true that I had sent Brother John<sup>1</sup> to attend these classes because I wanted to find out what was being taught there and how. These courses were attended mostly by Jews. Besides them, in John's class, there were a few Russians and two Catholics. From Brother John I found out that one of the teachers, a Jewess, had spoken out against religion and especially against honoring the Blessed Virgin—this was during a lesson in geography. Unable to stand this, John had asked to speak and had sharply protested against these attacks. All the Jews had turned and stared at him; then they took him down to the station. Although I tried very hard, I could not find out where they were holding him. Yesterday, that is, April 26th,<sup>2</sup> I got a letter from Marijampole from which I gather that John is in Marijampole. Perhaps he got away from the Bolsheviks and made his way there. I thought that they might have taken him to Mińsk or Smoleńsk and even asked Father Cikoto about it, but was unable to get any information. We all felt very sorry for John and were concerned about him.

I invited one or two Lithuanian priests in charge of teaching religion and tried to find out how things stand with the Lithuanian schools as well as their attitude towards the Bolshevik decree. The Bolsheviks had sent notices to all the schools stating that priests would no longer be allowed into them. I have one such letter. From

---

1 Matulaitis calls him "Jonukas," an affectionate diminutive like Johnny.

2 There is a slight discrepancy in the date: if this record of events were written April 28, the day before would be April 27th. This slip may be the author's or the transcriber's.

the Lithuanians and later from the Poles, I learned that it had been decided to teach the children in their native language and, in addition, to introduce Polish lessons into the Lithuanian schools and to have Lithuanian taught in the Polish ones.

The Bolsheviks had installed their own principal, Vyšniauskas, to replace Mr. Kairiukštis<sup>1</sup> as head of the Lithuanian Teachers' College. They have also dismissed the priests. The students protested against this and decided not to come to class. They made their retreat<sup>2</sup> and dispersed. The teachers met to send the Bolsheviks a letter of protest. That is how the Bolsheviks have disrupted one Lithuanian educational institution. The others would have been closed as well, but the Lithuanian high schools decided to end the school year right away and send the students home for vacation. They would not resume classes after Easter and thus avoid the Bolshevik repression.

I gave the Lithuanian girls the first retreat conference myself, while Father Joseph gave the rest.

Here in Vilnius, nationalistic quarrels are introduced into every serious issue. Some of the Polish priests, supporters of the National Democratic Party,<sup>3</sup> are saying that I will not publish a pastoral letter or speak out on the school issue because the Lithuanians have prevailed upon me not to do so, since they are afraid that the Bolsheviks will exile me if I do speak out. From the Poles I learned that a rumor is being spread against me that I have decided to dismiss Father Lubianiec from the seminary and put Father Vaitkevičius in his place. All this is coming from a group of Polish priests, the "endeks."

Once again I called together the Polish religion teachers to learn how things stand in the Polish schools. It seems that there is some disagreement among the Poles: a certain number are strictly opposed to the Bolsheviks, do not want anything from them, and are determined to close down the schools; others have accepted financial support from and collaborated with the Bolsheviks, continuing to have classes without religious instruction while consoling us with

1 Juozas Kairiukštis: a much-respected Lithuanian educator who taught for fifty-four years in all. From 1919 to 1926, he was the director or principal of the Lithuanian Teachers' College in Vilnius; he was reinstated when the Bolsheviks left.

2 It was the custom for students in all the schools to be given a retreat before Easter by the school chaplain or another priest.

3 Known as the ND, from which "endek," a popular term to denote supporters of this party, was derived.

promises to set everything right by having religion taught in secret someplace else. This has been the line taken by the principal Koscialkowski. Still others supported the Bolsheviks outright and wanted to have schools without religious education.

The Polish Educational Committee ordered that classes in all the grammar schools be stopped, but the high schools are still functioning. When the Bolsheviks learned this, they issued an order that the schools remain open until April 13th. However, that was futile.

On April 4th and 5th I invited the Dean, Monsignor Wolodzko, Canon Ellert, and some others and asked them about the situation in the schools. We conferred about what to do. I also invited Mr. Skirmuntas, Chairman of the Parents' Committee, and urged him to have the parents protest against the decree and to send delegates to the Bolsheviks. On my advice and under my supervision, parents' committees have been formed in all the schools in order to defend them. The individual committees have elected a central executive. They had already decided that religious instruction must remain in the schools and, if not, then they would refuse to send their children. Everyone had undersigned these decisions. Thus, the weapons with which to fight the Bolsheviks were prepared.

I pondered whether it would be worthwhile to publish a pastoral letter to the Catholic community on the school issue and consulted with some of the more prominent priests about it. Since it was becoming clear that Bolshevik rule here would be short-lived, it seemed to me and to the more thoughtful priests that there was no point in writing a letter. It would be better to wait awhile until the situation became clearer. However, some of them, especially the hotheaded ones, wanted me to issue such a letter immediately and were even so bold as to rebuke me for it.

On April 6th there was a meeting of the Parents' Executive Committee. Since Professor Chomski was there, I delegated him to supervise it, to provide it with suitable information, and to guide it in the right direction. It was decided to send representatives to Leszczyński,<sup>1</sup> the new Bolshevik Commissar of Education. Until

---

<sup>1</sup> Juljan Leszczyński: a Polish Jew who had replaced the Lithuanian Vaclovas Biržiška as Commissar of Education. While V. Biržiška held the position, he would not agree to issuing the Bolshevik Decree on Education. Bishop Matulaitis had appealed to him through his brother Mykolas.

very recently, Vaclovas Biržiška held that position, and I knew from the Lithuanians that as long as he remained commissar, no decree banning religious education would be issued. Thus, until now all had been quiet.

On April 7th I invited the Cathedral Chapter to discuss the question of religious education and the schools. I made an extensive summary of the course of events from the time the Bolsheviks entered Vilnius, and also related what I had done, what directives and orders I had issued. I consulted with the members of the Chapter about what further action should be taken and especially whether a pastoral letter should be written and what form it should take, or if we ought to wait until the present situation becomes clearer. If we really want to begin a campaign against the Bolsheviks, we must appeal to the people directly and ask them if they have authorized the commissars to issue such a decree and if they want the schools and the educational system to be without any religious instruction. If not, then what do they propose to do so religious education would remain in the schools. We decided to wait until things become clearer and to see what the Commissar will tell the parents' delegates.

I called in Father Chomski and told him to write up several resolutions for the parents' representatives so that they would not go to the commissar unprepared. They should take these resolutions with them and present them to the commissar in writing when they go to see him. Otherwise, he may distort or ignore what they are saying to him or try to confuse them in their speech and direct the meeting to his own advantage. It was not possible to send members of the educated classes, and so the common people, selected members of the working class, went.

On April 8th Father Chomski brought me a summary of the resolutions, and we corrected the text. I ordered it typed and taken to the Commissar. I asked that the parents come to see me right after they met with the Commissar.

The parents' delegation met with the Commissar on April 9th. They expressed their anger verbally and also delivered their demands and resolutions in writing. I asked them whether it would be worthwhile to issue a pastoral letter now. They answered that it was not yet time. We talked about the possibility of having a parents'

meeting on the second or third day after Easter. I delegated Father Chomski to organize this meeting and indicated what sort of resolutions it should vote on.

On April 10th to 13th, retreats were conducted in the schools. The Bolsheviks did not disrupt them. Nevertheless, Leszczyński and Olski came to see Sister Czarnowska of the Sisters of the Holy Family, inquiring why classes were not held. She told them very directly and unequivocally exactly what they should be told. They demanded that programs and curricula without religious education be prepared.

I celebrated Mass and gave a conference to the girl students on April 12th in St. Catherine's Church.

Father Tumas had been to the Bolsheviks to demand that they allow retreats to be conducted for the prisoners and that the prisoners be permitted to go to chapel to hear Mass. The Bolsheviks agreed. The imprisoned priests conducted a retreat for the other inmates and heard their confession. Father Żarnowski helped out, since his parish includes the Lukiškiai prison.

I celebrated Mass in the Cathedral on April 13th.<sup>1</sup> I was very concerned about the school issue. Besides, another decree had come out on the separation of Church and State. I cannot remember on what day the Bolsheviks issued this decree,<sup>2</sup> but if they had managed to enforce it, it would have done the Church a great deal of harm. The purpose of this decree was clearly to destroy the Church and to do away with religion.

On April 15th I celebrated Mass and gave a short sermon to the members of the Sodality of the Blessed Virgin Mary.

On Holy Thursday (April 17) services were held at the Cathedral. At three o'clock in the afternoon I called together the members of the Cathedral Chapter and also the pastors of the city to meet at the seminary to discuss whether it was time to issue a pastoral letter or whether it were better to wait a while longer. I explained the current state of affairs to them. Monsignor Sadowski, Dean of the Chapter, and Father Kretowicz, the assistant Dean, as well as the other calmer and more

---

<sup>1</sup> This was Passion Sunday, the beginning of Holy Week.

<sup>2</sup> The Decree on the Separation of Church and State was issued by the Council of the People's Commissars on March 31st.

serious priests were of the opinion that I should not bring out this letter yet. However, Fathers Lubianiec, Maciejewicz, and Chomski thought that the letter should be issued. Since these latter were more eloquent, their view influenced the others. Everyone agreed that the letter should be peaceful in tone. Monsignor Hanusowicz was against its publication.

Since the majority were leaning towards publication, I decided to have it appear the Sunday after Easter. However, when the Polish Legionnaires came, the letter proved unnecessary. I had told the pastors and the other priests that even without the letter they should speak to the people from the pulpit and explain those things which the Bolsheviks are trying to destroy.

During his speech Father Maciejewicz could not resist the opportunity to rebuke me and the pastors as well for being afraid to take a stand when necessary and not being courageous enough in doing our duty. I reprimanded him very gently and politely: "No one here is thinking of shirking or ignoring his duties. It is simply a question of whether we should make a public statement on the school issue." In addition to the members of the Chapter and the pastors, both Father Songin and Maciejewicz attended the meeting. Both are well-known Polish nationalists, who engage in agitation wherever they manage to get in.

Father Cikoto, now a professor at the Mińsk Seminary, arrived. The Bishop of Mińsk has fled from the city and is now hiding from the Bolsheviks somewhere in the villages. The Poles as well as the polonized Lithuanians and Belorussians in Mińsk strongly oppose the nationally conscious Belorussians. At the seminary Belorussian literature is taught, and Belorussian sermons are preached in a small chapel. The bishop has dared to speak in Belorussian in the Cathedral itself. For this reason the Poles look askance at the bishop. They say that they are very concerned about the state of the seminary and threaten to withhold financial support if the Belorussian spirit continues to dominate there. There are twenty-seven seminarians; two or three are Poles, but they are learning Belorussian. Among the Catholics, Cikoto himself and Abrantowicz support the Belorussian movement in Mińsk. The Poles are very angry with them because of this.



We talked about founding Belorussian religious communities for both men and women. I proposed that perhaps the men would like to join a branch of our Congregation. We do not persecute nations. We serve them all equally and endeavor to return our members to the nations from which they originated. He said that it would be better to found a separate religious community for women, but he liked the idea of joining our Congregation,<sup>1</sup> since he had been thinking of entering a monastery himself. I promised to help him with the foundation of these religious communities.<sup>2</sup>

I am concerned that the Belorussian national revival develop along Catholic lines so the spiritual life of the reborn nation be solid. As for Father Cikoto, he seemed to me a very intelligent man and one gifted with an abundance of the Spirit of God.

Since the Bolsheviks have begun to seize young men to join the Red Army, we sent our second brother, the candidate Andrius Meciuinas, to Marijampole. It seems that on April 9th he managed to get out of Vilnius and reached Marijampole safely.

On April 19th, before five o'clock in the morning I heard soldiers running along the street. When I looked out the window, I could see a large group of armed Jewish militiamen going toward the Cathedral almost at a run. Soon afterward, I saw several Polish Legionnaires ride up. After a while they returned on foot and set up machine guns on the street corner. They started shooting at the Bolsheviks, who were also firing back from St. George's Avenue and from the park near the Cathedral.

Throughout the city one could hear gunfire and sounds of fighting. The Legionnaires had surprised many of the Bolsheviks while they were still asleep like a flock of sheep. I noticed that there was not much order among them, but I did not think that they would have allowed themselves to be caught unaware. The evening before, the Bolsheviks had been reveling and partying with gusto, completely oblivious of what awaited them. The Legionnaires were few in number—they say, only about three or four hundred. They rode in and immediately took the station and attacked along Main Street.

---

1 In 1920, Fr. Cikoto joined the Marians and completed his novitiate in Marijampole. He learned Lithuanian and worked among the Lithuanians for a while. In 1923, he started a branch of Belorussian Marians in Druja and worked there until 1933, when he was elected Superior General of the Marian Congregation.

2 A Belorussian religious Community was established at the Marian parish in Druja in 1923 and juridically established by Matulaitis in 1924. The Servants of Jesus in the Holy Eucharist are still in existence.

The fighting lasted from the 19th to the 21st.<sup>1</sup> In the end, the Poles took the city. As they retreated, the Bolsheviks took some Lithuanian hostages<sup>2</sup> with them—the priests Vailokaitis, Reinys,<sup>3</sup> and Dogelis and also Mr. Stašinskas, Mrs. Bortkevičius, and Mr. Gira as well as more than a dozen Poles.

The Poles fought courageously. The Bolsheviks, the real Party people, also defended themselves fiercely. However, the Red Army soldiers did not really want to fight. They either surrendered or ran away.

The city looked dead. Many windows had been smashed by bullets. A number of roofs were destroyed and much damage inflicted. Street fighting is a terrible thing. Nine window panes were broken in my own house. Several bullets flew inside, and some were embedded in the walls and windows. The Catholic population of the city opposed the Bolsheviks, while the Jews were sympathetic toward them.

On April 21st the seminarians could already come to my chapel for ordination. I ordained several priests and a few subdeacons.

Świtalski,<sup>4</sup> the adjutant to General Śmigły-Rydz,<sup>5</sup> called on me and greeted me in the General's name. In the evening he came again to ask if the General himself could come to visit me at nine the next morning. I consented.

In the afternoon some ladies, members of the League of Patriotic Women, came to see me demanding that I bury the fallen soldiers. If possible, they wanted me to accompany the bodies as they were transferred from the hospital to the Cathedral in the evening, to offer Mass the next morning, and to go to the cemetery afterward. I asked them how many had been killed. They answered that there were about sixty. Seeing that they were greatly excited and difficult to talk to, I told them that I would decide what to do after consulting with the Cathedral Chapter. Father Kuleszo, a great Polish nationalist and activist, had sent them.

1 This was Holy Saturday, Easter Sunday, and Monday.

2 Eventually, all the hostages were released in exchange for Bolshevik prisoners given up by the Lithuanian government.

3 Fr. Reinys, the most famous of these prisoners, returned to work in Vilnius until 1922, when he was expelled by the Polish authorities. He went to Kaunas, where he was professor of psychology at the University, and continued to play a leading role in Lithuanian religious, cultural, and political life. Matulaitis consecrated him bishop in 1926.

4 Kazimierz Świtalski, an admirer and supporter of Piłsudski, at this time was staff officer and aide to General Śmigły-Rydz.

5 Edward Śmigły-Rydz (1886-1941): was a close associate of Piłsudski and eventually his successor. He helped organize the Polish Army and from 1919 to 1920 was in command of a special force sent in to fight the Bolsheviks.

On the 23rd still others came to demand that I hold services of thanksgiving for the liberation of Vilnius.

In the evening two Jewish representatives came in: Rabbi Rubenstein and Dr. Schabad. We spoke in Russian. They had started to speak Polish, but seeing that this was not easy for them, I asked them to speak in Russian or German, since, I added, I do not despise any language. They gladly took up Russian. They told me that the Legionnaires had arrested a large number of Jews, had beaten and tortured many of them, and had looted many stores. During the house searches they had confiscated many people's money and so on. They begged me to intercede for at least two well-known Jewish activists: Leo Joffe and Samuel Tscharny (Niger). I promised to do so.

When Major Świtalski was here, I asked that they be released. He wrote down the names and told me that it would be done. On my own I sent Fathers Kukta and Vaitkevičius to the train station, where the detained people were being held to intercede for them as well.

On the following day, the 22nd, General Śmigły-Rydz, without my even asking, told me that those two Jews had been released and returned home.<sup>1</sup> I was happy. I felt sorry for the Jews. I had not seen how they had been beaten and tortured, but whenever I could, I put in a good word for them. I asked the priests to calm and soothe the angry crowds.

As had been reported, the bodies of the fallen Bolsheviks, mostly Jews, lay in the streets for several days without burial. The people who passed by the dead bodies profaned them in various ways. The people have become terribly brutal. I am afraid that there will be problems. The Jews are sitting tight in their homes and keeping out of sight. In some places the Jewish Bolsheviks fired at the Legionnaires from their houses, and that is why there is so much anger. In any case, the treatment of the Jews has been inhuman. The Lithuanians have also complained that they have been harassed during the house searches. I promised the Rabbi and Dr. Schabad that I would defend and intercede for the Jews wherever and however I could, and I have done so.

---

<sup>1</sup> Subsequent events showed this to be false.

I had thought of asking the priests to admonish the people from the pulpit, but I was cautioned that it would make matters even worse, in view of the people's violent and angry mood.

Osmołowski,<sup>1</sup> a Polish political leader, came to see me.

On the 22nd of April, with the Chapter, we decided on the order of ceremonies. I said that I would gladly perform whatever is needed in church, but that I would not become involved in any political demonstrations and refuse to participate in them. It was agreed to hold a special thanksgiving service on April 23rd. I took it upon myself to sing Mass and also the "Te Deum" after the sermon. Father Maciejewicz was chosen to preach the sermon. It was agreed that the sermon would be purely religious in character.

We decided to have a funeral service for the dead on the 24th of April. I would sing the Mass and the "Libera." Father Lubianiec was designated to give the sermon. He proposed that I organize a procession of thanksgiving and reparation to the Gates of Dawn. Since shooting was still going on in the city, I refused. But even aside from this reason, I did not want such a procession because the Polish nationalists usually turn them into political demonstrations. Monsignor Bajko was designated to perform the burial services at the cemetery. Participation in the funeral services was to be voluntary. Those who wanted to, could attend. The funeral was dangerous because of the shooting in the city.

Jerzy Osmołowski, appointed by the Polish government to carry out its policies in Lithuania, stopped in to see me. He called himself Commissar for the Eastern Lands. He outlined his political program. I said: "I will not interfere in politics. I can only point out to you the aspirations and sensitivities of the Lithuanians. In general, I want to reconcile all the nationalities and guide them toward unity. In my opinion, if the Polish government will really be based on the principles of justice and humanity, it must recognize the rights of the Lithuanians and the Belorussians. Perhaps then these nations will make peace with each other." I added, "In my opinion, it would be

---

<sup>1</sup> Jerzy Osmołowski had been appointed by Marshal Piłsudski as head of the so-called eastern lands—Vilnius and the surrounding area as well as parts of Belorussia. He was to head the civil government, but there was a military government as well.

best if you acknowledge Lithuania and Belorussia as they have been in the past.” Let the people convene an assembly here in Vilnius and decide on their relations with their neighbors.

Osmołowski maintained that this was the policy they had in mind, but that up to now the parliament in Warsaw viewed matters differently. Now a change of policy has occurred. They want a union of equal and free people. I said that they should get in touch with Kaunas on this matter and consult with the Lithuanian government there. Here in Vilnius I pointed out Mr. Mykolas Biržiška and advised Osmołowski to contact him. I asked that they not involve me in politics of any kind. “My task is to bring about peace among all the people and to lead them toward mutual love and unity, and this is what I shall do. It is up to you to make the political decisions and carry them out. I am opposed to the clergy interfering in politics.”

During his visit Świtalski mentioned that Piłsudski<sup>1</sup> will be arriving soon and asked how we plan to greet him. He said that it was desirable for me to participate. I answered that this was a matter for the citizens to be concerned with. We bishops greet our Catholic rulers in the Cathedral, and besides, Piłsudski is not the ruler of Lithuania as yet. Świtalski called him “Head of State” (*Naczelnik Państwa*), although Piłsudski himself used the title “Commander of the Polish Armed Forces” (*Naczelnny Wódz Wojsk Polskich*).

On April 22nd Piłsudski arrived early in the evening. The Dean said that they were waiting for him at the Gate of Dawn, but he did not stop there. Then, Father Oleszczuk sang the litany with the people and ended with the hymn “Under Your Protection.” A while ago I had heard the rumor that Piłsudski is a socialist<sup>2</sup> and religion does not mean very much to him. He is estranged from his wife, and some Jewess has attached herself to him. I do not know how much truth there is in this, but such a rumor found its way here from Warsaw.

On April 23rd I celebrated Mass at the Cathedral. Maciejewicz could not resist the temptation and preached a purely political

---

1 Józef Piłsudski (1867-1935): as Commander in Chief of the Polish Army he had won independence for Poland in 1918 and by the end of that year was also head of its government. He had been born and raised in Vilnius and was attached to the city of his youth.

2 He was one of the organizers and leaders of the Polish Socialist Party and had edited its paper. When the Party split in 1908, he assumed leadership over its right wing, whose aim was to achieve the independence of Poland.

sermon. At every opportunity he rebuked those political groups that he did not approve of. The sermon was in the Polish nationalist spirit and was more fitting for the Polish parliament. It turns out that during Mass they incensed Piłsudski and gave him relics to kiss. Others told me about it with considerable indignation that such honor should be paid to a socialist. They sang the Polish national anthem, “God Save Poland,” and “Te Deum” afterwards. Then Piłsudski and I went to the Chapel of St. Casimir to pray. They had asked me to do so.

After Mass, Piłsudski came to visit me and I immediately returned the visit. He made excuses for not stopping at the Gate of Dawn. He did not know he was awaited there. I tried to calm him and to rectify somewhat the accusations Maciejewicz had made in his sermon.

In the afternoon the crowds accompanied the dead bodies of the Legionnaires to the Rašos cemetery.<sup>1</sup> Some members of the Chapter and some of the priests participated.

On the 24th of April I said a funeral Mass for those who had died in battle. Father Lubianiec preached the sermon. I could not understand what he wanted to get across.

Immediately after Mass, Mr. Ostrejko and another nobleman came to see me. Much of the food supplies left behind by the Bolsheviks had fallen into the hands of the Legionnaires. The Polish High Command wanted to distribute some of this food to the starving people. Those two gentlemen asked me to organize a committee to distribute the food. They made the following conditions: the Jews were not to get anything at all and the committee should also see that non-Jews holding progressive<sup>2</sup> views would not receive anything.

I answered: “I cannot take it upon myself to organize such a committee. First of all, if I were at the head of this committee, the hatred of the people would be directed against the clergy and me. Usually, many are dissatisfied with such distributions. I know this from experience. In other places where I had to create such committees or was consulted about them, I always encouraged the lay people to take matters into their own hands. We priests can only help

---

1 The cemetery is right in the city of Vilnius and is noted for the graves of famous people and for its artistic monuments. It was opened in 1769 and at that time was outside the city limits. It is named after the Rašos hills.

2 A term used for socialists.

them in their work. Secondly, you can punish the Jews by excluding them — that is your own affair. However, such conduct is inappropriate for me as bishop. It is not fitting to exclude the progressives in distributing food. Every hungry and starving person deserves compassion and should be helped, regardless of his convictions or nationality. But so that you would not think that I am rejecting this proposal without serious deliberation, I will confer with the Chapter on what should be done.”

Immediately after drinking a glass of tea, I went to see Monsignor Michalkiewicz. I found all the members of the Chapter gathered there as if by coincidence, except for Father Kukta, the only Lithuanian. They were reading some letter from His Excellency Archbishop Ropp.

I explained the matter at hand. Michalkiewicz then sent his servant to call Father Kukta, but did not find him at home. The Chapter was of the opinion that I should not form or head such a committee. We decided that those two gentlemen should approach Fathers Kretowicz, Kuleszo, Olszański and the various organizations for the welfare and relief of the poor.

I then informed the two gentlemen of that decision. They did not like it and threatened that if I did not take it upon myself to head the committee, the Army High Command may not give any food. I answered that there was not much I could do about that and that it was their decision. I had to be careful not to harm the Church or incur the wrath of the people. From the priests that I had indicated to the two gentlemen, I later learned that no one had approached them about this committee.

On April 25th Father Chomski came to me with various reproaches about my conduct. He apologized profusely for daring to speak openly and then told me the following: 1) the priests are very unhappy with me because I had appointed Father Kraujalis, a Lithuanian, to care for the spiritual needs of the wounded Legionnaires at the hospital and not a Polish priest. 2) It seems that the priests have begun to turn away from me, alleging that I fail to consult them and do not give them proper directives. For example, they did not know how to announce the Lenten fast, nor whether they should celebrate the feast of St. Joseph. 3) Even the people are starting to turn away from me. I should not forget that the Lithuanians make up only one-sixth of the diocese, that the

Belorussians are not nationally conscious and, having fallen into the Polish net, they will go wherever the Poles take them. Also, I should appear in public when this is expected of me and so on. Finally, 4) everyone knows and can see that those closest to me in my household are all Lithuanians, that Father Kukta often visits me and is suspected of giving me information. Regrettably, I fail to choose appropriate advisors, etc.

After I had calmly heard him out, I answered thus: 1) I am surprised that the priests are turning away from me, since I have never wronged any of them, nor at any time insulted a single one. I receive everyone who comes to see me and listen to whatever he has to say. I have even asked the Dean and the assistant Dean to inform me about what is going on. However, I have noticed that here the priests do many things behind the bishop's back and without his knowledge. They do not inform the bishop about what they are doing. 2) In my opinion, nationality should not be an issue in hospital work. When I learned that Father Kraujalis had diligently served the fighting men in the city, I appointed him to continue this work. If the Poles really want to make peace with the Lithuanians, then that is exactly what is needed — that they serve each other as brothers. 3) I have also served the people wholeheartedly wherever needed and I cannot understand why they should turn away from me. On the contrary, they defended me when necessary and always greet me with sincerity. Perhaps they would begin to turn away if the priests and politicians incited them against me. 4) It was the Dean's duty to inform me about the fast and the holy days. I had asked the secretary, and he told me that the directives were given in the rubrics and were also in Canon Law. I cannot guess what the needs of the priests are unless they tell me. 5) Whenever required, I do speak up in public, even if I have to suffer for it. But I do not intend to get mixed up in politics, nor to go wherever the wind blows, as the crowds do. I must serve all nations and parties by leading them toward peace and unity.

My guess is that Father Chomski is criticizing me because, when the Poles occupied Vilnius, I did not clearly take the side of the Polish nationalists as they wanted me to. 6) He then pressured me to issue some kind of letter. I answered that I do not see the need and it is not yet time to do so. When the Peace Conference determines the relations between nations, then it will be clear what and how to write. 7) I said that I consult the



Chapter on all important matters. Here he also criticized the Chapter: Piłsudski had not been received in a fitting manner; there was not enough pomp and ceremony. I replied that this was what had been decided on. 8) He went on to rebuke Father Kukta because he had been discredited, apparently because he had once been suspended.<sup>1</sup> I answered that he was my friend. 9) When something comes up, I always consult various priests, especially those who are knowledgeable about the issue at hand.

From all this I could see that, in addition to the official Chapter, there is another secret Chapter which pursues its own ends. These priest-politicians are dissatisfied mostly because they do not have access to me with their advice and political intrigues. They are even irritated that my chaplain is Father Joseph, also a Lithuanian.

He criticized me for not inviting the priests to confer with me. I answered that I consult the Chapter because it is the Bishop's Council. Whenever necessary, I also consult the pastors, if the matters under discussion concern them. I conferred with the priests who teach religion on the school issue. However, I do not intend to hold public meetings because nothing of value comes of them.

I guessed, and later my guess was confirmed, that Father Chomski was sent by the group of "endeks," the Polish nationalist priests. Their leaders—Lubianiec, Songin, Kuleszo, Maciejewicz—were too crafty to come themselves, so they sent Chomski to see me. In the end I told this priest: Such is a bishop's fate—that the priests use him as a target to vent their spleen. That is very sad because it is a sign that they lack the Spirit of Christ. And it is even sadder that these politicians drag the ignorant common people into their political intrigues and turn them against their bishop. Let them do as they wish. I shall follow the banner of Christ and will do the work of the Church. You, Sirs, can play at politics and, sensing danger, you will probably run away,<sup>2</sup> but I shall have to stay here and I shall suffer when necessary." There have been many short-lived coups and governments here in Vilnius and they have all tried to drag me into

---

<sup>1</sup> He was one of the four priests suspended by Msgr. Michalkiewicz in 1917 because of the famous memorandum.

<sup>2</sup> During the Bolshevik occupation, many of the Polish priests fled from Vilnius to Poland, leaving churches and parishes vacant. Some of them came back when the Bolsheviks were gone, but some did not.

their political machinations. But, thank God, I have resisted them and now I shall be careful not to get caught again.

When I was in Warsaw during the uprising of 1904, I saw the activities of the “endek” priests. How much heartache they created for the diocesan authorities. I can see that the same thing will be my lot here. God grant me truly Catholic priests.

I asked a few wise priests and other people whether it was worthwhile to publish a letter. They answered that it was not. Only the hotheads, mostly the “endeks,” were of the opinion that it was worth it to address the people by letter. They wanted to continue to incite the people by making use of my words. For myself, I saw no need to issue a pastoral letter. At present, conditions are entirely unsuitable for such a message.

The young, newly ordained priest Butrimowicz, a nationally conscious Belorussian, came by for a visit. This is what he told me. The newly ordained seminarians had gone to Father Chomski to thank him for providing them with food. Father Chomski spoke to them, claiming that there were no Belorussians here in the diocese of Vilnius. Of course, this was painful for the Belorussians. It is a fact that these Polish nationalist priests just cannot resist bringing politics into everything.

On the 26th of April I once again called in the Dean and the assistant Dean and asked them to keep me informed about everything that is going on in the parishes of the city, naturally, in the sphere of Church life. When he was here, Piłsudski had asked me that the soldiers be permitted to attend Mass every Sunday at 9 a.m. at the Gate of Dawn shrine. I asked the Dean to make sure Mass was celebrated there at the appropriate time.

Mr. Umiastowski<sup>1</sup> invited me to participate in the farewell ceremony for Piłsudski. I consented. At four in the afternoon I went to the affair with Monsignor Michalkiewicz. It turned out that I had not been told the whole truth. This was a ceremony presenting Piłsudski with the keys of the city. The hall was beautifully decorated. Father Lubianiec’s organizations were there and had taken care of the decorations. Many people participated. At 5:30, Piłsudski arrived

---

<sup>1</sup> Bronislaw Umiastowski, a Polish political activist, one of those who had signed the memorandum to the German authorities in 1917 requesting that Lithuania and Poland be united.

with his retinue. A representative of the citizens read a speech. I thought that there would be no more speeches, and consequently, it seemed appropriate for me to say a few words. I said that the Church had been harassed, but now can breathe freely. For this I thanked the victor. I expressed confidence that the Church will now work and grow without constraint. I tried to speak in a purely pastoral spirit. After drinking a glass of tea, we left. The other guests stayed on.

In the evening Mr. Osmołowski called with his deputy Władysław Raczkiwicz<sup>1</sup> before they left for Warsaw. He said that it had not been possible to come to an agreement with the Lithuanians. I answered: “It is understandable that the local people were unwilling to negotiate. You should have talked to the people in Kaunas.”

He asked that I not allow the priests to reclaim the churches taken over by the Orthodox just yet because it antagonizes them. I replied that I had never permitted any churches built by the Russians or the Uniates to be taken over. However, in the case of churches built by Catholics and turned over to the Orthodox, I had advised the priests to reclaim them wherever possible because they were Catholic property. When the Orthodox fled from the city, those churches often remained empty.

Father Sienkiewicz, the former pastor of St. James’s Church and now serving as an army chaplain, had told me that they had some plan to stop the Orthodox, fearing that they would retake the churches. I said that they would not dare take those churches already occupied and used by Catholics. Otherwise, there could be riots. He [Osmołowski] also complained that the “endek” priests are obstructing his work with their political activities.

The Jewish Rabbi Rubenstein and Dr. Schabad came to see me. Apparently, the two Jews for whom I interceded, Joffe and Nizer, had not been released, although General Śmigły-Rydz had assured me that they were free. The two Jews were taken to Lida. Once again the Jewish leaders asked me to intercede for the Jews and to calm the

---

<sup>1</sup> Władysław Raczkiwicz (1885-1947) was Mayor of Vilnius at the time when the Polish army entered the city.

people. They told me how the Jews are being mistreated at the hands of the Legionnaires. A great many completely innocent people are being arrested and harassed. Those two Jews had been arrested because they were in the crowd which I had observed while standing at the window. I had, in fact, seen that crowd of Jewish people and how abominably they were treated. Having arrested them, they dragged them along the streets, pushed them around, then herded them to prison. In some places they shot completely innocent people. They burned the beards of some of the Jews, even the Rabbi of Lentvaris, a seventy-year-old man. He covered his face with his hand, so they hit him on the hand and now it is swollen.

The Jewish leaders also complained about the house searches: they take whatever they want—money, valuables. The soldiers themselves create provocations. They throw bombs and start shooting, then they arrest innocent people and demand ransom. After I had heard all this, I promised to speak up for them wherever I could, and, in fact, did so.

I have heard the same complaints from the Lithuanians. They have searched the houses of many Lithuanians three or four times, confiscated their money, and stolen their things. Lithuanians are being watched and turned in to the authorities. Various false rumors have been passed around about the Lithuanians.

On April 27th I ordained several deacons. Monsignor Wołodźko celebrated Mass for the Legionnaires at the Gate of Dawn Chapel. On this occasion there was a Polish nationalist demonstration. Before leaving, Piłsudski sent his adjutant to bid me farewell.

During these past few days, with the arrival of the Polish Legionnaires, the appearance of the city has become almost purely Polish. The Jews are hiding in their homes, and only a few dare to leave their houses. The Lithuanians, dejected and depressed, are also staying out of sight. The Legionnaires have armed the men and even the youths. All the Poles have decorated themselves with little eagle pins and ribbons in the national colors. The whole city was supposed to be decked out in the national colors.

On April 26th Piłsudski's portrait was displayed in many Polish shops and other buildings. There were festivities to honor the Legionnaires, the soldiers and the officers. The Polish element has made itself felt everywhere. Those ladies and gentlemen who have just lately been in hiding under the Bolsheviks have come out of their hiding places. Just a little while ago everyone was dressed in ordinary

working clothes, but now the fashion has changed. Under the Bolsheviks the appearance of the city was practically Russian. Russian was heard in the streets all the time. The men were wearing Russian-style hats; even the Polish landowners put them on so that the Bolsheviks would not recognize them. The Jewish and Russian elements had the upper hand.

On April 28th, Father Jakavonis<sup>1</sup> from the town of Gervečiaiai came to visit me and reported that the Bolsheviks are fighting the Poles near New Vilnia. We could actually hear the shooting.

The Dean of Balstoge [Białystok in Polish] sent me a report on the parish of Jasiunai [Jasieńkowo in Polish]. The Polish Minister of State Property had confiscated church land — a wooded area [Lasek Kałuszyński in Polish]. Naturally, the pastor protested that even the Polish government was starting to confiscate church property. I told a certain priest about this with an expression of disgust. As a result, some of the Polish nationalist priests made haste to spread the rumor that ostensibly I was complaining and spreading gossip about the confiscation of this forest in order to attack the Polish government and to discredit it in the eyes of the people. They were discussing it at the seminary, and one of the priests told me about it, warning me to be more careful. Really, there is a great deal of unhealthy sensitivity here in regard to nationality. It never even occurred to me that I was attacking the Polish government.

I received a telegram through Monsignor Michalkiewicz, former administrator of the diocese, from Poznań. A committee has been formed there to send relief and aid to the people of Vilnius and the Eastern Lands. They had already sent their representative to Warsaw and were asking that Vilnius send one to the Chief Welfare Council (*Rada Główna Opiekuńcza*, Jasna no. 32 in Warsaw) to discuss how this aid should be sent and distributed. After conferring with

---

<sup>1</sup> Ambraziejus Jakavonis (1886-1943): ordained in Vilnius in 1911; pastor of the parish of Gervečiaiai, 60 km east of Vilnius. He was an active and able pastor, who had revived the parish, founding schools and organizations and conducting his pastoral ministry in Lithuanian. Because of this, he was having problems with the Poles and had probably come to consult with the bishop about this. On his way to Vilnius from the east, he passed through its eastern suburb, the town of New Vilnia, where the Red Army was trying to regain control of Vilnius and the surrounding area.

Monsignor Michalkiewicz, I invited Mr. Niedziałkowski,<sup>1</sup> former mayor of the city, Mr. Łopaciński (his wife came, since he was away), Father Kretowicz, and Father Kulesza. I entrusted them with the organization of a committee similar to the Chief Welfare Council here in Vilnius. They decided to delegate Mr. Łopaciński, who had already gone to Warsaw on other business, to handle the matter.

On this occasion Monsignor Michalkiewicz told me that the Poles were very upset and even indignant. It seems that Father Tumas and Father Abaravičius<sup>2</sup> are constantly conferring with the Jews, from morning till night, and plotting with them against the Poles. I called in Father Tumas and asked him if this were true. He said that he had not been seeing any Jews, nor had he conferred with them. As for Father Abaravičius, he is just a guest here. He is not involved in any Lithuanian activities; he just plays cards. He said that it was true that some Lithuanian laymen are allying themselves with the Jews and confer with them because their common misfortunes and sense of oppression have brought them together. The way things have turned out, there is nothing else to do but to unite with the Jews and the Belorussians.

A while ago there were complaints about Father Tumas because he wore secular clothes, especially a checkered jacket. He justified himself saying that he returned from abroad in those clothes, the only ones he had. He was saving his threadbare cassock to say Mass in. Actually, I myself have seen that his cassock was very worn. I could see that this man was a true idealist and very devoted to his work. I told him that he could continue to wear the clothes he had until God grants us better times. He said that he was now editor of the paper *Nepriklausoma Lietuva*<sup>3</sup> [Independent Lithuania]. He is doing it without any salary. Since he only has 600 rubles, he does not know what he will do when he runs out of money. Perhaps he will have to move somewhere else, away from Vilnius.

---

1 Mieczysław Niedziałkowski (1893-1941): one of the leading members of the Polish Socialist Party; had been head of the municipal government of Vilnius.

2 Mykolas Abaravičius was pastor of Ašmena and Dean of Priests until 1914, when he was exiled by the Russian czarist government. He had been living in Vilnius since then, teaching religion in one of the schools.

3 A Lithuanian newspaper published by the Lithuanian Committee of Vilnius. Fr. Tumas was Editor until 1920, when he left Vilnius altogether and settled in Kaunas, where he lived and worked until his death in 1933.

## April 30

On the night of April 28th and early on the 29th, the city almost fell into the hands of the Bolsheviks once again. Their shells were hitting the city, and they broke into Liponka, a suburb of Vilnius. The city was all chaos and confusion. All the gentlemen and ladies immediately began to flee from the city, mostly to Warsaw and Gardinas or other suitable places. The Legionnaires armed all the men and boys they could to help them fight. The sounds of battle could be heard.

Monsignor Michalkiewicz came in very early on April 29th. He said that his nerves are giving out. He feels that he cannot hold out any longer and is thinking of going to Warsaw for treatment in some clinic. Seeing his shattered nerves and weak health, I advised him to go ahead. He took out his *celebret* and left for Warsaw that evening or night.

Father Songin, who is once again working<sup>1</sup> at the *Dziennik Wileński* [*The Vilnius Daily*] with Father Maciejewicz, came in asking that he too be allowed to go to Warsaw. He is a Polish nationalist and is involved in the political organization of the National Democrats and may even be their leader. Of course, if the Bolsheviks take over, things would be hot for him. This interference of priests in politics is a real misfortune.

My secretary, Father Steckiewicz, has heart trouble and also complained that he cannot endure all this and has insomnia. He also asked to be allowed to go away somewhere. I permitted him to do so because I could see that he was really a sick man.

I received a second telegram from Poznań in Monsignor Michalkiewicz's name stating that the delegate from Poznań is in Warsaw and is expecting our representative. I gave this telegram to Father Kretowicz.

The city is in a state of unrest. The noblemen, men and boys, were either armed and had joined the Legionnaires or were trying to get out of the city. It looked deserted.

---

<sup>1</sup> The original has it that these two priests were editors of the paper, but most probably they were frequent contributors, since J. Obst, a Polish sympathizer of German origin, was editor.

The Polish Army chaplain, Father Baran, came by and told me that there is no danger at present, that the Bolsheviks have been beaten back, but it may be dangerous later on. The Poles may be forced to retreat. He tried to convince me to make preparations to leave the city. I answered that I will not flee anywhere and that he need not tell me if a dangerous situation should develop. Having abandoned myself to Divine Providence, I intend to remain here. It will be as God wills.

During the night of April 30th, there was considerable troop movement, and battles were in progress close to the city. Groups of soldiers constantly went by my window, and carriages and automobiles drove by. There was a great deal of noise—much bustling, clanging, and droning. I could hardly sleep. Early in the morning Father Żarnowski, the administrator of St. James's parish, came to see me. He asked that I permit him to leave, since his life will be in danger if the Bolsheviks return. The Legionnaires have hoisted a machine gun into the church spire and are firing it. Naturally, when the Bolsheviks come they will take revenge on the pastor. I let him leave with the others. Only the young priests will be left behind, and they will hardly take revenge against them. I have heard that many other priests are fleeing or are prepared to escape, especially those who were involved in political organizations and activities.

Since early morning, loaded down with their belongings, people have been fleeing from the city. The soldiers were also packing up and moving out. In the afternoon things quieted down somewhat. It seems that Polish fortunes in the battlefield had improved. I heard that the Lithuanians, apparently in two automobiles, had arrived in Vilnius to confer with the Polish Army Command about the city. They are staying at the Hotel Italia. The Polish Legions will scarcely be able to hold Vilnius by themselves. Already the people have begun to curse the Poles for coming here. They have succeeded only in making a great deal of noise and will probably bring new misfortunes upon the citizens. If they could not hold the city, they should not have come in the first place. The young men and the older ones as well are leaving the city with the Legionnaires. God knows how all of this is going to end. The people, anxious and restless, have been continually walking the streets. As is usual in such situations, all kinds of rumors and stories have been circulating.



Our future brother and servant, Andrius Meciunas, has come back. He stayed at his hometown of Rodunia and also at Marijampole. Jonas Varzaitis has also returned to Marijampole. Our brother, Vincas Urbanavičius, has just died, having fallen ill with typhoid fever. Otherwise, all are well and busy working. There are 18 sisters<sup>1</sup> who are doing well too.

Mr. Dybowski, the engineer-mathematician who had visited me once (I think it was March 13th) on the recommendation of Father Lubianiec, had announced that he was head of the Polish Military Organization [*Polska Organizacja Wojskowa*] and also appointed by the Poles to govern Vilnius, has turned out to be a provocateur. Some of the priests informed me that, ostensibly with the knowledge and blessing of the bishop, he had been going around among the priests and asking them to help him recruit young men into the army. He is the son-in-law of Dr. Domasevičius,<sup>2</sup> a Lithuanian Bolshevik. Yesterday, the Legionnaires arrested this Mr. Dybowski and put him in jail. Father Żarnowski told me about it.

On April 26th I went to visit the wounded in the hospital at the old bishop's mansion.<sup>3</sup> In addition to the Legionnaires, there are also some Bolsheviks and Lithuanians there.

## **May 1**

It is the beautiful month of May, dedicated to Our Lady. O Blessed Virgin Mary, holy and beloved, entreat God to give us peace.

All day long the firing of the big guns could be heard and sometimes machine guns as well. The soldiers in the streets seemed calmer; apparently, they are doing better. Yesterday they received reinforcements.

---

<sup>1</sup> The Sisters of the Poor under the title of the Immaculate Conception, a religious community for Lithuanian women founded by Matulaitis in Marijampole in October of 1918.

<sup>2</sup> Andrius Domasevičius (1865-1935): physician from the town of Panevezys; worked in Vilnius from 1893. One of the founders of the Lithuanian Social Democratic Party, he later became a Bolshevik; in 1919, he was the People's Health Commissar.

<sup>3</sup> Built by the first bishop of Vilnius in the 14th c. as an episcopal residence and subsequently remodeled in the neoclassical style, it was confiscated after 1795 and used by the Russian government to house visiting rulers. In 1812 Napoleon stayed here for three weeks on his way to Moscow. In 1901 the building was converted into a museum in honor of Muravjov, the governor general of Vilnius 1863-65. When the Poles occupied Vilnius, they used the building as an army hospital, and the army chaplain, Bishop Bandurski, lived here. It was then renamed in honor of Napoleon and a memorial plaque affixed, dated May 5, 1921. Later, the building was taken over by the Red Army, not to be used as a residence for the bishops of Vilnius.

On April 29th a car arrived bringing several Lithuanian army officers. Later on I found out from Father Kukta that they had come to discuss the creation of a common front with the Polish High command. However, the Poles in Vilnius did not want to negotiate with them and sent them to Lida, where the staff headquarters are located. Not having achieved anything, the Lithuanians went back. I heard that the Poles in Warsaw were also unwilling to negotiate with the Lithuanian representatives sent from Kaunas. Now a Lithuanian delegate has left for Warsaw once again, with a French delegate. It is doubtful whether they will achieve anything. From the Poles I had heard that the two armies had ostensibly agreed on a common front against the Bolsheviks. But if this has not happened, then God knows how everything will end. I am afraid that the Lithuanians and the Poles will start fighting each other. O God, save us from new wars and massacres!

A rumor has reached us that in Warsaw they do not know with whom to negotiate because there are three governments: one is that of the National Democrat, Dmowski,<sup>1</sup> who is now staying in Paris with Paderewski;<sup>2</sup> the second is the government of Piłsudski,<sup>3</sup> who considers himself Head of State; the third is the Polish Parliament. In addition to this, there are disputes among the army commanders Piłsudski and Haller. Apparently, Piłsudski has made haste to seize Vilnius against the wishes of Haller and the Entente.

May 3rd is the day for commemorating the Polish Constitution. Dr. Węclawski was here to ask me that Mass be celebrated in the Cathedral on that day and that, if possible, I would celebrate it. I said that I would convene the Cathedral Chapter to discuss how everything should be done. Naturally, I have nothing against offering Mass. Let the people pray. He requested that the sermon be delivered by Father Kulesza, a known nationalist.

The army chaplain, Father Baran, was here to ask that I arrange a solemn funeral for the recently killed soldiers. I sent him to the Dean to settle the matter.

---

1 Roman Dmowski: one of the leaders of the National Democratic Party, also President of the Polish National Committee formed in 1917 as a liaison between Poland and the Entente.

2 Ignacy Paderewski: also a National Democrat, eventually accepted by Piłsudski as premier so he could form a government and secure Allied recognition.

3 Piłsudski's political objective was to create a federation of nations headed by Poland, which would include Lithuania, Belorussia, and the Ukraine. He and his supporters became known as federalists.

## *May 2*

Mr. Mykolas Biržiška, the principal of the Lithuanian secondary school, came to see me. He told me about the current situation and what the Lithuanians think of the coming of the Polish Legions. In his opinion and that of the Lithuanians, all kinds of repression of freedom will follow the coming of the Polish Legions. This is clearly the beginning of Polish imperialism that seeks to enslave the weaker nations—the Lithuanians and the Belorussians. According to Biržiška, the National Democrats<sup>1</sup> are taking control. Apparently, the Legionnaires have come to defend the estates and the landowners. In the future, the Poles intend to colonize Belorussia and export its wood products to Poland.

The Polish Legions have brought both abominable anti-Semitism and hatred for the Lithuanians and Belorussians. Already the Lithuanians are losing their jobs. They are being dismissed, especially those who do not know Polish. Piłsudski and Osmałowski have a more just view and want to handle Lithuanian and Belorussian affairs differently, but they are only a drop in the ocean of National Democrats. The Poles are determined, if they can succeed, to occupy not only Lithuania, but Latvia and Estonia as well.

There is practically no member of the Lithuanian intelligentsia whose house has not been searched; some have been searched two, three, and even four times. It was quite common for the soldiers to take money and valuables during these searches. In Lida they shot many Jews. The soldiers looted the Jewish shops and allowed the local people to plunder them as well. Everywhere, the Jews have suffered a great deal at the hands of the Polish Legions.

Biržiška himself had received permission from Osmałowski and Piłsudski<sup>2</sup> to travel to Kaunas and needed only the signature of the Commandant. The latter not only refused to sign the paper, but treated Biržiška rudely, threatening to have him thrown out.

Jews, Belorussians, and also Lithuanians are opposed to the present Polish regime and the occupation. No one is able to do anything while the terror goes on.

---

<sup>1</sup> The views of the Polish National Democratic Party were least acceptable to most Lithuanians because it favored the reconstitution of the Polish State within the boundaries of 1772, the restoration of the historic Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth. This meant the annexation of Lithuania by Poland.

<sup>2</sup> Jan Piłsudski, part of the governing body of the Eastern Lands.

Biržiška had spoken twice and at length with Osmołowski. The Lithuanians could possibly agree with his and Piłsudski's program, but would the Warsaw Parliament accept it? Biržiška guessed that it would not. As Osmołowski was leaving, he said that if the Parliament approves of his program, he will return to Vilnius to continue his work. If not, then there is nothing left for the Lithuanians and the Polish progressives to do but to get ready to react and to stage an uprising.

Mr. Biržiška complained that the Lithuanian institutions cannot continue to function for very long if he cannot bring back some money from Kaunas. Apparently, he meant to go to Kaunas for that purpose, but since the Poles do not permit it, the Lithuanian institutions may stop operating. He does not know what the people in Kaunas have in mind.

The Poles did not come to any agreement with the Lithuanian officers who came here by car and then went to Lida. It looked as if the Poles did not really want to negotiate with them. They did not want to talk to those who had gone to Warsaw either. In Kaunas, the Lithuanian Council and the government have accomplished a great deal and are functioning in a democratic manner, as even the Polish progressives have to admit. The Poles had intended to divide the Lithuanians by making an agreement with the Lithuanian socialists, but the latter did not consent. For this Mr. Jundziłł<sup>1</sup> had even been arrested in Kaunas. Now Romer<sup>2</sup> has gone to Kaunas to negotiate with the Lithuanians.

Mr. Staniszewski,<sup>3</sup> a member of the Warsaw Parliament, came to visit me. He is an acquaintance of mine from Marijampole. His father was a teacher there and even taught the Lithuanian language. His mother is Polish. He considers himself half Lithuanian and half Polish, but has almost forgotten how to speak Lithuanian. He belongs to the Polish National Democratic Party and is convinced that Vilnius should be united with Poland. He spoke about the colonization of Belorussian territory with Poles. However, he was not sure what the fate of the Belorussians would be. The Entente might make them a separate national entity and place it under the protection of the League of Nations.

---

1 Zygmunt Jundziłł a Polish political activist with socialist views who advocated cooperation with the Lithuanian socialists.

2 Adam Romer: a major in the Polish Army.

3 Stanisław Staniszewski was the son of Vincas Staniškis who had been a teacher at the secondary school in Marijampole which Matulaitis had attended. Staniszewski was soon sent to Kaunas to negotiate about the borders between Lithuania and Poland.

His Excellency Archbishop Teodorowicz and Father Kazimierz Lutosławski, both National Democratic delegates to the Warsaw Parliament, came to call on me. Father Lutosławski, in particular viewed the situation in a harsh and uncompromising manner. According to him, Vilnius and those areas with greater numbers of Belorussian Catholics must be annexed to Polish territory as a matter of course. The Belorussians are not a nation, merely the raw material from which a nation can be created. When the Belorussians are engulfed in a network of Polish schools, they will become polonized. As for the Jews, the Poles must wage a battle to the death with them. The Lithuanians in Kaunas must be forced into union with Poland. If they refuse, they can keep Samogitia.

His Excellency Archbishop Teodorowicz talked less and did not seem to grasp the situation here. I tried to calm Father Lutosławski as much as I could by reminding him that in presenting matters in such a harsh way he would provoke people even more. I said that I did not interfere in politics, but inasmuch as I knew the Lithuanians, they might agree to Osmołowski's and Piłsudski's program. Otherwise, God only knows what may happen—perhaps new quarrels and bloodshed.

According to what Father Lutosławski said, the majority of the Warsaw Parliament regards Piłsudski and Osmołowski and their policy as “traitors to the national cause” [*Zdrajcy sprawy narodowej*]. From Father Lutosławski's words one could see that the Poles have a great deal of self-confidence. They are sure of their forces and of the present situation. Ostensibly, the Entente wants them to take charge of the situation not only in Lithuania, but in Russia as well. Speaking with him made me very uneasy. This determination of the Polish nationalists to take Vilnius and the polonized areas around it away from the Lithuanians and also to take over the Belorussians and polonize them, did not seem to me to bode well. *Iustitia elevat gentes*. In the words of Holy Scripture: Only truth and justice make nations great and powerful.

Mr. Meysztowicz<sup>1</sup> came to call on me, followed by Mr. Mineika. Both of these men regard Lithuania from a different point of view. They simply want Lithuania to unite with Poland. While listening to the opinions of the one and the other, I took care not to get involved in politics myself.

### **May 3**

I celebrated Mass in the Cathedral at 10 o'clock. His Excellency Archbishop Teodorowicz delivered the sermon. He speaks well and is a real orator. The sermon was political in content and only at the end did he mention the Blessed Virgin. The people could not understand this sermon. Only a handful of the intelligentsia could have grasped what he was saying.

His Excellency Archbishop Teodorowicz and Father Lutostawski accepted the invitation to have lunch with me. They are both of the opinion that Vilnius, the polonized areas of Lithuania, and Belorussia should be annexed to Poland. Father Lutostawski left first, and His Excellency, the Archbishop, remained alone with me. I questioned him about the situation of the Church in Poland and the position taken by Parliament. They are determined to take over Church property. His Excellency the Apostolic Visitor Ratti, wanted the Polish government to deal directly with the Holy See in this matter. But the committee that was looking into the question refused to do so, saying that this was within the jurisdiction of the bishops. The bishops asked Ratti to request the Holy Father to permit them to negotiate with Parliament on this question and to save whatever they can. The right wing is dominant in Parliament. There are twenty priests and a large number of peasants who will follow the clergy.

The Parliament has not yet adopted a constitution. In about two weeks the Catholics will present the question of the relation between Church and state for discussion in Parliament and hope that it will agree to declare Catholicism the accepted religion in Polish lands.

---

<sup>1</sup> Aleksander Meysztowicz (1864-1943): born and bred in Lithuania, inherited a large estate in northern Lithuania; had studied in Vilnius with Piłsudski; from 1909 to 1917 had been a member of the Duma and lived in St. Petersburg; back in Lithuania in 1918, took an active and leading part in Polish politics promoting annexation of Lithuania to Poland. Nov. 21, 1921, appointed by Gen. Żeligowski as head of the governing committee for Central Lithuania, succeeded Gen. Mokrzecki.

But, until now they have held back in order not to antagonize the Masons abroad and also so that Poland would not be labeled as a reactionary state. This could be detrimental to relations with other countries.

O Lord, it seems that everywhere action is being taken against the Church! I pointed out to him that it was not a good thing when priests are too involved in politics. Were there not too many priests in Parliament? His Excellency replied that Monsignor Ratti had been of the same opinion, but now agrees that the priests had acted correctly in becoming members of Parliament.

I also asked him how we should regard the activities of Piłsudski and Osmołowski here. The Archbishop said that neither of them had any authorization from Parliament to implement any kind of political program here. Parliament disapproves. The Polish representatives have come with their own declarations. (It is true: today the announcement was made that Vilnius is to be immediately united, annexed to Poland.) I also inquired whether Piłsudski was really the Head of State. He said that Piłsudski had been designated such for two weeks, and this has not been retracted. The Parliament has a great deal of trouble with Piłsudski, but it cannot do without him, since he has the Army on his side. On the other hand, Piłsudski's actions are detrimental to Parliament and to Poland because he is a socialist and a Party man. Everywhere, in society and within the armed forces, he is carrying on political agitation. He is also not a man without vanity. For a long time he has been dreaming whether he will enter Vilnius on a bay or a gray horse. He has the idea of restoring Lithuania and Belorussia to the boundaries of the ancient Lithuanian Grand Duchy and of creating a Jewish state. This is contrary to the wishes of Parliament, and so he is regarded as betraying the national cause. He is also destroying Poland financially. He acquired 15 million and distributed it among his supporters and to finance agitation. There is to be an official investigation by Parliament.

The economic situation in Poland is rather difficult. There are few trains; funds are low. The workers' wages have been greatly increased by the socialists, and for this reason the cities are going into debt and the state itself must borrow money.

British policy is contrary to that of Poland. Apparently, the British want to keep the countries around the Baltic Sea under their own influence and protection. On April 4th Poland declared in Parliament that it recognizes Lithuania's independence so others would not think that they intend to seize foreign territory. When I told the Lithuanians about this, they interpreted it differently. In their opinion, the Poles simply want to cover up their activities in Vilnius and also their intentions.

A member of the Polish Parliament, Swida, told me during his visit that the Poles, after taking care of the Bolsheviks, are going to liberate Lithuania from the Germans. The Lithuanians themselves cannot do this because they are in debt to the Germans. The Poles cannot tolerate the fact that the Germans, while they are still in Lithuania, are constantly plotting against them and inciting the Lithuanians to turn against them as well. They intend to attack Grodno and the Suwałki region and disarm the Germans. They will force the Lithuanians to join the Poles.

My God, my God, what a terrible thing is the politics of our time! Morality is completely excluded from the political arena. The same morality which governs and guides relations among individuals should also govern the relations between nations. Christ has not given us a double standard, nor double justice, but only one. There can be no true peace among nations until they begin to base their relations with one another on the moral principles of Christ.

I heard that the members of the Warsaw Parliament had participated at the meetings and assemblies of the local Poles. A very noble-minded young lady came to see me. She was indignant at Father Lutostawski's speech. He had practically incited the common people to go out and massacre the Jews. He said that there was still one enemy against whom the Poles must fight to the death: the Jews. Such speeches might truly provoke the people who are already enraged against the Jews to go out and kill them.

In my opinion, this involvement of priests in politics is disastrous. When one is excited, the mind is clouded. Overcome by political passion, a priest can easily drift off somewhere—far from the Spirit of Christ.



## ***May 4***

I went to say goodbye to His Excellency Archbishop Teodorowicz at about 12:30. All the members of Parliament have gone.

Until now heavy fighting with the Bolsheviks could be heard. Yesterday evening they pushed the Bolsheviks back even further. Today the booming of the big guns can no longer be heard. The city looks deserted. All the shops are closed, although it was ordered that they be kept open under threat of punishment.

From all this it is clear that the majority of the Poles are determined to annex Vilnius. The Lithuanians, Belorussians, and Jews are very much opposed to this, and they cannot believe that the Entente will allow the Poles to seize their lands. I can see that the political sky is overcast and mutual relations are strained. God knows what storm is yet to come. Everywhere it is said that the Lithuanians are banding together, packing up, and leaving Vilnius. The Jews are holed up in their apartments and staying out of sight. One rarely sees any of them out on the street. You can still see groups of arrested Jews being taken to prison. Life in the city has come to a standstill.

God grant that truth and justice gain the upper hand. Otherwise, I do not see how real peace can be achieved.

This morning Archbishop Teodorowicz celebrated Mass at the Gate of Dawn Chapel at nine o'clock. Father Lutoslawski preached, and afterwards the Archbishop himself said a few words. All the members of Parliament left for Warsaw at about 12:30. I went to see them off.

Today I ordained four deacons to the priesthood.

## ***May 5-7***

Nothing special happened.

General Szeptycki came to visit me and Mr. Jasuwat also called. The city has quieted down somewhat. Gradually, the Jews are appearing in the streets. You still see small groups of arrested Jews being herded into prison. The Lithuanians are constantly complaining about the searches and the soldiers and militiamen taking their things. It seems that the Christians are being stirred up not to sell food to the Jews. They have begun to bring American flour into the city. I have heard that they have distributed some of it to various institutions, but it is still considered a luxury item.

Mr. Jonas Vailokaitis,<sup>1</sup> a member of the Lithuanian Council, came to see me and brought a letter from Father Staugaitis urging me to flee if the Bolsheviks approach the city again. From Vailokaitis I learned that the Lithuanians do not intend to fight the Poles over Vilnius, but are leaving the matter to the Paris Peace Conference. That the Poles have taken Vilnius has not proved detrimental to the Lithuanian cause. The Lithuanians were prevented from entering Vilnius by the German Spartacists.<sup>2</sup> The Lithuanian Army is still fighting the Bolsheviks. It was not possible to come to an agreement with the Poles.

### **May 9**

At 11:30 I called the Chapter together. The Jewish Rabbi had written to me asking me to calm the people who were furious with the Jews. They do not even want to sell food to the Jews. I have looked into this matter. It is not so much the people, but rather the Polish military who are at fault. They block the roads and either prevent the farmers from bringing food into Vilnius or warn them not to sell food to the Jews. The Polish Army considers the Jews as an enemy with whom they are at war. Any intervention on my part would be regarded as interference in the affairs of the Polish Army. I interceded wherever I could because I felt great compassion for the suffering of so many innocent people.

In my first pastoral letter I had tried to restrain the people and urged them to live in harmony. But now, I am aware that I cannot write anything or even raise my voice. No one would listen, and it would be considered as interference in military matters. Consequently, I advised the Jews to negotiate with the military authorities. If only the soldiers took no action [against the Jews], the people would calm down and life would continue as usual. When the Bolsheviks were here, with the help of the priests I stopped the massacre of the Jews.

---

1 Brother of the above-mentioned Father Juozas (Joseph) Vailokaitis; a prominent economist and industrialist who did a great deal to revitalize the economy of independent Lithuania.

2 German soldiers who supported the Bolsheviks.

They have already begun to distribute the flour sent by the Americans, and the Jews are getting some as well. Perhaps, with the help of God, these disturbances will cease.

1) The Chapter also thought that I need not write a pastoral letter concerning the Jews. They ought to appeal to the military authorities.

2) Mr. Jamont, the commissar, had written to me about the matter of the Catholic churches that had been turned over to the Orthodox. He requested that the priests not reclaim the churches on their own, but apply to the authorities. We decided to send a copy of this letter to the priests so that they could relay the necessary information to the chancery with the appropriate petitions. Then the chancery could negotiate with the civil authorities.

3) I spoke of the possibility of visiting the diocese this year. I had already consulted the priests, and the Chapter was also of the opinion that it would hardly be possible to do the visiting in the diocese properly. However, as soon as the harvest is in, it will be possible to visit the area around Białystok, as well as the Bielski deanery.<sup>1</sup>

4) We talked about whether it would be worthwhile for me to go to Warsaw to see His Excellency Monsignor Ratti, the Apostolic visitor. Everyone agreed that it was necessary. Since Vilnius is no longer threatened, I can go to Warsaw.

5) We agreed that there is no sense in resuming classes at the seminary. The food has not been delivered and it is uncertain when we will be able to get any. It will be difficult for the seminarians to get here, and they would not make much headway in their work. It would be better to begin soon after summer vacation. We also made decisions on some minor questions.

## ***May 10***

At four o'clock in the afternoon I attended a meeting of the Children of Mary. They presented their annual financial report and had elections. I gave a short talk.

---

<sup>1</sup> In 1919, these places were in the southeastern part of the diocese of Vilnius, but now are within the boundaries of Poland.

I received the necessary permits to travel to Warsaw.<sup>1</sup> During my absence, I left the administration of the diocese to Monsignor Sadowski. I am leaving tomorrow with Father Joseph.

Father Kulesza came to see me and asked if I would sign the address to be presented to Piłsudski—the same one that was read when the keys of the city were given to him. I answered that I would not sign because it was a political matter. When the Paris Peace Conference decides on the fate of these nations, I will try to be a loyal citizen of whatever government is recognized here. At present, I cannot join any party, but must serve everyone equally.

### *November 19<sup>2</sup>*

I have not written anything for a long time. Perhaps I shall make a note of the more important events as I recall them. And there is much that is worthy of note. This has often been a time of hardship, suffering, and oppression for me.

Today I am leaving for Białystok. Tomorrow they are celebrating the nationalization of the secondary schools<sup>3</sup> and insisted on my coming.

It is bitterly cold: about 18 or 19 degrees Celsius.<sup>4</sup> The railways are in a state of chaos. The trains are late. They do not leave on time, and there is a shortage of fuel. Instead of arriving at one o'clock a.m., the Warsaw-Vilnius train came in only at nine and left Vilnius at 12:30 p.m. The railway cars are unheated. There were many travelers, and it was very crowded. The officers and soldiers were stamping their feet and shivering in the cold. They were poorly dressed. Somehow or other we reached Białystok<sup>5</sup> at ten in the morning. The priests were waiting for me there.

---

1 This would be the first time Matulaitis and Ratti met.

2 Unfortunately, he never filled in this six-month gap.

3 A private high school in Białystok (Balstoge) was turned over to the Minister of Education, symbolic of the nationalization of private schools, as decreed by the new Polish government. The chaplain of this school was Fr. Lucjan Chalecki, Matulaitis's future chancellor.

4 Presumably below zero; about one degree below zero Fahrenheit.

5 The town was called *Balstoge* in Lithuanian, *Białystok* in Polish. It had once been Lithuanian, but was now within the borders of Poland, being 70 km southwest of Gardinas (Grodno). It belonged to the Diocese, later the Archdiocese of Vilnius.

## ***November 20***

Although I celebrated Mass solemnly, with assistants, it was only a low Mass so the children would not freeze. After 12 noon there were ceremonies at the secondary school. I made a speech outlining the history of the Polish schools. Here in Białystok I encouraged them to remain faithful to their honorable past in uniting faith and reason, the education of the mind, with the development of the will and of character. I wished them well. They liked my speech. It seems that rumors had been spread about my being an enemy of the Poles. Now they could see for themselves that I sympathize with them. With the Poles I try to be like a Pole; with the Jews I am a Jew; with the Gentiles—a Gentile. Everything to everyone (cf., 1 Cor 9:20-22).

There were many other speeches. The school inspector from Warsaw spoke well. The Minister of Education had promised to come, but did not, apparently because of the cold. Father Ciepliński from Warsaw was also there. In the evening there was a program at the girls' school.

## ***November 21***

The cold weather has broken. In the afternoon I left for Gardinas with the seminarians. I barely managed to find a seat in the soldiers' car. They had their own stove, and it was so hot you could hardly stand it. We were in Gardinas after seven; I was met by the priests and several city officials. In Grodno the Missionary Fathers were conducting a mission.

## ***November 22***

I called on all the important people. I attended a meeting of the Sodality of the Blessed Virgin for high-school boys and gave them a short sermon. Then I visited the children's homes and schools and also the workhouse of the parish of the Bernardines.<sup>1</sup> Everywhere I had to say a few words. I also called on the Franciscan Fathers and

---

<sup>1</sup> The Bernardines were well known both in Poland and in Lithuania. They were a branch of the Franciscans of the strict observance, named after the reformer, St. Bernardine of Sienna (1380-1444).

the sisters of Nazareth, to whom I gave a conference. I visited some of the other priests. The children and the people were preparing to receive the Sacrament of Confirmation.

### ***November 23***

This was a very full day for me. At 9:30 in the morning, I gave Confirmation to more than 500 children. I preached a brief sermon. Afterwards, I celebrated a solemn Mass during which I delivered another sermon to the people. In the afternoon I dedicated a girls' high school conducted by the Sisters of Nazareth and gave an appropriate talk. Then I went to the meeting of the Christian Democrats, and here I had to give a speech as well. From there I went back to the church to give Confirmation to the adult women and again preached a short sermon. After that I called on a religious community of sisters dedicated to serving rural folk. I gave them a conference. In the evening we were all invited to dinner with Father Kuryłowicz. The rest of the time I stayed with the Dean, Father Żebrowski.

### ***November 24***

At eight in the morning I celebrated Mass for the secondary school students and afterwards confirmed them and gave a brief sermon. In the afternoon I gave Confirmation to the adult men and preached a sermon.

Father Hryniewicz, a Belorussian priest who teaches religion at the boys high school, told me that there was a group of nationally conscious Catholic Belorussian boys who wanted to work for their own people.

In the evening I left for Vilnius. I barely managed to squeeze into the soldiers' car, which was already overcrowded. The journey was tiring, and it was hot and stuffy in the railway car. We arrived in Vilnius at midnight.

### ***November 25***

Three sisters made their religious profession at the Benedictine convent of St. Catherine. I celebrated solemn Mass and gave the sisters a sermon.

### ***December 1***

This is the anniversary of my consecration as Bishop. Monsignor Michalkiewicz celebrated Mass. After Mass some representatives of the clergy came to congratulate me.

It has been a difficult and troublesome year. The normal flow of life has been constantly disrupted and disordered. The situation is confused, and there are continual complications.

### ***December 8***

Today is the anniversary of my installation. I celebrated Mass and preached a sermon. This year has been one of constant suffering, a year of the cross. Glory be to God! O Blessed Virgin Mary of the Immaculate Conception, protect me and the diocese!

These days I have been trying to organize a chancery and have been conferring with some reliable priests. I intended to appoint Father Ellert as chancellor, but it turned out that I could not do so. He is accused of having collaborated with the Russian authorities during the Czarist regime and of having asked certain officials that he be appointed bishop. It is unfortunate that this negative opinion stands in the way of his appointment, since he is an able man and would certainly have put the chancery in order. Even his enemies admit this. However, I shall have to look for another chancellor.

### ***December 13***

I called the Chapter together. The Polish Provisional Government has issued regulations for the schools and wants to take the seminaries under its supervision—at least in part. These regulations are totally untenable, much like those passed by the Russians. We cannot accept them. I decided to ignore them. If the government starts to enforce them, then we can protest. In the meantime, it will be

enough to write to His Excellency Bishop Szelażek<sup>1</sup> in Warsaw and send him a copy of the regulations.

The head of the village of Bielsk has appealed to me to urge the priests voluntarily to give the required amount of grain to the government. I had heard that the priests there had agreed to pay government taxes. As for the grain, some of the priests decided to give the government the required amount; others did not. We decided to forward this matter to His Excellency Bishop Szelażek so that he and the Bishops' Conference would decide what we should do in such cases in order to remain consistent. Under previous governments the priests had been exempt from placing unnecessary burdens on the Church.

I consulted with the Chapter, or rather, listened to its advice on the appointment of ecclesiastical judges, procurators, and advisors. It has not been possible to set up a full chancery as yet, because it is difficult to get in touch and make arrangements with the priests.

We made some decisions about the Giedraiciai<sup>2</sup> case. I proposed that a three-day retreat be conducted there and those who are at fault be obliged to attend it and, in addition, that they be required to fast one Friday. Since only those who consider themselves Poles are at fault, the retreat should be given in Polish.

I am going to appoint Father Gumbaragis<sup>3</sup> of Suzoniai pastor of Giedraiciai. The Chapter agreed to this, but they did not want Father Vaitkevičius to go there to conduct the retreat because they regard him as a party man. The Franciscan Father Haula will go there after the feast of the Epiphany.

The Giedraiciai case is in the chancery records, but, of course, the whole story is not set down. The Polish delegation from Giedraiciai came to see me three times. The first time they demanded that I abolish the Lithuanian language from the church and remove the

1 Adolf Szelażek was the representative of the Polish bishops in matters dealing with the civil authorities.

2 A town in eastern Lithuania, 45 km north of Vilnius, named after a Lithuanian noble family who had a large estate there. Bishop Arnulfas Giedraitis had built the church of St. Bartholomew in 1809 that was still in use as the parish church. The people were of mixed nationalities—Lithuanian, Polish and Belorussian—and the town had a history of ethnic unrest. Separate church services were provided in Polish and in Lithuanian. In 1919, nationalistic feuds broke out again and led to rioting in the church.

3 Karolis Gumbaragis (1885-1958): a Lithuanian priest who had studied at the Vilnius Seminary and was ordained in 1910. He had been pastor in various Lithuanian parishes.



pastor, Father Slabšinskas.<sup>1</sup> At that time I told them that I would not change the order of services while we are in a state of war. After the fighting is over, it will be possible to investigate the situation and see whether some changes are needed. If they have something against the pastor, let them point out what is wrong and I will look into it. The delegates were impossible to talk to.

Father Slabšinskas had told me about the situation. The Polish Legionnaires and militia as well as the agents of the Border Guard<sup>2</sup> had interfered in matters of the church and had also incited the people. I thought it better to wait awhile until the mood of the Poles is somewhat calmer and they have cooled off a bit. They also brought me lists of the parishioners, drawn up by the Poles, of course; only a handful of Lithuanians were listed. I could not accept these lists. In 1912, lists had been made and checked by having them read from the pulpit so everyone would know if he is included and under what nationality. I begged the delegates to be patient until the war ended. I said to them: “You have not lost your national spirit up to now. You consider yourselves Poles, and during this short period while the war is in progress, surely you will not lose your national identity.”

The same people came a second time. Now they demanded not only the abolition of the Lithuanian-language services, but also denounced the pastor. I promised to appoint a committee to investigate the charges against the priest. The Lithuanian delegation came as well and argued that the accusations against the pastor were pure lies and fabrications and that the order of services was fair.

After that I immediately left for Gniezno.<sup>3</sup> In the meantime, at Giedraiciai the Poles, encouraged and incited by the soldiers, seized the pastor and took him away.<sup>4</sup> I heard they intended to banish a whole group of Lithuanian priests in this manner, including me. Then the Poles began a campaign against me and published all kinds of fabricated stories. This campaign was led by members of the Polish

---

1 Antanas Slabšinskas was a Lithuanian priest who had been pastor of the parish in the town of Giedraiciai for some time.

2 The *Straż Kresowa* was a Polish political organization active from the beginning of 1919 in southwestern Lithuania known as the Suwalki region, which they claimed for Poland. After the first border demarcation line was drawn up June 18, 1919, these Border Guards extended their activities to the area around Vilnius as well.

3 To attend the Conference of the Bishops of Poland.

4 On August 14 he was taken to the local militia who then took him to Vilnius and left him in front of the bishop's residence.

National Democratic Party and especially by the Border Guard. By this means they hoped to intimidate me and some other Lithuanian priests.

The Polish delegation from Giedraiciai came to see me once again. I told them that this kind of behavior is a mortal sin and that those who took part in the attack on the pastor are excommunicated. They returned once more, but I would not receive them. They were impossibly insolent. They demanded that there be nothing for the Lithuanians in church and that I appoint a Polish pastor who does not know a word of Lithuanian. With the help of the Border Guard, they sent delegates and letters to the nuncio<sup>1</sup> in Warsaw making accusations against me.

Then I appointed two representatives of my own to investigate the matter: Father Kraujalis and Father Miłkowski. It turned out that the Lithuanians in Giedraiciai were intimidated and many had signed up as Poles out of fear. Two persons were arrested because they admitted to being Lithuanian. Upon further investigation, it became clear that where Father Slabšinskas was at fault was in his uncompromising character. The other accusations were groundless suspicions.

On their way back from the nuncio in Warsaw, four delegates representing the three parishes of Inturke, Moletai, and Videniskiai came to see me and demanded that the order of services in their churches be changed. The accusations against the pastor of Inturke were especially vehement. Since the newly ordained Polish priest Father Stanislaw Możejko was on his way there, I asked him to make a thorough investigation of the situation at Inturke. It turned out that one of the accusers, a certain Ciesiul, is a worthless character. Under the Germans he had sided with them, but now he had become an ardent Pole. Mackiewicz, the ringleader of the troublemakers, was also a bad sort. He had been wandering around in Russia and had now become an agent of the Polish Border Guard.

When I returned from Gardinas, this Mackiewicz came to see me with two other representatives demanding changes and removal of

---

<sup>1</sup> Ratti was appointed Nuncio to Poland in June of 1919. On Oct. 28, he was consecrated bishop in Warsaw and also made titular Archbishop of Lepanto; Matulaitis had attended the ceremonies.

the pastor. I answered that I would not make any changes while we are at war. I asked them to settle down and to calm the people. If they had something against the priest, they should point it out, and I would see that he was tried in an ecclesiastical court. Then they threatened to expel the priest, just like at Giedraiciai. “If this is how you talk,” I retorted, “then you are not even Catholics—perhaps you are some sort of Bolsheviks. I will not discuss anything with people who talk like this.” And I threw them out. They hurried to Monsignor Michalkiewicz, who came to me suggesting that perhaps it would be worthwhile to investigate the matter and make some concessions. I said that I had already made an investigation through Father Możejko and that all this was the work of a few troublemakers. I also stated that I would not make any changes while fighting was going on and there is so much unrest. If I begin getting rid of the Lithuanian language in the churches, the Lithuanians may start to remove the Polish language on their side of the demarcation line.<sup>1</sup> And, after all, one must uphold truth and justice. It is now clear that the lists they brought me mean nothing and it is impossible to make any changes under such conditions, since all hell would break loose in all the parishes of mixed nationality.

As yet, it is still uncertain as to who will control this region. We cannot carry on such a short-sighted *cuius regio, eius religio*<sup>2</sup> policy in the Church. I said: Let them expel the priests, let them do whatever they want. They can even expel me, as the troublemakers in Giedraiciai threatened to do, but I will not back down from just principles, nor will I make any changes while the fighting continues. In my opinion, such a strict stance will benefit the Church and even the Polish element. If Poland does not get these territories, it is possible that I shall then have to defend the rights of the Polish language in the churches. As for now, I said, we must put up with this

---

<sup>1</sup> The first of several demarcation lines, the Marshal Foch line drawn up June 18, 1919, served a military purpose: to maintain a cease-fire between the Polish and Lithuanian armies. However, hostilities continued.

<sup>2</sup> A well-known Latin saying: The religion of whoever is in power prevails.

epidemic of clergy expulsions. The important principle at issue here is this: who rules the Church—the bishop and the priests appointed by him or the troublemakers? If they expel the priests, I shall place them under interdict until they calm down. Then I learned that those delegates who were running around with their complaints had gone home and, according to what I heard, they have calmed down somewhat.

At this time, I went with the rector of the seminary to see the General Commissar, Mr. Osmołowski. I asked him to give us some funds for the upkeep of the seminary and to provide some financial support for the priests. The plight of the urban priests is especially difficult. The pastors are forced to go into debt, and the curates, unable to support themselves, are asking to be transferred out of town. In those areas which have been devastated by war and where the people are impoverished, it is hard for priests as well. Mr. Osmołowski complained that there is a lack of funds, but that he will try to help us somewhat. He promised to provide an estate and some livestock for the upkeep of the seminary.

I also spoke to him about our churches that have been reclaimed from the Russians. He said that he must be informed which churches and church property have been recovered and, in the future, churches cannot be reclaimed without the permission and approval of the government. I requested that the churches and monasteries belonging to the Franciscans and the Sisters of the Visitation in Vilnius be returned to them.

He also touched on politics. He said that in some places there are complaints about the language used in church services and also that in some places they intend to expel the Lithuanian priests. He asked if there was a possibility of making changes in church services. I replied that, while the war is still going on, I am determined not to make any changes in the arrangement of the services because all hell would break loose in the mixed parishes. They can expel the priests if they wish, and we will endure it, but I cannot back down from my principles. I also added that this was mostly the work of the Border Guard agents and gave him some concrete facts. I spoke about the continuing arrests of the priests and their being brought to Vilnius. I said: “Such things do not harm the Church so much, but neither does anyone derive any benefit from them. The Polish authorities are too willing to heed various complaints and slanders and are arresting priests without cause. Not a single one of all those who have been brought here to Vilnius by the

gendarmes has been proven guilty of any crime. Besides, the treatment of those arrested is deplorable.”

In the evening of December 13th, Mr. Aleksander Meysztowicz came to see me. I had heard from His Excellency Archbishop O'Rourke that he is an advocate of conciliation with the Lithuanians and recognizes Lithuanian independence. I spoke with him at length. In his opinion, Greater Lithuania with a parliament in Vilnius should be restored and, though independent, it should be united with Poland at least by military and economic ties. He vehemently attacked the Polish officials in Lithuania and their methods of governing. At first the local people had welcomed the Poles with the greatest confidence because they were quite weary of the Bolsheviks. If only the Poles had known how to exploit this moment! But now that they have robbed and injured the people, they are proposing a plebiscite. This is how he talked.

I have noticed that some of the Poles are changing their policy toward Lithuanians to some extent. There are now those among them who advocate a separate and independent Lithuania associated with Poland.

### ***December 14***

I ordained two deacons to the priesthood.

### ***December 15***

The meeting and annual elections of the St. Vincent de Paul Societies were held at five o'clock in the afternoon. I attended, gave a speech and a donation. These are Polish organizations, and they are doing good work. At least, the women's branches are, but the men's are mostly inactive.

### ***December 16***

An open letter addressed to me about Lithuanian priests and church services in parishes of mixed nationality appeared in the

Polish newspaper *Nasz Kraj*, nr. 199. The letter was published in the name of the Presidium of the Peoples Council of the People's General Assembly from the Vilnius District.<sup>1</sup>

This letter is written on behalf of all nationalities. It is full of lies and fallacies. I had never heard of any such elections of parish delegates as alleged in the letter. I asked the priests, and they had never heard of such elections either. I had expressly forbidden all the clergy—Lithuanian as well as Polish—to get involved in politics. Now some of the priests are being attacked unjustly.

This so-called People's Council has not sent any representatives in to see me. Some people have been here from several parishes, but not on behalf of any People's Council. The present order of church services in the parishes is based on parish lists drawn up during the time of His Excellency Bishop von Ropp<sup>2</sup> and especially during the administration of Monsignor Michalkiewicz.<sup>3</sup> These lists of people by nationality had been confirmed by mixed Lithuanian-Polish committees and have been read aloud from the pulpits. Consequently, there is no need to change the present arrangements in the churches all over again.

The very form of addressing me in this letter is inappropriate. Genuine Catholics do not address their bishop in such a fashion. It is clear that they want to intimidate me. All this is the work of the Border Guard. According to what I have been told, the Border Guard is calling its supporters and agents to attend meetings in some of the smaller towns and parishes and, afterwards, they vote for suitable delegates from among themselves to form an executive committee. And people who have been elected in this manner dare to represent the entire population and the interests of all the nationalities! The Communists also used to resort to such tactics. Always and everywhere they succeeded in ramming through only Communists during elections, as if other kinds of people did not even exist.

---

1 *Prezydium Rady Ludowej*, which seems to have been the executive committee of the larger body *Powszechny Zjazd Ludowy Powiatu Wileńskiego*.

2. Bishop Eduard von Ropp was Bishop of Vilnius from 1903 to 1907. He was exiled by the Russian authorities to St. Petersburg, but later allowed to live with relatives in Latvia.

3 When protests from the Vatican failed to reinstate Bishop von Ropp, Pope Pius X appointed Monsignor Michalkiewicz administrator of the diocese; he remained in this position from 1907 to June 1918.

I had thought of ignoring this letter and not responding to it at all. However, some of the priests thought that it would be worthwhile to reply. I conferred with Monsignor Michalkiewicz. Actually, in this case he was more the one being attacked because he introduced the present arrangement of church services in the parishes of mixed nationality. I had not changed anything, but had simply continued the previous arrangements that he had introduced. And it was he who had assigned the priests now being attacked.

Monsignor Michalkiewicz was of the opinion that we ought to answer the letter in some way. But how? He suggested that the reply could be in the form of questions and answers. Others thought that the chancery office should reply in the bishop's name. It seemed to me inappropriate for the chancery and the bishop to get involved in an argument with such people. It would be difficult to convince or satisfy them. They will just go right on singing the same old tune. We decided that I should go and talk with Mr. Niedziałkowski, who is in charge of this district.

## 1921

*After an interval of thirteen months, Bishop Matulaitis resumed writing in his Journal. The 1921 entries are fragmentary, recording events and meetings with various persons from late February to early April. Once again, Vilnius and the surrounding area were under a new government. The city had been occupied by General Żeligowski<sup>1</sup> and the Polish Army on October 9, 1920. This area was then named Central Lithuania and placed under the control of the Provisional Governing Committee made up of military and civilian personnel. The Lithuanians contested the occupation, and the League of Nations sent in a Military Control Commission, which ordered a cease-fire and designated a neutral zone around the territory occupied by the Polish Army, separating it from independent Lithuania. Members of this Control Commission came to Vilnius to investigate further the situation. Some of the Polish politicians advocated a plebiscite in the Vilnius area similar to the one to be held in Upper Silesia. As the political climate shifted once again, both the clergy and the people of Vilnius were caught up in a fresh wave of political turmoil. Bishop Matulaitis had a constant stream of visitors from every walk of life and was kept in touch with current events. However, he was careful to retain his neutral stance, since his primary concern was to uphold the interests of the Church and to care for his flock, although he was well aware that his position was becoming more and more difficult.*

### **February 19**

General Stefan Mokrzecki<sup>2</sup> invited me to join the honorary committee to raise funds for the plebiscite in upper Silesia.<sup>3</sup> We elected a panel of auditors so that the people, confident of

---

1 Lucjan Żeligowski (1865-1946): Polish general and supporter of Marshal Piłsudski. He was now in control of Vilnius.

2 Had recently been appointed by Żeligowski to succeed Witold Abramowicz as head of the Provisional Governing Committee.

3 *Komitet Honorowy Górnego Śląska*, as it was called in Polish. The plebiscite was to take place March 20, 1921.



accountability, would be more generous with their donations. Archbishop Hryniewiecki<sup>1</sup> was there as well.

After the meeting, General Mokrzecki requested that Hryniewiecki and I remain behind to speak with him. He started to complain about how the priests were interfering in politics and carrying out their own policy and that it was necessary to curb their political activities. If I did not do so, he would be forced to take strict measures, which would be unfortunate. Since he was head of the governing body and consequently responsible for the tranquillity and eventual fate of this area, he could not tolerate the present situation. Archbishop Hryniewiecki agreed with him. I understood that they had the Lithuanian and Belorussian priests in mind, although actually these accusations could be aimed just as well at the Polish priests, the so called “endeks.”

I answered that I also am strictly opposed to the involvement of the clergy in politics. I have even published a letter to the clergy reminding them of the directives given by our Holy Father Benedict XV to priests,<sup>2</sup> stating that in their sermons they should confine themselves to purely religious matters and avoid national and political issues. First of all, they ought to carry on the work of the Church and then take up educational and social action wherever possible. However, my guidelines did not accomplish much. The situation in the country is abnormal, and its fate is undecided as yet. Everyone imagines that his influence is of great importance and will determine the nation’s future. Consequently, all are involved in politics, overexcited, and rushing around in every direction. It is a disease peculiar to our times. What can one do about it? The clergy resists any kind of control. Perhaps it is better just to wait until they have gotten over it.

At this point, the General and especially the Archbishop began to attack the Lithuanian and Belorussian clergy. I replied that they were not the only ones to blame. The Polish priests were also not without fault in this regard. I addressed the General, “You, sir, have been in church on various solemn occasions and have heard the sermons

---

1 Karol Hryniewiecki (1841-1929): was 80 years old and had returned to Vilnius after 43 years. He had been Bishop of Vilnius from 1883 to 1885.

2 In his encyclical *Humani Generis*, published June 15, 1917, Pope Benedict XV reminded priests of their obligation to preach not politics or esoteric philosophies, but the Word of God.

preached by the Polish priests. Were they free of political issues?" The General was silent. I had in mind the most recent sermon of His Excellency Bishop Bandurski<sup>1</sup> during the national commemoration of the "January Uprising."<sup>2</sup> In his sermon he did not mention God at all. He began with Poland, spoke about Poland, and ended with Poland. He quoted only Polish poets. This was a speech fit for a political rally. I have heard a number of such sermons, especially during various national celebrations. Fathers Czerniawski, Jasiński, Sienkiewicz, Kulesza, several army chaplains, and some other priests have spoken in this vein. I then reminded the General: "All the priests—Poles, Lithuanians and Belorussians—should be equally restricted from interfering in politics. Since I cannot enforce this and the Polish government would not agree to it, I must then allow all of them equal freedom of action. It would be unjust otherwise. I cannot have the Church identified with one party or a particular point of view."

Then Archbishop Hryniewiecki and General Mokrzecki began to attack Father Petrovski, a Belorussian and pastor of Boruny, because he supported a rural organization called [*Odrodzenie*] Rebirth<sup>3</sup> that is hostile to the nobility. They accused him of participating in a recent meeting of this organization, of encouraging the Belorussians to establish their own schools, and of founding a teachers' college in Boruny. Why is all of this necessary? Petrovski is opposing the Polish state. His work is even detrimental to the Church. The people are dissatisfied with him and complain. In a polite way the General indicated and actually ordered me to remove Father Petrovski from that parish and transfer him to Kobrynia or some other place where he would be unable to continue the work he is doing.

After I had heard all this, I replied: "General, your predecessor, the former President of the Provisional Governing committee, Mr. Witold Abramowicz,<sup>4</sup> came to see me and expressed the wish that

1 Władysław Bandurski (1885-1932): had been auxiliary Bishop to the Archbishop of Lwów from 1906; came to Vilnius in 1920 with General Zeligowski as chief chaplain (Biskup Polowy) of the Polish Army. A rousing speaker, he was an enthusiastic supporter of Piłsudski.

2 In January 1863 Poles, Lithuanians and Catholic white Russians rose against Russian occupation of their native territory and sought to gain independence. The uprising lasted 15 months and was brutally put down. The defeat was followed by executions, confiscations, deportations to Siberia, forced Russification and curtailment of religious freedom.

3 The author uses the Polish title throughout, but we have substituted the English name of this political organization. It was set up to draw the rural folk, the peasant farmers, and to popularize Piłsudski's political program among them. It had a socialistic bent, since its members spoke out against the wealthy landowners because the peasants wanted to own the land they farmed.

4 Also called Vytautas Abramavičius, since he was born in Lithuania in 1874. He was a supporter of Piłsudski and had headed the Polish governing committee of Central Lithuania from 1920 to 1921.

Father Olszański<sup>1</sup> not remain in Vilnius, since he was spreading unsuitable political views among the workers. On that occasion I told Mr. Abramowicz: ‘Kindly submit the accusations against Father Olszański in writing, and I will turn them over to the ecclesiastical tribunal for investigation. If it appears that Father Olszański has transgressed Canon Law, I shall punish him.’ I repeat the same thing now. I have never punished and will not punish a single priest because of his political or national convictions as long as they do not conflict with the teaching of Christ. I adhere to this principle: whether one is a federalist or an annexationist, a supporter of independent Lithuania or an advocate of union with Poland, such views are not in opposition to eternal salvation. In these matters I leave everyone freedom of choice. Up to now, it has not appeared to me that Father Petrovski was an enemy of the Polish people. After all, with the Workers’ League of St. Casimir<sup>2</sup> which he directed, he helped the Polish Legionnaires take Vilnius the first time they came. He was then praised by the Polish government for this and lauded in the newspapers. Father Petrovski has been going to Warsaw to consult with the Polish Christian Democrats, whom he supports. They say that he has also founded several Polish schools in Boruny.”

At this point Archbishop Hryniewiecki interrupted me and said that at that time Father Petrovski had been a loyal Catholic and had done good work, Now he has strayed from the straight path. He must be dismissed and punished. In his organization, the Rebirth, he is opposing the nobility. Then I asked him: “But who is actually supporting and directing this Rebirth organization? Is it not Piłsudski and the Polish government? Are they not financing this organization to oppose the National Democrats? I can see that the government is involved in this, and that is why I refuse to interfere.”

“This Rebirth is against Catholicism,” said the Archbishop. To this I replied that a representative of theirs came to see me and I told him that as long as they do not go against the Church and religion, I will

---

<sup>1</sup> Olszański was a National Democrat, while Abramowicz and Mokrzejcki were supporters of Piłsudski and hence federalists.

<sup>2</sup> *Liga Robotnicza św. Kazimierza* in Polish. This was the organization begun by Fr. Muckermann in 1919.

not say anything against them. They firmly promised me not to oppose the Catholic Church.

On the contrary, they told me they were in favor of religion. And, to tell the truth, until now I had not heard that the members of Rebirth had ever shown any hostility to Catholicism. They simply warn that if the priests interfere in politics and obstruct their work or attack them, then they will defend themselves and oppose such priests. This will lead to a political conflict. They even asked me to give them a priest to lead them. I did not do so because they are a political organization and really can go astray. Priests should not become involved in such associations. But until now, I have had no cause to condemn that organization.

In the final analysis, neither the members of Rebirth, nor the National Democrats are concerned primarily with religion, but with politics. One party favors a federation, while the other is for annexation. Consequently, there is a struggle between the two currents of thought. Be that as it may, I will not interfere. However, I can see that both want to use the Church for their political purposes and would like to have control over the clergy. The “endeks” are hiding behind the name of His Excellency Archbishop Hryniewiecki and others, while the members of Rebirth boast that they are supported by Bishop Bandurski, Father Petrovski, Father Bobnis, and others. I cannot prevent the priests from participating in political activities, and so I leave them free to choose. But I cannot allow any political party to monopolize the Church or the Faith. I told the Archbishop how I had warned the members of Rebirth. “If you come out in opposition to religion,” I said to them, “I will immediately speak out against you.”

Then I went on to reply to the Archbishop: “Now you are demanding that I punish priests who support Rebirth and are in favor of a federation. Meanwhile, the Rebirth representatives have given me a letter asking me to restrain certain priests who are unjustly slandering and attacking their organization from the pulpit. All I see here is a regrettable political conflict in which I do not intend to interfere.”

The Archbishop then started to censure Father Petrovski for taking part in a Rebirth meeting last Sunday and inciting the people against the Polish landowners. He also accused Petrovski of engaging in

political activities.

To this I responded: “I have never heard Father Petrovski say anything against the Catholic Faith. But there are many priests here in Vilnius—Father Lutosławski, for example — and other delegates to the Parliament whom I heard speaking not about the Gospel, but on purely political issues. I could not forbid them to do so. Consequently, I must give the same freedom to Father Petrovski. As for Your Excellency’s interview with the newspaper reporters that was later published in the Polish papers *Rzeczpospolita* and also the *Głos Wileński*<sup>1</sup> what was that? Was it not a political matter from start to finish? How then am I to forbid other priests from participating in political activities?”

His Excellency, the Archbishop became very excited and began to speak out against the Belorussians and Lithuanians. He rebuked me for introducing the Belorussian language into the churches. “This,” he said, “will harm the Catholic Church and will make the people go over to the Orthodox.” According to him, no Belorussian or Lithuanian issues ever existed here. That is the work of the enemies of the Church and of Poland, and none of it is necessary.

I answered him: “Your Excellency, you are looking at these lands as they were forty years ago, and you see everything through the eyes of a person who was here forty years ago. Neither the Lithuanians, nor the Belorussians are what they were. They are coming to life as nations and are demanding their rights and fighting for them. And they will achieve their goals. There is nothing we can do. We cannot change the course of history. As for this matter of languages, I have not made any changes in the churches. While there is war and unrest, I have left everything as it was under my predecessors. I had issued a directive that no changes should be made without my permission. His Excellency Bishop Ropp introduced the Belorussian language into the Disna deanery and Bishop Loziński did so in the Diocese of Mińsk—and both of them are Poles. Meanwhile, I have only asked the priests to teach the children their catechism in a language they under-

---

<sup>1</sup> These newspapers were *Rzeczpospolita* in Polish or *The Republic* and *Głos Wileński* in Polish or *Vilnius Voice*.

stand—that is, in Belorussian. I have not heard that preaching in Belorussian has resulted in any harm to Catholicism. On the contrary, in those areas many Belorussians who attend the Orthodox churches are converting to Catholicism. However, while such a confused political situation continues, it is not the time to make any final decision on these questions.”

“As for the Belorussian schools,” I said, “I give them neither permission, nor funding. The secular authorities are responsible for that. I have heard that Father Petrovski is establishing a Belorussian teachers’ college after consulting with former government officials—with Mr. Witold Abramowicz and Mr. Ivanovski, a Belorussian. Apparently, the school was not in conflict with the political interests of that government. But I do not understand why I am being involved in all of this.”

The General said that the people are complaining about Father Petrovski’s activities and that they themselves do not want the Belorussian language...“If Father Petrovski had violated Canon Law,” I said, “kindly point it out to me or let the people bring it up. Then I will punish him. Until now I have not heard any complaints about him from Boruny. On the contrary, I have heard that the people there love and respect him a great deal. If I were to transfer him somewhere else, not only the parish, but the entire district would rise to his defense. And if the people do not like the Belorussian school, they will not allow their children to attend and that will be the end of it.” Then the General took pains to point out to me that the Poles cannot relinquish what they have built up over the centuries. Boruny is a seat of Polish culture.<sup>1</sup> “I will not interfere with that,” I replied. “That is not my problem. But tell me this: what do the common people of Boruny speak — is it not Belorussian? Then what is wrong with having a Belorussian priest there? It seems very appropriate to me. After all, he is working among his own people.”

---

<sup>1</sup> The Polish Bazilians settled here in the 17th c. They had a monastery and church and conducted a school, spreading Polish culture in the area. The church was famous for a miraculous Madonna they had brought. In the 19th c. the Russian government closed the monastery and confiscated the church. In 1919, it was restored as a Catholic parish. At this time the area was settled mostly by Belorussian farmers.

Father Górski had been Dean of Asmena.<sup>1</sup> The priests had complained because of his difficult character and about the way he behaved toward them. They were convinced that he was working with the Polish government officials and the police. He had informed against his fellow priests. I received one, then another request from the priests that he be removed from his position as dean. I tried to calm them down and reconcile them with Górski, but nothing came of it. When Górski fled to Warsaw upon the arrival of the Bolsheviks, I appointed Father Mykolas Abaravičius, formerly of the little church of the Bonifratres<sup>2</sup> in Vilnius, as pastor and dean in Górski's stead. To me he seemed suitable for that position. During the Russian regime he had been pastor and dean at Asmena until he was expelled by the Russian government for organizing a religious procession. After that, he taught religion in the high schools in Vilnius, since he was a graduate of the Theological Academy. Although he considered himself a Lithuanian, he did not use Lithuanian when he spoke to me, nor did such things interest him. The priests of the Asmena deanery received his appointment quite favorably.

When Górski returned, he was determined to resume his duties as Dean of Asmena. Finally, I decided that, for the time being, Górski would just be pastor of Asmena, while I transferred Dean Abaravičius to the neighboring town of Župronys<sup>3</sup>. Górski was not satisfied. He appealed to the more prominent Polish officers to intercede for him and even to influence me through General Żeligowski so I would reappoint him as dean. He argued that Polish interests in the Asmena district depended on him alone and that I had intentionally appointed a Lithuanian to undermine those interests. He encouraged the people to send petitions to General Żeligowski and to me. There were more than fifty signatures on these petitions, but whether they were genuine and had any real value is

---

1 Oszmiana in Belorussia: a town in western Belorussia, about 50 km southeast of Vilnius. Under the czarist regime it belonged to the Vilnius province, and in 1919 was still part of the Diocese of Vilnius. At this time, the town was occupied by the Polish army. It was contested by the Poles, Belorussians, Lithuanians, and Bolsheviks because of its strategic location: through it passed the most widely used road linking east and west. During WW I, the area had been heavily damaged; many villages and farmsteads destroyed.

2 The Bonifratres were the Hospitalers of St. John of God. Their main monastery and hospital had been in Vilnius, but the order was closed down by the Russian government in 1843. Bishop Matulaitis restored it in 1924.

3 Župrony in Belorussia: a small town 10 km east of Oszmiana (Asmena). It was the site of an old Lithuanian estate, but the area was now populated mostly by Belorussians.

uncertain. I knew that not only the priests, but even the common people disliked Górski. I was obliged to send Chancellor Chalecki<sup>1</sup> with documents to show the Polish government officials (Mr. Piwocki) why Górski could no longer be dean.

Now General Mokrzecki once again raised the issue of Fathers Górski and Abaravičius. He began by stating that the people demand that Father Górski be Dean of Asmena. I answered: "I cannot understand why the parishioners should be concerned about who is dean. That concerns only me and the priests: deans are appointed to supervise and direct priests. Why are the people interfering in this issue? Perhaps they are being incited to do so?" Once more I had to explain why I was forced to remove Górski from the position of dean.

The General criticized Father Abaravičius for his Lithuanian orientation.<sup>2</sup> I replied that I was not interested in the political or national views of the clergy. I had sent Father Abaravičius to Asmena not to engage in politics, but to provide for the spiritual needs of the people. I happen to know that he is not involved in any political activities there, nor have I had any complaints about him from the people. After all, it is a Belorussian parish.

Finally, General Mokrzecki reproached me for becoming involved in politics. "When and where?" I asked him. "The Belorussian paper *Nasza Dumka*<sup>3</sup> reported that you participated in an evening program held at the Lithuanian high school on February 16th commemorating Lithuanian independence. You even applauded a speech by Father Stankevich<sup>4</sup> in which he declared that Vilnius ought to be returned to the Lithuanians," said the General. "Very well," I answered him, "but when I also took part in the celebration to honor the formation of the Lithuanian-Belorussian Division of the Polish Army, and when I participated in all the Polish national festivities, that was fine. I was present with you at the

1 Lucjan Chalecki (1873-1964): had been appointed chancellor by Bishop Matulaitis most likely in 1920 and remained in that position until 1925. He admired Matulaitis and was loyal to him.

2 In Polish the phrase reads *litewska orientacja*, which suggests sympathizing with the Lithuanian political and nationalistic viewpoint.

3 Its English title is *Our Thought*.

4 Adam Stankevich (1891-1955): a Belorussian priest who completed his studies at the Vilnius Seminary, ordained in 1914. Graduated from the Theological Academy of St. Petersburg; from 1918 to 1922 worked among the Belorussian people of Vilnius. He was a journalist, directed various organizations, and was a well-known Belorussian leader.



recent patriotic program given by the Polish students at city hall, and at the time we both applauded. There was nothing wrong with that, was there? I believe that all are my children: Poles, Lithuanians, and Belorussians. I have to serve them equally. I must rejoice and grieve with them all. But tell me, what would the Lithuanians have said to me if I, who so often attended various Polish celebrations and ceremonies, had ignored their invitation and refused to come to their program? I must be shepherd to all without distinction.” Meanwhile, His Excellency Bishop Bandurski had come in. He supported my position and helped me end this unpleasant conversation with General Mokrzecki and Archbishop Hryniewiecki.

His Excellency the Archbishop continued to complain that he was being sharply attacked by the press. He had asked Father Tołoczko to answer these tactful comments and publish a rebuttal. He mentioned the paper *Straż Litwy*.<sup>1</sup> He turned to me and spoke heatedly: “So, these newspapers of yours (emphasizing the word *wasze* in Polish) dare to speak about an old man in such a fashion?” I calmly replied that I myself do not own or edit any newspapers. Then I added jokingly: “After all, we have only those papers which are permitted by His Honor the General.”<sup>2</sup>

When I was left alone with General Mokrzecki, I said to him in all seriousness: “Tell me, sir, whether the presence of His Excellency Archbishop Hryniewiecki, his interviews published in the press, and finally all his activities here—are they not purely political, with a political objective? And if the Archbishop himself is engaged in politics, what am I to do with other priests? How can I forbid them to get involved in politics or to defend themselves when attacked? All that I am doing is trying to calm the people down and to restrain them as much as I can. And if I had not done so, hostilities would have been even worse and the results unfortunate. I have tried to reconcile all the nationalities — Belorussian, Lithuanian, and Polish. I have done my best to make peace among them all so that they may live

---

<sup>1</sup> Its English title is *The Guardian of Lithuania*. Printed in Polish, it was a paper for the Lithuanians of Vilnius who knew Polish. Edited by Mykolas Biržiška, it ran only for a few months before it was confiscated by the Polish authorities on April 1, 1921.

<sup>2</sup> General Mokrzecki had censorship rights over the Vilnius press and had already exercised them by closing down various publications.

in love and harmony. But, sir, you cannot demand that I attach the Church to any particular political party nor condemn the Belorussian and Lithuanian priests while you praise and honor the Polish clergy for the same thing. Do not expect me to forbid Belorussians and Lithuanians from doing what I allow Poles to do. Let us make a few distinctions. If the priests violate your laws and directives in political matters, then you, sir, can look into it and investigate their activities. You certainly have the means to do so. And if proof is given that a priest has transgressed Canon Law, then, without doubt, I shall punish him.”

From all that happened, it was clear that the General had been roused to action by Archbishop Hryniewiecki. I left with His Excellency Bishop Bandurski. He admitted that I was right. He also complained about the activities of the “endeks”—how their actions are obstructing the implementation of the wise political policy of Marshal Piłsudski and are detrimental to Polish interests.

### *March 1*

Father Steckiewicz, the vice chancellor,<sup>1</sup> sent me a message. He asked me to permit him to resign from his position. Ostensibly, it was because my recent appointments of several priests clearly showed that I favored Lithuanians and Belorussians and that I was engaged in party politics. He had consulted with his confessor and decided to resign because he wanted no part in any work that is detrimental to his country, Poland, and to our holy Church. In his letter he did not mention any facts.

Thank God that he has resigned. He did not do very much work in any case. Fearing the Bolsheviks, he once left Vilnius and had gone beyond Gardinas into Poland, where he stayed for several months. In

---

<sup>1</sup> Canon Julian Steckiewicz had been working in the chancery in this capacity ever since Bishop Matulaitis took over the diocese in December of 1918. Bishop Matulaitis was not able to appoint a proper chancellor until 1920.

June of last year he again went to Poland and remained there until recently. He has been constantly ill with heart trouble. Among the Lithuanians he has been denounced as a fervent “endek,” who, while sitting in the chancery office, was actually engaged in party politics. I have always been aware that I have enemies in the chancery, that they relay information from the chancery to their own people and hinder my work. I used to keep hearing complaints that certain documents against some of the priests had never reached me. These documents disappeared somewhere. Several times I asked Father Steckiewicz to publish my directives in the *Dziennik Wileński* and other newspapers, but he did not do so. I felt that he and some of the “endek” priests have been working against me; however, I tolerated all of this because of the troubled times and the situation that has arisen in the country.

During the last few days another matter has come to light. Last year the wife of Korwin-Milewski filed for annulment at the diocesan court and won it. Monsignor Sadowski, the official who had charge of the case and also Monsignor Hanusowicz and Canon Kukta informed me that Father Steckiewicz had inserted the words *ex culpa mariti* (due to the fault of the husband) in a copy of the court decision. These words were not used in the actual decision. Father Chalecki, the chancellor, also confirmed this. Mr. Korwin-Milewski was offended precisely on account of these words and had asked the chancery to give him an authentic copy of the document. Monsignor Sadowski was of the opinion that the wisest thing for Father Steckiewicz to do would be to go away to America. When Korwin-Milewski finds out that these words were inserted by Steckiewicz, he will be furious and will take him to court. I said that we should wait until the situation is clarified. Perhaps Father Steckiewicz is innocent and will be able to defend himself. Now the thought occurs to me: did Father Steckiewicz, having learned all this and seeing that he would not be able to remain in the chancery any longer, plan to injure me as he was leaving? The fact is that a certain priest had suggested that I should exonerate Father Steckiewicz by ordering that the words *ex culpa mariti* be inserted in a new copy of the court decision. Naturally, I could not consent. Monsignor Sadowski was also of the opinion that we cannot alter the wording of the decision. It would be

unconscionable.

When Father Steckiewicz returned from Warsaw, he did not come in to see me. Apparently, he did not wish to talk to me. I had always taken great pains to treat him with special gentleness and courtesy and even helped him in some minor matters as much as I could. Now he is telling everyone around town about the letter of resignation he submitted to me and is bragging about the heroic step he has just taken. May God bless and protect him! Of course, I released him, as he requested.

### ***March 4***

I celebrated solemn Mass at the Cathedral. In the evening I preached to the Lithuanian students at St. Nicholas's Church.<sup>1</sup>

On Sundays during Lent I have been preaching on the Passion of Our Lord Jesus Christ at four o'clock in the afternoon. On the 5th, 6th, and 7th of this month I also preached at the Cathedral. This was during the forty-hours devotion and exposition of the Blessed Sacrament.

### ***March 16***

His Excellency Archbishop Hryniewiecki has gone. He paid me a visit before he left, and I also called on him. We did not discuss anything in particular. The old man said that he was leaving because he did not feel well, and besides, where he was living the air from the courtyard was bad. As usual, he became somewhat agitated and could not stop talking about his illness and about how the doctors had removed one of his ribs.

Then he talked about the old times when he was Bishop of Vilnius and how he had visited the parishes in the diocese under the Russians — always the same story. His age and senility are very pronounced. He also likes to talk about the unscrupulous administrators of the diocese who had preceded him and to touch upon political matters as well. In his day, forty

---

<sup>1</sup> Built in the 14th century, it is one of the oldest Lithuanian churches in the country. Since the Lithuanian high school was next door it came to be known as the Lithuanian students' church, since the students came for Mass here and their days of recollection were held here.

years ago, there were no Lithuanians or Belorussians here, only Polish Catholics. Those nations have arisen, financed by Russian, German, Jewish, and Masonic money. This is all the work of the enemies of Poland and is also harmful to the Church. The Belorussians are especially dangerous. If they continue to force their language into the churches, they will make the people turn Orthodox. Then he spoke out vehemently against the Lithuanian and Belorussian clergy.

The more he talked, the more excited he became. His eyes would start to glitter with a fanatical spark. He would repeat the same thing over and over, getting confused and tired. But you could not say that he did not make sense or was not aware of what he was saying. He was able to redirect his talk to his determined purpose.

His Excellency the Archbishop is a tall, lean man with a pleasant face. He has aged considerably: his eyes appear sunken, and his lips bluish. Although he usually looked very pale, the color of a corpse, when he got excited, he became flushed and seemed to revive.

The National Democrats brought him here to set him up against Bishop Bandurski — and me, of course. Actually, Bishop Bandurski is a great admirer and follower of Piłsudski. His views are more democratic and progressive. He supported the efforts of Piłsudski and his aides as well as the rural organization Rebirth that opposed the “endeks.” The members of Rebirth used his name in their campaign among the common folk in order to get their support. Consequently, the “endeks” brought in His Excellency the Archbishop to bolster up their own political efforts. They wanted to make use of the episcopal purple and the archbishop’s name and authority to gain credibility among the people and to offset Bishop Bandurski.

The clever “endek” leaders manipulated the old man, feeding him their own ideas, which he repeated. Then they would spread these views among the people, as if they had come from the Archbishop, in the form of interviews or responses. Mr. Jan Obst<sup>1</sup> published such an inter-

---

<sup>1</sup> A well-known journalist and newspaperman of German descent who had espoused the Polish cause and wrote articles for the Polish press, usually on political topics. While Matulaitis was in Vilnius, he edited the Polish daily *Dziennik Wileński*, instrument of the National Democrats.

view in *Rzeczpospolita* to turn the people against the Lithuanians, Belorussians, and Jews. He then repeated it in the *Głos Wileński*. This caused a general furor and a great deal of polemics in the newspapers that did not quiet down for a long time. The “endeks” shamelessly used the old man for their own purpose. They took him to the workers meetings (i.e., the Workers’ League founded by the Jesuits) and Father Olszański’s Christian Unions and also to the children’s homes to make speeches. Or, they would gather the country folk together from various places and bring the old man in to bless them and to enlighten them about proper political convictions. In the hands of the “endeks” the honorable old man was turned into a common political agitator. It was very sad and also detrimental to the Church.

I got the brunt of it as well. The old man, speaking somewhere near a church, in the street, or at a meeting hall to a group of old ladies or some ordinary people, would publicly rebuke me and the other priests on various matters. In other words, he sometimes directed his campaign against me. I found out that he had turned some of the more prominent people, even General Mokrzecki, against me. Unable to calm down, he went around everywhere, even to the editorial offices of the Polish newspapers and headquarters of the various organizations, speaking as he had been directed by the “endeks.” Everywhere he spoke out against Lithuanians, Belorussians, Jews, and Masons, nor did he overlook me. He created a good deal of trouble for me and for some of the other priests. He conducted a campaign on behalf of the National Democrats.

When he was here, during the first Polish occupation, he came out against me in public and also attacked some of the other priests with various rebukes and other nonsense. The fact is that wishing to honor him as a martyr, I invited the Archbishop with a group of priests to my house. He used this opportunity to blast out at us like a gramophone, accusing us of all kinds of things he had heard against me and some other priests.

Naturally, one has to forgive the old man everything. The real fault lies with those who exploited his old age for their own unscrupulous ends. Still, the old man himself was something of a

troublemaker and had some ill will to boot, especially a fanatical hatred of Lithuanians, Belorussians, Jews, Russians, and other people. His presence here in Vilnius did a great deal of harm to the Church. He again stirred up discontent and animosity among the local factions when the situation was already fraught with tension. He did not sow love, peace, or tranquillity, but rather turned out to be an agitator and a troublemaker. I have heard that the Lithuanians are getting ready to collect the facts and send a complaint to Rome about Archbishop Hryniewiecki's activities here.

### *March 19*

On the feast of St. Joseph I celebrated Mass and gave a sermon in the chapel of the sisters of Mary Magdalene in Antakalnis at about nine in the morning. After breakfast I visited the girls' workshop conducted by the sisters.

From there I went to Lukiškiai square. Here there was a solemn Mass at 11 o'clock in honor of Piłsudski—it was his name day. His Excellency Bishop Bandurski said Mass, but there was no sermon. I had been invited to the festivities by General Mokrzecki himself. After the services there was a military parade. Not many people were there. Some children had been brought in from various institutions, and quite a number of soldiers out on leave were mixing in among the people. These made up something of a crowd.

At seven in the evening I went to the University, where an evening program had been organized in honor of Piłsudski as the restorer of the University.<sup>1</sup> The Rector<sup>2</sup> spoke of the momentous hour that Poland was now facing: the signing of the peace treaty with the Bolsheviks,<sup>3</sup> the plebiscite in Silesia, negotiations with the Lithuanians.<sup>4</sup> He expressed the conviction that all this will turn out for the honor and glory of Poland. He glorified Piłsudski and honored

---

1 Piłsudski had reopened the University of Vilnius in the fall of 1919. The opening ceremonies were held on Nov. 11. The University had been closed by Czar Nicholas I in 1832.

2 Dr. Michal Siedlecki was rector from 1919 to October of 1921.

3 The Treaty of Riga had just been signed on March 18, 1921, ending the Polish-Bolshevik War and readjusting boundaries.

4 These had been resumed by order of the Military Control Commission set up by the League of Nations.

General Żeligowski.

After that, Professor Władysław Zadawski spoke about Silesia, its past and present, and especially about the attempts made to germanize it. It seemed to me that everything he said against the Germans could just as easily be applied to the Lithuanians and Belorussians by simply reversing the accusations and replacing “Germans” with “Poles.” The professor was certain that the Poles will win in Silesia. Monsignor Żongołłowicz,<sup>1</sup> the vice-rector, spoke third. He talked about love of our Polish Fatherland. This was an apotheosis of Poland presented in a rhetorical, poetic style.

It was interesting that I had been invited to participate in this celebration. When Żeligowski and Piłsudski were mentioned, the invited guests applauded, expressing their satisfaction and approval. A representative from the League of Nations, Major Uzquiano,<sup>2</sup> a Spaniard, was also present. It was apparent that he felt trapped. In his speech, the Rector also mentioned the League of Nations and made some critical remarks. It is a good thing that the Spaniard did not understand them; otherwise, he would have been insulted.

I became acquainted with Mr. Uzquiano a long time ago. He is a very pleasant person and a devout Catholic. I learned that whenever he can, he attends Mass and receives Holy Communion at nine o'clock at St. Casimir's Chapel in the Cathedral. He knows Russian, French, English, German, and also, I think, Italian. He appeared to me quite well-acquainted with the situation here. He promised to bring me a letter from the Nuncio Monsignor Ratti<sup>3</sup> tomorrow at seven in the evening.

Some parts of the city had been decorated. Quite early in the morning I had seen a militiaman walking around and ordering the watchmen to raise Polish flags.

## ***March 20***

I celebrated the main Mass at the Cathedral. It is Palm Sunday. As I was leaving the church, I could see some ladies urging the women who

---

1 Bronislaw Żongołłowicz was also Dean of the Department of Theology.

2 A member of the international Military Control Commission set up by the League of Nations to ensure that the cease-fire agreement between Poland and Lithuania was not violated.

3 Ratti was now Archbishop and Nuncio to Poland. The French title *monseigneur* is used for bishops and higher clergy in Europe.



were coming out to attend a political meeting. Then I saw a group of people, mostly women but a good number of men as well, gathered in front of the Cathedral. One of the men had climbed onto a monument and was addressing and organizing the gathering. The crowd was not very large. It turned out that this was a meeting of women protesting against Colonel Chardigny<sup>1</sup> for not allowing the women to vote during the plebiscite.<sup>2</sup> The meeting did not appear very successful.

During the afternoon services at the Cathedral I preached on the Passion of Jesus. The Cathedral was full of people, just as it had been during all the sermons on the Passion. The people must like these sermons. It seems that this is what they want to hear, since they have had enough sermons on political and ethnic topics. Whoever wants politics can go to a political meeting. The people are happy to get a respite, in church at least, to hear the Word of God, to calm down and turn inward to meditate on their eternal salvation.

Major Uzquiano came at seven in the evening and brought Monsignor Ratti's letter. I spoke with him for more than an hour. It turned out that he had discussed my position here and the situation in the diocese with Monsignor Ratti.

I learned a few things from Mr. Uzquiano. The "endeks" are conducting a campaign against me on all fronts. Mr. Szymon Meysztowicz, a landowner from Panevežys, had approached Uzquiano to ask his help in removing me from Vilnius through the Spanish Embassy at the Vatican. Naturally, Uzquiano did not agree to this. Mr. Meysztowicz had also gone to Warsaw several times to see the Nuncio. He is also preparing to go to Rome. I responded: "Then he is my friend, and what he is doing is really for my good. I was very reluctant to come to Vilnius. I did what I could not to be appointed here, but my efforts were unsuccessful. I came because the Holy Father ordered and pressed me to do so, and I will gladly leave as soon as the Holy Father gives the word." Uzquiano affirmed: "I

---

1 Auguste Chardigny was head of the Military Control Commission.

2 Probably a reference to the proposed plebiscite in Vilnius and the surrounding area. Poland and Lithuania could not agree about it, so it never took place.

know that this is true. Archbishop Ratti told me about it.”

“Sir,” I went on, “kindly ask those who are carrying on this campaign against me to point out the facts and instances where I have been at fault. It would be very useful for me to know this.” He replied: “They are criticizing you because there is no Polish auxiliary bishop as yet.” “But that is not my fault,” I explained. “I have made every effort to have one appointed. However, I learned from Monsignor Ratti that Rome is determined not to appoint any auxiliaries here while the fate of these lands has not yet been finally decided. And I am in full agreement. Perhaps it may be necessary, and it probably will, to divide the diocese.<sup>1</sup> “Monsignor Ratti told me that if an auxiliary is appointed for the Poles, then there should be one for the Belorussians as well. But this is not possible as yet. The fact is that it is not yet clear whether under these conditions it is really necessary to appoint a Belorussian suffragan. Only time will tell.”

Uzquiano then said that they are reproaching me for supporting the Belorussians, thus creating a Belorussian issue. I answered “What am I to do with them? These parts are inhabited mainly by Belorussians: wherever I send a Belorussian he finds himself among his own people. And finally, I am of the opinion that this is how it ought to be: Belorussian clergy should be appointed to Belorussian areas, Polish clergy to Polish areas, and Lithuanian to Lithuanian areas. Quite often I do not even know which priest is Polish and which is Belorussian. They often conceal their Belorussian origin because they are afraid of persecution.”

Mr. Uzquiano mentioned Father Petrovski from Boruny. I told him that he was not hostile to the Poles, that he and the Polish workers had helped the Poles take Vilnius on April 19, 1919. For this he had been honored and rewarded—he received either a medal or a letter of commendation. Under the administration of Witold Abramowicz, this priest had been appreciated, praised, and supported by the government for his work with the Rebirth. Now that the government has changed,

---

<sup>1</sup> According to the new borders, part of the Diocese of Vilnius was within the boundaries of Poland, part within Belorussia, and a considerable section in independent Lithuania. It became an Archdiocese in 1925. In 1926 a separate ecclesiastical province was created for Lithuania.

they regard Father Petrovski in a different light. The Belorussians are no longer supported, but are repressed and persecuted. It is difficult when a bishop has to treat his priests according to the attitudes and whims of various governments: to remove, transfer, and punish them accordingly.

Mr. Uzquiano also mentioned Father Górski, the former Dean of Ašmena and now just the pastor there. I had to explain to him what sort of man this Father Górski was and how all the priests of the deanery had been up in arms and demanded that he be removed from the office of dean. Just as, formerly, Father Górski had gone against Monsignor Michalkiewicz and had written him anonymous letters, so now has he come out against me, accusing me to the General [Mokrzecki] and inciting the people against me and other priests.

Finally, Mr. Uzquiano mentioned Father Abaravičius, the present Dean of Ašmena and pastor of Ziupronys. I replied: "Here too, I cannot see that I have committed such a great crime against the Church or against Polish interests. Father Abaravičius had been Dean of Ašmena under the Russian regime. He had been expelled and persecuted only because he had organized a procession without permission. After all, Ziupronys is in an area populated by Belorussians, and Abaravičius knows Belorussian. He has not supported the Lithuanians. Perhaps in some of his speeches he has irritated the Poles because, as I have heard, he is of Lithuanian orientation. It is difficult to appoint priests according to their political convictions. There has been talk that not only the lay people, but also the clergy have been campaigning against me and spreading false and inappropriate rumors, etc." It turned out that Mr. Uzquiano understood the difficult situation of the bishop in Vilnius very well indeed. When the Bolsheviks took over, almost all the Polish priests fled and large areas of the various deaneries were left without priests. Then I really did have to assign Belorussian and Lithuanian priests because most of them had remained in their places.

Mr. Uzquiano has taken note of the intensity of Polish chauvinism:

they will not even recognize the existence of the Belorussians. The Lithuanian nobles and the polonized gentry especially are noted for their Polish chauvinism. Mr. Uzquiano asked some questions about Bishops Hryniewiecki and Bandurski. He told me that there would be no plebiscite. It is clear to him that Vilnius should belong to the Lithuanians. Then he asked about the Jesuits and said that he had noticed that they too were excessive Polish nationalists. I said that the present Father Superior is somewhat wiser and calmer, but that Father Rudnicki had been greatly at fault regarding nationalism. In his sermons and during the meetings of the St. Casimir Workers' League he would allow agitators to criticize the Bishop of Kaunas, the clergy of Samogitia and incite the crowd against them, etc. I spoke out in praise of Father Muckermann, who served everyone. If only there were more like him.

## ***March 22***

At about nine o'clock in the morning I received a telegram that Monsignor Michalkiewicz<sup>1</sup> is coming home via Baranovichi, Volkovysk, and Lida. I told his servants to prepare his rooms and to go to the station. I asked Chancellor Chalecki to go and meet the Monsignor. Fathers Lewicki and Puciata also went. However, they all missed the Monsignor at the station. At ten o'clock I learned that he had already come home. I immediately went to greet him. I saw that he had a graying beard, but otherwise appeared to be quite well, in good health.

At first, he had been in Mińsk and had stayed with the Bishop [Łoziński]. Afterwards, they had taken him to prison in Moscow. After some time they released him and allowed him to live in the city. He went to stay with a priest near a church among the Georgians. Monsignor Michalkiewicz did not complain that the Bolsheviki had treated him badly either in prison or

---

<sup>1</sup> Michalkiewicz had been arrested by the Bolsheviki April 29, 1920, while attempting to flee from Vilnius to Warsaw.

afterwards. They had behaved humanely. Naturally, prison and exile are not pleasant for anyone. He had communicated with the delegation from Kaunas, but they had failed to gain his release, although they showed concern and made an effort. Miss Wojewódzka, who had come with a Lithuanian mission from Vilnius, had looked after him and Bishop Łoziński.<sup>1</sup> I shall have to reward her for this in some way. Perhaps I can get some mark of recognition for her from the Holy Father.

His Excellency Bishop Łoziński was in prison the whole time. It is believed that he has been released<sup>2</sup> and is returning through Riga. The Bolsheviks were greatly incensed against him. It seems that when the Bolsheviks asked him what his opinion of Communism was and what relations he plans to have with the Communists, he said that he intends to use every possible means to struggle against Communism and Communists. In addition, they were enraged at the patriotic sermon given by the bishop in Mińsk during the services for the Polish delegation. The Bolsheviks called him an enemy of Soviet Russia and especially found fault with his expression that he would fight them with “every possible means.”

Monsignor Michalkiewicz painted the conditions in Russia under Bolshevik rule in very dark colors. I am very happy that he has returned. He will help me in my work and in the administration of the diocese.<sup>3</sup> Thank God that he is in good health. I was afraid that his health would not hold out.

### ***March 24***

Holy Thursday. I conducted the services at the Cathedral.

### ***March 26***

---

1 Bishop Łoziński was arrested by the Bolsheviks on October 4, 1920, and imprisoned in Moscow.

2 After signing the Treaty of Riga, the Poles and the Soviets exchanged prisoners of war. Bishop Łoziński was released to Poland, and from there by a circuitous route returned to his own Diocese of Mińsk.

3 In 1922 Bishop Matulaitis requested Rome to appoint Michalkiewicz auxiliary bishop. Matulaitis consecrated him in June of 1923.

The priests were here to wish me a happy Easter. At eight in the evening I celebrated the Resurrection Mass at the Cathedral.

### ***March 27***

I celebrated Mass at the Cathedral. Then I paid formal visits to the more prominent government officials: Mr. Raczkiewicz, Representative of the Republic of Poland; General Żeligowski, Commander-in-Chief and highest authority; General Mokrzecki, President of Central Lithuania; Mr. Bańkowski, Mayor of Vilnius; Dr. Siedlecki, Rector of the University—and others.

### ***March 28***

I visited the sisters' convents. Just as I was coming home, Count Stanisław de Moriez arrived to see me. He started speaking Polish, but very badly. I asked him if he were French, and he answered that he was. We then conversed in French.

I gathered that he was a staunch supporter of the Poles. He asked me to be an honorary member or chairman of a committee to honor Napoleon here in Vilnius.<sup>1</sup> I consented. He inquired about the situation in the country, and I explained many things to him. He was looking at the situation as the Poles had presented it to him in Warsaw and here in Vilnius. He accused the Lithuanians of being Bolsheviks or, at least, of sympathizing with the Bolsheviks. "Where is this Bolshevism found in Lithuania?" I asked him. "There is no sign of it in the army. That is clear from the occasions the Lithuanian troops fought the Bolshevik army in Vilnius and at the front."<sup>2</sup> The peasants cannot be Communists because

---

<sup>1</sup> On his way to Moscow, Napoleon passed through Vilnius in June 1812 and stayed three weeks at the former bishop's residence. He also stopped in Vilnius with his army on the way back from his disastrous Russian campaign. The Poles were planning to rename the building in Napoleon's honor and put up a memorial plaque.

<sup>2</sup> The Lithuanian army and the people opposed the Bolshevik takeover of Vilnius. They fought against the Red Army until it was forced to retreat from Lithuanian soil on August 25, 1919.

they want to own their land. There are hardly any industrial or urban workers in Lithuania. There may be some Communists among the Jews, the Bundists.<sup>1</sup> As for Lithuanian Communists, there are some young dreamers. But even these are not numerous.”

He asked me if I thought that in Vilnius and the surrounding countryside the people would be up in arms against the Lithuanians if the League of Nations were to order Żeligowski’s army to withdraw and turn this territory over to the Lithuanians. I answered that in the villages they will not rise up because the common people are hostile to the Polish troops and perhaps even to Polish rule in general. They would much rather have the Lithuanians. The villagers want peace and quiet, law, and order. Once and for all, they want to live in peace and an end to their poverty and the wrongs and cruelties they suffer. As for the city of Vilnius, who will oppose the Lithuanians here? Not the Jews, nor the Russians, nor the Belorussians. The common people are hungry for bread, but also for jobs and for peace. Some troublemakers and agitators may emerge, but they are not dangerous.

He also spoke about a federation. I said that the Lithuanians do not want one and that it cannot be imposed by force. Let them first divide up the land, establish law and order. Then the parliaments can determine relations with neighboring countries.

## **March 29**

The 25th of this month was the Belorussian national holiday—the third anniversary of the day when the nation’s representatives in Mińsk proclaimed the independence of Belorussia.<sup>2</sup> They are celebrating today.<sup>3</sup> I found out that Father Stankievich preached a sermon in Belorussian during their Mass at the Church of the Bonifratres. After Mass they sang a Belorussian hymn: “O My God, I Believe in You.”<sup>4</sup> I had asked them not to give the sermon in Belorussian so as not to

---

1 From the German “Bund”: an association of Jewish workers that became a political party active in Lithuania, Poland, and Russia in the late 19th and early 20th centuries.

2 On March 25, 1918, the Belorussian National Council convened in Mińsk and declared Belorussia an independent republic. They had no time to organize a working government before they were attacked and invaded by the Red Army. January 1, 1919, the Belorussian Soviet Socialist Republic was created, while the democratic government sought and received asylum in Kaunas.

3 Probably because March 25th fell on Good Friday that year.

4 In Belorussian the title was: *O Mój Boże, vieru Tobie.*

antagonize the Poles. Now I suspect that we will have an unpleasant reaction on the part of the Poles.

At 6:30 in the evening two of the members of the Military Control Commission created by the League of Nations paid me a visit: Colonel Chardigny, the Frenchman, and Nase, the Belgian. For an hour and a half we discussed the situation here and the allocation of those lands that would bring about peace in the area. I shall record all my conversations with the representatives of the League of Nations under separate cover.<sup>1</sup>

Mr. Jonynas<sup>2</sup> came to see me yesterday. From my earlier conversations with the League of Nations delegates, I gathered that it is quite certain that they do not intend to give Lida and Gardinas<sup>3</sup> to the Lithuanians. Consequently, the Lithuanians should determine their border in advance, an absolutely minimal one on which they would make no further concessions. I expressed my opinion to Mr. Jonynas in these terms: "I do not understand why we should at all costs demand to have both Gardinas and Lida.<sup>4</sup> These areas have become thoroughly Belorussian, and we will not be able to make them Lithuanian again.<sup>5</sup> On the contrary, if they are joined with Vilnius, they will exert a Belorussian influence. Then too a time will come when Russians and Belorussians will make every effort to regain Gardinas and Lida and, in tearing these cities away from Lithuania, may detach other territory as well, especially those areas where both the Lithuanian and Belorussian languages are used. It is better to be satisfied with a smaller, but more homogenous Lithuania, one which would include fewer foreign elements. Thus, we ought to be content with the following border: Oze-Ratyncia-Druskininkai (which are within our diocese), then Pariecia-Rodunia-Bastunai; after that, leaving aside the Grodno-Lida-Mołodeczno railway line, go on up to Asmena and Lake Medziol. Here the Lithuanian ethnic element is relatively strong, and that part which has become Belorussian can readily recover its Lithuanian identity. Thus,

1 Aside from what is mentioned in this Journal, such a record has not been found.

2 Ignas Jonynas (1884-1954): a Lithuanian history professor. He officially represented and acted on behalf of the government of independent Lithuania in Vilnius while the city belonged to Poland.

3 At this time both Lida and Gardinas, cities in the south, were on the contested border between Lithuania and Belorussia. Poland was also interested in acquiring these cities; at this time they were occupied by the Polish Army.

4 According to the Treaty of Moscow signed on July 12, 1920, by both Lithuania and Soviet Russia, these cities were allocated to Lithuania. That is why some of the Lithuanian politicians were insisting that they be retained. In fact, both were already occupied by the Polish Army and remained under Polish control until WW II.

5 Historically, Gardinas and Lida (*Grodno and Lida* in Belorussian) had belonged to Lithuania for centuries and had close historic ties to Lithuania proper. However, demographic and ethnic changes had made these areas predominantly Belorussian.



Lithuania would, it is hoped, become a more unified nation. The city of Vilnius would easily revert back to its Lithuanian origins. Then our neighbors would no longer have any pretext to quarrel with us. It would be best if the Lithuanians declared the territory to the south, east, and north of this line as Belorussia and let the Belorussians themselves decide whom they want as allies. However, it should be noted that this is not Polish territory.”

Then I said: “If, up until now the Lithuanians have demanded wider borders, this perhaps may not have been a mistake—it gave them a basis for negotiation. And, after all, we were doing this at the request of the Belorussians, who wanted as few of their people as possible to come under Polish rule. Now, however, we must demand only that which is wise, just and well-considered as well as what we can realistically hope to obtain. We can help the Belorussians get what they want in other ways.”

Mr. Jonynas asked me to send him some knowledgeable priests to help determine this minimal border line. I entrusted Canon Kukta with the task. This afternoon they met at Mr. Biržiška’s and with Mr. Jonynas, Canon Kukta, Fathers Kraujalis, Zajančkauskas,<sup>1</sup> and Kriščiukaitis<sup>2</sup> discussed the matter.

At nine o’clock in the evening Father Kukta and I went to the Biržiškases’—we had been invited. We found Mr. Wróblewski there already. He is getting ready to go to Kaunas at the invitation of the Lithuanians and then, perhaps, to Brussels to negotiate with the Poles. His sympathies are with the Lithuanians. I gave Mr. Biržiška the more significant information gathered from my talks with the League of Nations’ representatives.

### ***March 30***

Father Labukas,<sup>3</sup> a curate from Svenčionys, asked me to let him go abroad to continue his studies. I said that, if possible, I would let him

---

1 Vincentas Zajančkauskas (1864-1956): a Lithuanian priest engaged in pastoral work in Vilnius since 1912, also an educator active in various Lithuanian organizations.

2 Jonas Kriščiukaitis (1866-1946): A Lithuanian priest who joined the Marians in 1918. From 1920 to 1925 he lived in Vilnius and was Bishop Matulaitis’s personal secretary.

3 Juozapas Matulaitis-Labukas (1894-1979): completed Vilnius Seminary in 1918, ordained by Matulaitis. In 1922, he went to study in Germany and Switzerland. Served as Chancellor and Vicar General in the Kaišiadorys Diocese. Under the Soviets spent nine years in Siberia (1946-55). On his return, taught at the Kaunas Seminary. In 1965, while attending Vatican II, he was consecrated bishop in Rome.

go in the fall. I too am anxious to have as many educated, good, and decent priests as possible.

In Svenčionys they have had some trouble over the Lithuanian preparatory school.<sup>1</sup> The Poles wanted to evict them from the building, but they managed to hold on. However, they have to have classes from four to nine in the evening. This is very difficult and inconvenient for the children. There is talk that people have been robbed, terrorized, and harassed by the Polish soldiers.<sup>2</sup> The poverty is appalling. Some of the farmers do not have enough seed to sow their fields. The people are noticeably depressed and filled with despair as the situation continues and there is no change. They do not have the heart to work. If you work and toil, they say, it is all for nothing — they come and take everything away. Generally speaking, the people do not want the Poles and are sorry that the Lithuanians have gone.

Mr. Jonynas was here in the evening to take some letters to Kaunas. I told him about my conversation with Chardigny and Nase, the representatives of the League of Nations. The League is of the opinion that the confused and complicated problems in this area cannot be solved without Russia. Apparently, they want to wait until Russia recoups and recovers. In the meantime, they are looking for other ways to solve the problems, at least temporarily, so that the local people would calm down somewhat.

The treaty concluded by the Poles in Riga, although it was only with the Bolshevik Party and not with Russia as such, will still have to be registered by the League of Nations. According to this treaty it is impossible to take Belorussian lands away from Poland because then, ostensibly, it will be necessary to return them to the Bolsheviks. Some sort of arrangement must be made. The Poles can govern them for a time, except for the territory that will go to the Lithuanians. The question is: how much will go to the Lithuanians?

Furthermore, there is the problem of nationalities. Should Polish

---

<sup>1</sup> Opened in January 1919 while the Lithuanians were in power here. The school prepared students for high school. The town of Svenčionys, in eastern Lithuania, was predominantly Lithuanian, and the people were very patriotic.

<sup>2</sup> Żeligowski's troops occupied the town in October of 1920. They terrorized the people to such an extent that they wrote to Piłsudski to stop the persecution and also sent a delegation.

be introduced as a state language in addition to Lithuanian? Perhaps a system of cantons might work? I can see that what they are afraid of is that the Belorussian issue will be raised and a Belorussian state created. I am convinced that the Lithuanians will have to be satisfied with more limited borders, acknowledging that Vilnius and the surrounding area belong to the Lithuanians.

Mr. Jonynas told me that Polish women had attacked and insulted Colonel Chardigny allegedly because he would not let them vote in the plebiscite. Yesterday evening the women had surrounded him at the George Restaurant, but he had shaken them off there. This morning at the railway station they threw rotten eggs at the Colonel. He was forced to return to his railroad car to change. The women had prepared for this action in advance. I had heard about this plan four days ago. A little while ago the women students held a meeting about this matter. On Palm Sunday there was a women's demonstration against the League of Nations in the Cathedral square. The Poles are not happy with the work of the League of Nations' representatives here in Vilnius because they will not permit the Poles to do as they wish and intervene in various matters. The Poles wanted to frighten the League of Nations' people out of Vilnius. They threatened to chase them to Varena. It is surmised that all this was planned in Warsaw—and by the leftists, supporters of Piłsudski at that; while here in Vilnius, it was carried out with the help of right-wing politicians.

After the incident, Raczkiewicz, the Representative of Poland, General Mokrzecki, and the Rector of the University (since women students had been involved) called on Chardigny to apologize. However, Polish society on the whole was pleased with this action taken by the women.

### ***March 31***

Father Abaravičius, the Dean of Ašmena and pastor of Ziupronys, came to see me. It seems that sixteen years ago, now almost seventeen, he was pastor and Dean at Ašmena. He was expelled by

the Russians because of a religious procession he had organized without permission.<sup>1</sup>

He reported that Father Górski, pastor of Asmena, has not stopped his campaign against him and some other priests, particularly Lithuanians and Belorussians. He is not only complaining to the officers and informing the police, but now he is inciting the people against their bishop. The peasants reported this to the Dean at Ziupronys. I told him to get some genuine witnesses, to swear them in, and to question them in the presence of another priest and send me the depositions so that I can have Father Górski tried in court. On behalf of the priests, the Dean requested that I remove Father Górski from Ašmena entirely. He showed me a secret police document obtained from an acquaintance in which there are various accusations against certain Belorussian and Lithuanian priests. He suspects that these priests have been informed on by Father Górski. I answered that such action cannot be taken. The generals are protecting him and will not allow him to be removed from Asmena. As it is, I have had to send my chancellor to the government with documents (the appeals sent by the priests) to prove that I had not removed him from the office of dean without cause. I said: "If you have any real evidence and witnesses against Górski, send them to me and I will take him to court, for only an ecclesiastical tribunal can dismiss him from Ašmena."

I asked Abaravičius whether the national consciousness of the Belorussians is, in fact, getting stronger in the Ašmena district. He said that it was and that the repression by the Polish government is hastening the rise of Belorussian consciousness. There are now villages where the people maintain Belorussian schools with their own funds. The latest action taken by the Polish government, that is, closing the Belorussian teachers' college in Boruny, has strongly aroused national consciousness of the peasants. As usual, repression gives rise to resistance.

---

<sup>1</sup> The events referred to occurred in the spring or summer of 1905 during the Czarist regime. The area had a history of opposition to Russian rule. Current tensions and conflicts were due to the fact that it had recently been occupied by the Polish Army.

I also requested him to tell the Belorussian priests to keep calm and to restrain the hotheads since the Poles might arrest and deport them, now that a different wind is blowing in government. I received a document<sup>1</sup> from General Mokrzecki incriminating Belorussian priests, especially Fr. Petrovski of Boruny, who was accused of collaborating with the Bolsheviks (although he was arrested and jailed in Lyda for a couple of weeks, I think). In the written message I was given to understand that I should remove these priests. I gave Mokrzecki's letter to Father Abaravičius so that he and Father Petrovski could give an appropriate answer which I could then forward to the General.

The Belorussian question is becoming more acute and is making itself felt ever more forcefully. Apparently, more and more priests are turning up who consider themselves Belorussian. The government will not succeed in stifling this Belorussian movement.

Just as I had anticipated, there is a commotion, especially among the "endeks," on account of the Belorussian sermon preached by Father Stankevich at the Bonifratres Church. The newspaper *Rzeczpospolita* even published a formal complaint to the ecclesiastical authorities: "Why is the Church being belorussified?" Father Chalecki reported that agitation against me is going on because of this. But I did not know that there would be a sermon, so how am I at fault? Last year there was even a delegation of Belorussians to see me, asking me to allow them to have a Belorussian sermon during the services. At that time I explained to them that this is not possible under present circumstances. The Poles might incite the common people against them because of it, and a great deal of commotion and unpleasantness would result. They obeyed me and there was no Belorussian sermon. But this year they had the sermon without asking permission. In itself there is nothing wrong with this. In most Catholic countries no one would find fault with it. They would probably be happy that the Belorussians too are worshipping God in their own

---

<sup>1</sup> The document was in Polish entitled *Dla wiadomości i ewentualnego wykonania*, meaning: "Facts to be acted upon in due time."

language and are drawing closer to the Church like little children around their own mother. But in Vilnius things are different; here the atmosphere is unhealthy. Here, other nations and languages other than Polish are hated. The introduction of the Belorussian language into the Church is considered a danger that would draw Catholics away from the Catholic Church (actually, away from polonism). I asked Father Chalecki to invite Father Zajančkauskas, the rector of the Bonifratres Church, to report on what really happened and to publish it in the newspapers.

After a little while Monsignor Michalkiewicz came to warn me that already a campaign against me was under way in the city because of the sermon. Some of the old women might come and smash my windows or pelt me with rotten eggs as they had done to Colonel Chardigny. "What can I do?" I replied. "If they break the windows, I shall cover them up with plywood. If they throw eggs at me, I shall wash them off." After all, Father Stankevich gave that sermon without my permission or my knowledge.

On this occasion I told him how in other Catholic countries all national minorities are under the care of the bishops as, for example, in America, Switzerland, and even in much-reviled Germany. If there is a small group of Catholics, be they Italians, Englishmen, or Poles, every effort is made to find suitable priests of their own nationality for them. A special time is given them for services in the churches, and the bishops even provide money from their treasuries to help finance these arrangements. Monsignor Michalkiewicz admitted that this is so and that this is the way it should be, but here in Vilnius one cannot do so. I said: "And I am also aware that under the present circumstances it is truly impossible, but the time will come when it will be necessary to do this in order to satisfy everyone's just demands." Father Michalkiewicz planned to go to the troublemakers' den to calm them and make them quiet down. *O tempora, o mores!* (What times, what customs!)

Later on Father Zajančkauskas came in to relate what really happened. He promised to prepare a text with the chancellor and give it to the newspaper *Rzeczpospolita* so that the troublemakers would calm down. I intended to go and reprimand Father Stankevich

because, knowing the mood of the people of Vilnius and the prejudice against the Belorussian language being used in church and also the tense political situation, he had jumped in with his sermon. Thank God that everything is quieting down somewhat.

Father Możejko from Silenai was here to ask me what he should do. On Palm Sunday armed soldiers had gathered around the church and started rounding up young men, supposedly to join the army. Tumult and confusion broke out. The terrified people had come running in to ask him what to do. On the spur of the moment he told them: “Don’t you know yourselves what you should do?” The people understood, disarmed the soldiers and brought the weapons to the priest, who took them for safekeeping, intending to send them to the authorities in Maišiagala. That night the commander from Maisiagala rode in with a group of armed soldiers to recover the rifles. They threatened the priest. The pastor said that the young men are being rounded up on purpose—supposedly for the army, but actually to extort ransom money. In fact, they are released upon payment of several thousand marks. The young men are afraid of being seen in public and do not even come to church. Similar incidents had occurred in Dukštai, where Father Zakarowski is pastor. The soldiers and militiamen were rounding up the young men right by the church. The commander suspected that Father Możejko might be Lithuanian, since he was inciting the people against the Polish troops. The officer spoke out against several Lithuanian priests: Narusis, pastor of Korviai, Kakarieka, pastor of Maišiagala, and some others.

I advised Możejko to be patient for the time being. If he sees that the soldiers and the police do not stop this outrageous behavior, he should report it in writing, and I will officially present it to the government. I also cautioned him not to come out in direct opposition to the soldiers and militia himself so as not to provoke their revenge.

All the priests have confirmed that the behavior of the soldiers toward the people is outrageous. They often requisition all kinds of supplies without permission or compensation. They have collected almost all the hay and straw from the people, and there are hardly any oats left. They have also caught and slaughtered all the hogs grown for bacon. Incidents have been reported of soldiers robbing people at gunpoint and even several cases of murder. Many priests have

complained that the soldiers have raped women and girls wherever they happened to find them. There is an atrocious lack of discipline, and there is terrible immorality amongst the soldiers—especially the Ulans and other cavalry. Almost everywhere the soldiers have torn down fences and burned them for fuel, and they have done the same with some of the houses. The land is ravaged. Stories of various atrocities and cruelties are circulating. The war is demoralizing the people and destroying the country.

Father Zienkiewicz rector of St. Stephen's, came to see me about the associations and institutions of the *Powściągliwość i Praca*.<sup>1</sup> This organization had been founded by Father Dyakowski, now deceased, when he was curate at the Gate of Dawn Shrine. When he became rector of St. Stephen's, he had a building erected on the church grounds to house the various charities conducted by the organization. Then Dyakowski became pastor of All Saints' Church, while the late Father Kiersnowski was appointed rector of St. Stephen's. However, Dyakowski was still in charge of the organization. When the Bolsheviks arrived in Vilnius, Father Dyakowski fled. The Bolsheviks arrested him near Gardinas. When his guards fell asleep, he killed one with an axe and mortally wounded the other. Then he took cover. However, the people found him and, fearing retribution, turned him over to the Bolsheviks. They put him in prison and later tried him. It is assumed that he was executed.

The organization was then left without a leader. Under the Bolsheviks, Father Łozakiewicz had, at my request, supervised the organization and its work to some extent. At that time Father Zienkiewicz<sup>2</sup> was in charge of the Christian Workers' Unions in place of Father Olszański, who had also fled. When Father Olszański returned, I appointed Father Zienkiewicz curate at the Gate of Dawn Shrine. A delegation of the officers of the organization came to see me twice, I think, asking me to permit Father Zienkiewicz to take charge of the institution, since it was

---

1 An association for young men and women organized in 1898 by Fr. Bronisław Markiewicz (1842-1912), founder of the Congregation of Saint Michael, and dedicated to the promotion of priestly and religious vocations and caring for the poor.

2 Antoni Zienkiewicz: a Belorussian priest ordained in 1911. He was engaged in pastoral and charitable work in Vilnius. In 1922, Bishop Matulaitis appointed him pastor of Druja, where the Belorussian Marians settled and where the Servants of Jesus in the Eucharist, founded by Matulaitis, also had their first convent.



deteriorating and would fall apart completely unless I helped them. It was true that the *Powściągliwość i Praca* orphanage was in a deplorable state. There was almost no food and very few children since many had scattered. The workshops were inactive. And so I appointed Father Zienkiewicz to take charge. He managed to do so very quickly and organized the institution very well. He gave permission for a school to be housed in the building.

The parents, workers, and teachers had constantly complained about Father Dyakowski, and I had a great deal of trouble on that account. There was even an investigation and trial. Now everything has quieted down, and everyone is content. Gradually, the other members of the executive committee who had fled started coming back: Mrs. Romer, the Marshal's wife, Mr. Leon Perkowski, Dr. Moraczewski, and finally Father Songin, pastor of All Saints' Church. These people were not happy with Father Zienkiewicz's nationality nor with his socialist views: ostensibly he believes in the class struggle. They were also very much against Father Tołoczko, who had been teaching the children religion in the schools conducted by the association at the request of Father Dyakowski. The former officers decided to dismiss Father Zienkiewicz and told him so. Then they came and informed me of this decision and asked me to appoint Father Jaleński rector of St. Stephen's and director of the association and its institutions. They made it quite clear that I have no right to interfere in these matters and voiced their complaints against Father Zienkiewicz. I assured them that I do not intend to interfere in the internal affairs of their association, but that the church and the appointment of priests is within my jurisdiction. I have nothing against Father Zienkiewicz's leaving the association, but just now it is difficult for to me to appoint Father Jaleński because he is teaching religion in the schools. It is now the middle of the school year, and there is a shortage of priests. Father Songin can supervise the institution for the time being. My policy is not to interfere with the national loyalties of the priests. If there is a question about Father Zienkiewicz's loyalty to Catholic doctrine as a priest, then it should be pointed out, and I can empower an ecclesiastical court to investigate the matter. That is how we parted.

After that Father Songin came in. He was very excited and agitated, threatening that the organization will close down rather than

have Father Zienkiewicz remain in charge. He accused both Father Tołoczko and Father Zienkiewicz of advocating class struggle and of contaminating the purity of the Catholic Faith. I called in Fathers Tołoczko, Zienkiewicz, and Taškunas,<sup>1</sup> who lives there as well, and discovered that these accusations were untrue. It is a political matter. The “endeks” are afraid of losing control of the organization, and that is why they are making such a fuss.

The former executive committee then presented its demands in writing. Evidently, Father Zienkiewicz had been elected committee chairman. I do not know what nationality he regards himself. Father Songin told me that he considers himself Polish. My own impression of Father Zienkiewicz is that he is a Catholic priest without chauvinistic leanings. He intentionally does not ally himself with any nationality. His views on social matters are rather progressive. He is a decent and ascetic priest.

This conflict was reflected in the press. The teachers, parents, children, and workers at the institution supported Father Zienkiewicz. His opponents did not dare go inside to insult him there. I decided not to interfere in the quarrel although the former director keep pressing me to dismiss Father Zienkiewicz, since they could not regain control otherwise. I told them: “You have your own bylaws and can settle your affairs and disputes accordingly. I have neither the right nor the reason to get involved in the internal affairs of your association.” However, I could see that they were attacking Father Zienkiewicz unjustly, simply because he did not belong to their political party. He had done a good job of reorganizing and directing the institution. He had remained in the city during the most difficult time—during the Bolshevik occupation. It was not right to dismiss him because of someone else’s whim.

Then the old committee, seeing that they were getting nowhere with me, went to various government agencies to complain about Father Zienkiewicz. They were planning to boycott the institution, but have

---

<sup>1</sup> Vincentas Taškunas (1880-1967): Lithuanian priest; completed studies at the Vilnius Seminary, ordained 1904 after studied at the Theological Academy of St. Petersburg. After WW I he lived and worked in Vilnius; he was active in the religious and cultural life of the Lithuanian community and became well known as an educator and editor of religious publications.

not succeeded so far. An investigation was conducted, and everything found in order. As for promoting Polish interests, the institution was even more diligent in this regard than many others. And so, Father Zienkiewicz is still there.

The “endecks” are angry with me, but what am I to do? I cannot disregard justice. Father Zienkiewicz is calling a plenary meeting of the association to take care of various matters and settle this dispute or, if that is impossible, to elect a new executive committee. In any case, it is not those who are trying to take over that actually support and maintain the institution, but rather the government and various charitable organizations.

### *April 1*

Monsignor Bajko came to warn me that things are in a sorry state. Apparently, the old man was upset about the sermon that Father Stankevich had preached in Belorussian. That was the first thing he began to complain about. I calmed him down and told him: “I have not made any changes until now, since I am waiting for more peaceful and stable times. If sermons are being preached in Belorussian in certain places, it is because His Excellency Archbishop Ropp allowed it. His Excellency Bishop Łoziński also introduced the Belorussian language into the churches in Mińsk. As for Father Stankevich, he spoke Belorussian in public without permission.”

For my part, I told him that, while certainly this is not the right time to introduce the Belorussian language into the churches—it would be unwise to do so under the present circumstances, in the future, however, such a step is inevitable. All nations are demanding their rights, and the Belorussians will do so also. No one can stop the rebirth of the Belorussian nation.

The Monsignor then went on to attack Father Zajančauskas, the rector of the Bonifratres Church and also Fathers Tołoczko, Stankevich, and others. He also complained that when preaching, the priests often conclude their sermons only by calling for love of country. They do not direct their sermons toward matters of faith. In general, he berated the clergy, especially those priests who were in parishes just outside the city.

I understood that he had been instructed to say this. I knew that there was some dissatisfaction when, in place of those who had died or fled, I appointed not the “endeks,” but more moderate priests like Bobnis to Rudamina, Žuk to Bukonis, and so on. I had heard that the *Border Guards* had even organized certain watch groups to supervise the priests and to remove them if they do not approve of them. Monsignor Bajko was critical of Fathers Bobnis, Žuk, Kakarieka,<sup>1</sup> and others. Actually, I constantly hear various complaints, but usually the people defend their priests. So far, they have succeeded only in getting Father Linartas out of Nemencine. As much as I could, I did my best to calm the old man down. Truly, the situation in which the Church now finds itself is a very difficult. May God grant that the fate of this land be decided quickly. Then we can begin some serious work.

In the evening Colonel Chardigny and Mr. Nase, the representatives of the League of Nations, visited me again. I expressed my regards and apologized to Colonel Chardigny for the unfortunate attack made on him by the women. We discussed the situation that has developed here. It seems that the League of Nations’ people are now well aware of local conditions. Colonel Chardigny expressed himself very frankly. I shall make a separate note of this conversation.<sup>2</sup>

They expressed their regrets that I have to live in such a difficult atmosphere. While they can pack up and leave, I must stay behind. And, in fact, all the League of Nations’ representatives left this evening by train for Kaunas. They were angry with the Poles. They said that up until now they had been as patient as angels with them, but even patience has its limits. “After what has happened,” they said, “this is no place for us.” They promised to come back from Kaunas to visit me.

General Żeligowski returned from Warsaw that same evening. The Poles organized a rally in his honor at the railway station—to show

---

1 Žuk was Belorussian, while Bobnis and Kakarieka were Lithuanian.

2 There is no evidence of such a record. He probably did not have time to write it, since even the journal entries for 1921 are incomplete.

the League of Nations that they will always be loyal to General Żeligowski.

*April 2*

General Żeligowski and his adjutant Mr. Prystor<sup>1</sup> returned my visit. The latter is Piłsudski's trusted man and Żeligowski's guardian angel. They say that Mr. Prystor runs the whole show here, and the Polish "endeks" make fun of him: they have nicknamed Central Lithuania "Prystoria." Both of them asked me to act as mediator between them and Kaunas. They said that because of the inflexible attitude of the Lithuanian government in Kaunas, many of our supporters are defecting. We are losing ground. They cannot believe that it is impossible to come to an agreement with Kaunas. I answered: "Officially, the Lithuanians cannot and do not wish to negotiate at this time when they have already begun discussing the issues with Warsaw with the mediation of the League of Nations." "Let them negotiate," said Mr. Prystor, "but we can also have our own negotiations at the same time." "I am of the opinion that it is necessary to negotiate and to find some common ground, for after all we shall have to live together," I responded.

As I had promised Mr. Witold Abramowicz, I did try to act as mediator. I spoke with Mr. Jonynas and Mr. Biržiška. Both acknowledged that it would be useful for the representatives of both parties to have discussions alongside the official negotiations. Consequently, the delegates of the Lithuanian Social Democrats and also of the Socialist Populists arrived in Vilnius. Now someone from here should go to Kaunas to return the visit. We also made efforts to invite the delegates of the Christian Democrats to come here, and Father Viskantas worked on it. Mr. Jonynas, who has just gone to Kaunas, took the letters of invitation with him. In this way I am acting as mediator and making every effort to bring these nations that are in conflict to the negotiating table and, I hope, to an agreement. Perhaps when they

---

<sup>1</sup> Aleksander Prystor: a well-known Polish politician delegated by Marshal Piłsudski to supervise political activities in Central Lithuania.

take a good look at each other, they will see that neither is the monster they had imagined.

Then I added: "It seems to me that, first of all, it is necessary to come to a fair decision about the disputed territories, to determine boundaries, and only then to discuss if we should create a federation and how this ought to be done." Jokingly I said: "Let us give the Poles Gardinas and Lida, and they will be satisfied, while whatever is to the north would be considered part of Lithuania." They disagreed, saying that it cannot be done this way because the historical territory of Greater Lithuania must be restored. But the government in Kaunas wants to create an ethnographic Lithuania.

"But what about the Belorussians?" I asked them. "Their country will be divided: the greater part of Belorussia will be in Russia. The Belorussians also want independence and a unified nation. It seems to me that we can no longer be guided by historical precedent. We must now decide national issues according to different principles. Historic Greater Lithuania<sup>1</sup> will hardly satisfy everyone."

They replied that minorities must not be smothered or dominated by larger nations. The fate of these territories cannot be decided without consulting the populace. "Of course, I agree that the rights of minorities must be protected," I replied, "and that the wishes of the people must be taken into account reasonably. But in our lands where at present normal life has been disrupted, where there is oppression and persecution, where the situation is chaotic and people are ignorant or unaware of their national identity, it is very difficult to satisfy everyone." We parted amicably. I promised that I would try, in whatever way I could, to reconcile all and to help them negotiate and discuss the issues with the people in Kaunas. It seems to me that, in addition to the negotiations in Brussels, we have to pave the way for peaceful coexistence right here.

Late in the evening, Father Cibulskis<sup>2</sup> from the United States came

---

<sup>1</sup> Refers to the Union of the Polish Kingdom and the Grand Principality of Lithuania proclaimed in Lublin in 1569.

<sup>2</sup> Pranciskus Cibulskis: a Lithuanian priest of the diocese of Vilnius, ordained in 1908.

<sup>3</sup> Bučys had been sent to the USA by Matulaitis and arrived in 1916 to help the Lithuanian Marians working there since 1913. He worked in several Lithuanian parishes; edited the Lithuanian daily *Drugas*, published in Chicago, until August 1921. Returned to Lithuania; from 1922 to 1928 was professor and head of the Department of Theology at the University of Kaunas. After Matulaitis's death in 1927, he was elected Superior General of the Marian Fathers. Consecrated Bishop in 1930.

to visit me. He brought a letter and some money from Father Bučys.<sup>3</sup> There was \$208.00 in Mass stipends; \$162.00 as a personal gift for me. Father Cibulskis added a donation of \$20.00 from himself to be used at my discretion.

I was overjoyed to get a letter from the Marians in Chicago. Thank God, all are in good health there, only Father Serafinas<sup>1</sup> and a Brother have died. May they rest in peace.

Father Cibulskis came from our diocese and asked if he might return. I answered that he should wait a bit until the situation here is clarified and stabilized. However, we need Lithuanian priests, and I will gladly welcome them.

According to Father Cibulskis, the United States sympathizes with the Germans and is distressed that the French and British are pressing them too hard. The Americans are upset that the European nations are squabbling among themselves instead of working together. The Germans are dead set against the French and even more against the Poles. They are merely biding time until they can rebuild and until the situation changes; then they will ally themselves with the Russians to fight their oppressors. Generally speaking, there is order in Germany and real destitution is not noticeable. However, it is evident that the people are depressed and disheartened. The Germans are angry especially about this Polish Corridor.

---

<sup>1</sup> Pranciskus Serafinas (1871-1920): had been pastor of various Lithuanian parishes in Chicago. He welcomed Matulaitis when he came to Chicago in 1913 to found the Marian Mission. In 1918 he joined the Marians; he died in 1920.

NOTES FROM MOVE  
TO ROME  
1925





## 1925

*The Journal breaks off abruptly after April 2, 1921, and is resumed four years later. The last few entries are written in Rome in the summer of 1925 after Bishop Matulaitis had submitted his resignation from the Diocese of Vilnius to Pope Pius XI. Having received confirmation from Rome that his resignation was accepted, he left Vilnius in mid-July and travelled via Bielany in Warsaw to Ciechocinek, Poland, for a short vacation accompanied by Fr. Jan Sobczyk. While in Ciechocinek, he received an invitation to see the Apostolic Nuncio. He left Ciechocinek and went to Warsaw on the 31st of July. During a short stop in Warsaw, he informed the Cathedral Chapter of Vilnius that he would not be coming back and also sent some farewell notes to his personal friends and aides. He left Warsaw to go to Rome on August 3, 1925. Matulaitis was going to Rome with the idea of staying permanently, founding a house of studies for the Marians as well as transferring the Marian generalate there. On arrival, he records his movements over a three-week period. The Journal stops on the eve of his elevation to titular Archbishop of Aduli, which occurred on September 1. On December 7, 1925 he was appointed apostolic visitor to Lithuania. Later on in December, Matulaitis returned to Lithuania, making no further entries in the Journal.*

### **August 5**

I arrived in Rome just after 12. I am staying with the Resurrectionist Fathers at S. Sebastianello 11. They welcomed me very warmly. I also found Archbishop Cieplak<sup>1</sup> here.

I decided to stay with the Poles so they would not think I am angry with them or do not want to have anything more to do with them. As yet, no one here knows that I have already been released from

---

<sup>1</sup> Jan Cieplak (1857-1926): was known to Matulaitis as a professor at the Theological Academy of St. Petersburg. He had been Archbishop of Mogiliev since 1914. In Dec. of 1925 he was appointed Archbishop of Vilnius; he died in 1926, while visiting the Polish Catholics in the United States.

my duties in Vilnius.

### ***August 6***

I requested an audience with the Holy Father.<sup>1</sup> His Eminence Cardinal Gasparri<sup>2</sup> was away taking a cure at the sulphur springs in Monte Cassino. I saw only His Excellency Bishop Pizzardi<sup>3</sup> and Borgognini-Duca<sup>4</sup> and told them what His Excellency Nuncio Lauri<sup>5</sup> of Warsaw had directed me to do. From both of them I learned that the Polish government had made efforts to transfer me to Częstochowa.<sup>6</sup> But I already knew this from His Excellency Bishop Przeździecki. During the Bishops' Conference on May 29 he had asked me if I would agree to go to Częstochowa.

That same day I visited the Polish Embassy. There I found only Mr. Perłowski.<sup>7</sup> Apparently, it was only from me that he heard about my release from Vilnius by the Holy Father. I assured him that he need not be anxious on any account, for I have no intention of harming the Poles. As a priest, I have tried never to injure anyone. On the contrary, as much as I could, I tried to serve people and to do good. *Vince malum in bono* [Overcome evil with good].<sup>8</sup>

Perłowski said that the Polish government has nothing against me as a priest or as a bishop. On the contrary, in its reports to the Holy See it spoke well of me and tried to get me transferred to Częstochowa. It is only for political reasons that I could not remain in Vilnius. I told him that I understand these reasons very well and wish to live in peace and good will with the Polish people. It was evident

1 Achille Ratti, Pope Pius XI, had been elected on Feb. 6, 1922.

2 Pietro Gasparri (1852-1934): well-known as an expert in Canon Law. He was named Cardinal in 1907, served as Vatican Secretary of State (1914-30).

3 Giuseppe Pizzardo (1877-1970): Undersecretary of State.

4 Francesco Borgognini-Duca: member of the Secretariat of State; in 1929 appointed Nuncio to Italy.

5 Lorenzo Lauri: Nuncio to Poland since 1921.

6 Poland had just concluded its Concordat with the Holy See on Feb. 10, 1925. Vilnius had been made an Archdiocese. Matulaitis knew that he would be unacceptable to the Polish government as Archbishop of Vilnius and hence resigned. Transfer to the newly created Diocese of Częstochowa had been suggested, but he had declined.

7 Jan Perłowski: minister and consultant to the Polish Ambassador.

8 Matulaitis's personal and episcopal motto taken from Rom 12:21.

that this representative of the Polish government was pleased with my visit. He said to the priest who accompanied me: *Szlachetny gest zrobil.* (He has made a noble gesture.)

After this visit I also told the Resurrectionist Fathers that I have been released from my duties in Vilnius. Then I called on some of the more prominent Poles.

### ***August 13***

Today the Holy Father was pleased to receive me. It was a great pleasure for me as well. He said that he had been thinking about giving me and our Congregation some small place to live, but was not able to realize his wish. He told me to see His Eminence Cardinal Pompilji<sup>1</sup> about this matter.

From my conversation with the Holy Father I learned that I had done the right thing in asking to be relieved of my duties. The Polish government would have declared an absolute veto to my being made archbishop. I had also been told this by other people, namely the Resurrectionist Fathers.

The Holy Father granted me two favors that I had requested: 1) During the war I had granted many dispensations and was anxious about whether I had always done right. The Holy Father was pleased to confirm everything and validate *sanare in radice* (to heal at the root) all that I had done as Bishop of Vilnius. 2) He permitted the Marians to settle in Rome.

The Cardinal Vicar was not in Rome. He will return only at the end of October. I was not able to attend to the matter at hand right away.

Some Polish pilgrims were in Rome<sup>2</sup> with Father Taskunas and Bishop Łoziński (of Mińsk). With them I participated at the Mass celebrated by the Holy Father as well as at the audience he gave them. I did all this so that the Poles could see that I am not bitter

---

<sup>1</sup> Basilio Pompilji (b. 1858); became Cardinal in 1911; at this time he was Vicar of the Diocese of Rome.

<sup>2</sup> Pilgrimages were especially popular that year because it was proclaimed a Holy Year by Pope Pius XI. It had begun on Christmas Eve, 1924, and was to end on Christmas Eve, 1925.

toward them. Wherever and whenever possible I spoke in praise of the good that I had experienced in Poland and among the Polish people. May the Lord bless them all and bestow His goodness on them. After all, the injuries that I suffered were not the work of the Polish people, but rather the result of the politics of certain parties. I prayed for them too and resolved to keep praying for them with all my heart.

### *August 21*

I said good-bye to the Resurrectionist Fathers and moved in with the Benedictines near the Basilica of St. Paul to make my retreat. I had been longing to make one. I felt an urgent need to take care of certain matters of conscience and to lay the foundation for a new life.

### *August 21-30*

My retreat went well. I put my conscience in order and was at peace. I received many graces from God. It was quiet. The Benedictines gave such a beautiful example of fervent and devout religious life. I made an effort to absorb more of the spirit of St. Benedict.

My resolutions are as follows:

1) To be ever more thankful to God for all crosses and blessings; to love God more fervently and more intensely; to try to remain in the closest union with God and to trust His Providence completely. O Lord, how good You are! The paths along which You lead us are miraculous. Thank You for everything. Blessed Virgin Mary of the Immaculate Conception, help me to love God!

2) Except for periods of rest, to take care to make the best use of my time—for prayer or for work. Remember that you have come to Rome to learn to live a truly holy religious life. Here in Rome it is especially fitting to work even harder for the glory of God and for the good of the Church.

3) To finish revising the Marian Constitutions and to work on the Instructions as much as I can; to found our own house here in Rome.

4) To devote all my strength, as much as possible, to the Congregation; to seek perfection myself and to help others walk along the way of perfection.

5) To pray more for those from I had experienced any kind of evil.

REPRODUCTION OF TWO PAGES FROM  
BLESSED GEORGE MATULAITIS'  
PERSONAL NOTEBOOK WHICH HE ENTITLED: "THOUGHTS,  
ENLIGHTENMENTS, INSPIRATIONS,  
AND RESOLUTIONS."









# APPENDIXES



## APPENDIX I

*Sermon given in Lithuanian by Bishop Matulaitis on  
the occasion of his installation as Bishop of Vilnius  
December 8, 1918\**

The Holy Father has appointed me Shepherd and Bishop of this honorable Diocese.

For the first time I stand in this holy place with you, my dearly beloved, to speak with you openly and publicly about how we shall live together, how we shall care for the needs of souls, and how we shall discharge our duties. I stand before you as a stranger and therefore, first of all, I ask one thing of you—to regard me as the servant of Christ, who has been given you to show you the way to heaven and to guide you to eternal happiness. From now on we shall live together as one large spiritual family of which I am to be father and head as we move on along our wearisome spiritual journey.

Apparently, you have been anxious to see who your new Shepherd will be. And this is what you may expect and demand of me: “Before God, we are confident of this through Christ: not that we are qualified in ourselves to claim anything as our own work; all our qualifications come from God” (2 Cor 3:4-5).

I shall make every effort to be mediator and intercessor for my flock before God. As I go to the altar to offer holy Mass to our heavenly Father, I shall offer the spotless Lamb of God not only for myself, but for the whole diocese—that the good may be strengthened, that sinners return to God, that the sick and the afflicted be at peace, that the departed receive mercy and be saved.

I shall be your teacher. Diligently and constantly I shall preach the word of God to you. I shall enlighten you so you would know God, Christ, and the Church better. I shall remind you of the laws of God and of the Church. I shall teach you the moral law and shall uproot

---

\* Translated from the Lithuanian text given in the monograph *Archbishop Jurgis Matulaitis*, published by the Marian Fathers in Marijampole, 1933. This text seems to have been reconstructed from Matulaitis's personal notes.

immorality. I shall promote love, justice, temperance, and I shall bring you God's grace in the holy sacraments.

I shall take care to be both father and friend. I shall be the friend of *little children* so that they learn to know God, to pray, to obey, and to lead orderly lives. I shall defend their innocence and guard them from sin and scandal. I shall be the friend of the *poor* and the afflicted. I shall console the destitute and urge the rich to share their bounty. I shall *never turn anyone away*. Living in harmony with everyone, I shall do my best to have love reign among us: that there be no quarrels, no hatred or injury. I wish to be forgiving to those who do evil, a support for the weak, and a refuge for the good.

Momentous duties await me. I shall spare no effort but shall expend all my strength to fulfill them. I shall take care, like Christ, to look after you, to be everything to you. I am prepared to lay down my life for the truth. I want nothing more, but to be your father and shepherd, a disciple of Christ. My field of endeavor—the kingdom of Christ (the Church militant); my party—Christ. I trust that God's grace will be with me and will properly order my every step.

What can I expect of you? If from now on we are to be one large family, then we must work together. I shall pray for you, and you must pray for me. This I ask of you most fervently. Ask God to enlighten me, to strengthen me, and to help me in my work. Your duty—to open your hearts to the word of God: “Anyone who listens to you, listens to me” (Lk 10:16). Open your hearts to me!

It is true that my duties are difficult, but I am full of hope that God will help me fulfill them. I greet all of you in the name of God, our *Father*, who in His Providence has given me this Diocese; in the name of *Jesus Christ*, by whose grace I have been sent here; and in the name of the *Holy Spirit*, given to us to dwell within us and make us children of God. I greet all of you who are gathered here and also those who are at home, both the just and the sinners. I come to you with love and, therefore, have no doubt that you will return love for love. May the most tender Heart of Jesus unite us all so that all our desires and efforts be for the glory of God.

Holy Immaculately Conceived Mother of God who shine out from the Gate of Dawn, protect and care for us! I entrust myself and my fold to you. Grant that war may end and peace return! That hatred be banished and universal love reign! Reconcile us with your Son so that we may be happy forever in heaven. Amen.

## APPENDIX II

FIRST PASTORAL LETTER, 1919\*

JURGIS MATULEVIČIUS\*\*

BY THE GRACE OF GOD AND OF THE HOLY SEE

BISHOP OF VILNIUS

Praised be Jesus Christ!

Dear Catholics of Vilnius,

My duty as Shepherd compels me to say a few heartfelt words to you about the events of the last several days.\*\*\*

Without question, you are being wrongfully deprived of your rights. You have the right to demand freedom of speech, of the press, of holding public meetings and belonging to whatever associations you choose. You, the workers, have the right to organize, to demand and try to obtain by fighting for those social conditions in which you can live as human beings and as Christians. You also have the right to ask for the help of those persons you consider suitable and trustworthy. As Catholics, you have the right to demand freedom of conscience: that your convictions and your faith be respected, that your churches not be desecrated and profaned. You have the right and the duty to demand that your children be educated according to the principles of the Catholic Faith and that religious instruction not be banned in the schools. You have both the right and the duty to defend your Church.

It is very true that in the past, during times of persecution and oppression in our country, when our churches were closed and confiscated, when priests were imprisoned or exiled to Siberia, you,

---

\* This and the following pastoral letter were translated directly from the Lithuanian texts as given in the monograph: Arkivyskupas Jurgis Matulevičius, Marijampole, 1933.

\*\* He used the polonized form of his last name.

\*\*\* Early in February the Bolsheviks had closed down all non-Communist newspapers and forbidden public meetings. On Feb. 9-12 occurred the siege of St. Casimir's Church, ending in the arrest of Father Muckermann, SJ, founder of St. Casimir's Christian Workers' League.

Catholics were always faithful to the teaching of Christ and bravely defended it. Therefore, I commend you, our faithful Catholic people! I trust in the Lord that in this difficult time you will also bravely adhere to your faith and will be faithful. However, in fighting for your rights and convictions, remember that you must do this under the guidance of the Spirit of Christ.

“But be brave: I have conquered the world” (Jn 16:33), says Jesus Christ. How has He done so? With what weapons? This is how: by the power of His Spirit, His sacrifice, His passion and death and by the power of His love. Those weapons of Christ must be your defense as well. Make sure that no one causes you to lose your patience; do not let yourselves be provoked. Be careful not to let anyone press you into acting in a manner that is not fitting for a Christian and a Catholic. Do not forget: you are the heirs of those Christians who, during the early centuries of Christendom when great persecutions were raging, often had to shed their own blood, but never shed that of others. Unable to profess their beliefs openly, they went underground—into the catacombs. They were exiled from their homeland, condemned to hard labor, thrown to wild animals, but they never used inappropriate weapons against their persecutors. Yet their faithfulness raised the standard of the cross by the power of their patience and love.

And you too must move forward courageously, fighting for a better and happier future, clad in the armour of unity and solidarity, armed with faith and love. God will help you to bear everything and to overcome. Wherever you can, be diligent in your struggle against evil, opposing it with that which is just and good, as Holy Scripture bids us. Be on your guard to avoid scandals that are being spread among the people. Defend yourselves against them, but be compassionate towards those who have strayed and do not stop loving them. Respect one another. Do not stop doing good to one another. Each one of you must continue to keep peace and tranquillity in your heart. Each one must try to be reconciled with the other, directing him toward peace. Everyone must be diligent to do whatever promotes peace among the citizens so that you will have a part in Christ’s blessing: “Blessed are the peacemakers; they shall be called the children of God” (Mt 5:9).

Having urged the Catholic people to do everything to keep the peace, with a sincere request I also address those who are not Christians and

those who hold opposing views. Respect our religious convictions, our holy places. Allow us freedom of religion, freedom for our Church, our organizations, our Catholic activities. Try to influence those of your faith and convictions to contribute toward the peace of the entire community, toward a harmonious life together. All the citizens should take note of the importance of this moment in history, of the growing difficulty of current living conditions with rising prices and the threat of starvation. Leaving aside our differences, we must work together for the good of all and especially to hasten to help the poorest of the poor who are in danger of dying of starvation.

May truth and justice, real love and peace reign in your hearts, in your families, in our city, and in the entire country.

Given in Vilnius: February 16, 1919





# APPENDIX III

PASTORAL LETTER OF 1923

JURGIS MATULEVIČIUS  
BY THE GRACE OF GOD AND OF THE HOLY SEE  
BISHOP OF VILNIUS

My greetings and blessing to all the clergy of the Diocese  
and to all the faithful.

Beloved in Christ,

I have just come back from the Holy Father—from Rome, where, according to an old tradition and as required by the Church, I have been to honor the relics of Saints Peter and Paul and to report to the Holy Father on the state of our Diocese.\* I have returned with a heart full of love for the Holy See and with a firm belief that it has been created and given to us by God. It is also my unshakeable conviction that the “gates of hell” will not prevail against it. I want to share these feelings and these convictions with all of you, my beloved in Christ; I hope to awaken and strengthen similar convictions in your souls as well.

Christ said to St. Peter: “You are Peter and on this rock I will build my Church. And the gates of the underworld can never hold out against it” (Mt 16:18). These words, it seems, have never been so clear and so understandable as at the present time. Do we not see with our own eyes how the gates of the underworld are attacking the Rock of Peter: by sowing perverse opinions, spreading corruption, promoting selfishness

---

\* This was his “ad limina” visit, which took place in June of 1923. The letter is dated Sept. 8, 1923.

and pride, and also by closing down churches, imprisoning bishops and priests, and persecuting the faithful — even to the point of killing and torturing them, just as during the first centuries of Christianity? Do we not see as well how these waves of deceit and corruption are dissipated as they crash against the supernatural power of the Rock of Peter? A breath of peace wafts up from the Holy See. What divine power emanates from it; how it touches the souls of men ever more deeply. Nowhere is this more profoundly felt than at the tomb of St. Peter and at the throne of his successor.

The Basilica of St. Peter is incomparably beautiful, and the Vatican is magnificent. But it is not the size of its walls, nor the purity of the exhibited marbles, nor yet the splendor of its paintings and works of art that comprise its value and power! The Basilica of St. Peter contains the Blessed Sacrament—Jesus himself; under the Basilica is a small chapel with the relics of St. Peter. In this consists the glory of the Basilica, its value and splendor! In the many rooms of the Vatican where the works of the greatest artists are kept also lives the Bishop of Bishops, a white-robed old man—or so he appears to earthly eyes—a weak prisoner\*, he is the soul of the Vatican and its glory, for he is the head of all the faithful on earth. Between this white-robed old man, Our Lord Jesus Christ in the Blessed Sacrament, and St. Peter under the Basilica exists an indissoluble bond and a continual closeness. That old man is the vicar of Christ on earth, the true successor of St. Peter. Through him Jesus Christ himself governs us, teaches us, and guides us toward salvation. St. Peter lives on in him and fulfills the duties entrusted to him by Christ.

“The gates of hell shall not prevail against it.” The pagan world looking at St. Peter crucified most probably laughed at these words of Christ. And today, the world, looking at the old man in the Vatican deprived of his earthly throne and of his armed forces, sometimes says that the rule of the popes has come to an end.\*\* And even the faithful who see how the waves of infernal corruption, originating either in the enemies of the Church or in her own wayward children and crashing against the Rock of

---

\* After September 1870, when King Victor Emmanuel II seized the Papal States during the reign of Pius IX, he and the following popes—Leo XIII, Pius X, Benedict XV—refused to leave Vatican City in protest and thus were called “prisoners of the Vatican.”

\*\* On October 28, 1922, the Italian army led by Mussolini marched into Rome, demonstrating that the city belonged to the Italian Government. Pope Pius XI finally resolved the controversy by giving up the last vestiges of civil authority. The Vatican became a sovereign State when the Lateran Pacts were concluded on February 11, 1929.

St. Peter, have doubts about whether the Holy See really has supernatural power. What superficial views on the one hand and what weak faith on the other! No! The gates of hell have not and will not prevail. It has been built up and is supported not by the hand of man but by that of Jesus Christ. A house not built on a firm and steadfast foundation has to fall; a ship without a navigator becomes a toy of the waves; an army facing the enemy without a commander must retreat; human society without government must fall apart. Christ, when he founded his kingdom on earth—the holy Catholic Church—that most numerous and most perfect human society which embraces all people of all times, all nations and countries, knew that he must give it a powerful arm to unite all men, a heart that cares for all, and a head that rules all. That is why he left us the Pope here on earth.

Thus, from among the twelve apostles Christ consistently and publicly singles out one—Simon. He alone has his name changed to Peter—the Rock; Jesus pays the required tax for both of them; from his boat Jesus preaches to the crowds. In this manner for three years He prepares Peter to lead the Church. Giving him the keys to the kingdom of heaven, He says: “You are Peter and on this rock I will build my Church. And the gates of the underworld can never hold out against it. I will give you the keys of the kingdom of heaven”—meaning supreme authority—“Whatever you bind on earth shall be considered bound in heaven” (Mt 16:18-19). This means: your command will be my command; your permission—my permission. These words leave no room for doubt: St. Peter received full authority in the Church. Where people reject the authority of St. Peter, there is no Church of Christ. It is a high and responsible position. And whom does Christ call to it?—He calls the weak and the powerless so that in their weakness His power would be all the more evident (cf., 1 Cor 1:27). He chooses an ordinary, uneducated laborer—a fisherman. And so that he would not be overly confident in his own power, nor that such a great thing should depend on something so weak, He allows Peter to fall. On hearing the words of a servant girl, he denies his Teacher and Redeemer three times (cf., Mt 26:69-75). But Christ raises him up after He himself is risen from the dead and once again confirms him as prince of the apostles and head of the Church. After asking Peter three times: “Simon, son of John, do

you love me more than these others do?”—he receives Peter’s affirmation: “Yes, Lord, you know that I love you.” Christ says to him: “Feed my lambs . . . look after my sheep” (cf., Jn 21:15-17). That meant: rule all of my Church—both the flock and the shepherds. “As the Father sent me, so I am sending you” (Jn 20: 21). I am the Shepherd, and you also will fulfill the duties of shepherd. Anyone who listens to you, listens to me; anyone who rejects you, rejects me (cf., Lk 10:16). And so that Peter, that Rock, would no longer falter, Christ promises to support him with His own power: “And know that I am with you always, yes, to the end of time” (Mt 28:20). So that he himself would not err nor lead his flock into error, Christ gives him infallibility: “Simon, Simon! Satan, you must know, has got his wish to sift you all like wheat; but I have prayed for you, Simon, that your faith may not fail, and once you have recovered, you in your turn must strengthen your brothers” (Lk 22:31-32). But when the Spirit of joy and of truth whom Christ will send, comes it will lead him to the complete truth (cf., Jn 16:13). And from then on, St. Peter through his successors is the strength and support of the Church.

All this is so transparently clear. After Christ has ascended into heaven, the apostles do not choose another leader. St. Peter is their leader. He is the first to speak on behalf of all the apostles to the crowds at Pentecost and to teach them (cf., Acts 2:14) . He accepts the first Jewish converts into the Church at Jerusalem (cf., Acts 2:37-41) and also the first Gentile converts at Caesarea (cf., Acts 10:47). He orders the election of another apostle to take the place of Judas (cf. Acts 1: 15-21). He calls the first council and presides over it (cf., Acts 15: 6-7). When St. Peter dies, the Corinthians turn not to the still-living apostle John in matters of faith, but to the Pope, St. Clement, successor of St. Peter.

Thus, all the ages, both in life and in practice, hold to this principle: wherever Peter is—there is the Church. All affirm with St. Augustine: Rome has spoken, the matter is settled. During the nineteenth century, that unbelieving and unstable age, all the bishops of the Church convened for the Vatican Council\* and clearly proclaimed to the whole world that the Pope has the supreme authority in the Church and that when he teaches as head and shepherd of the whole Church on matters of faith or morals, he

---

\* Vatican Council I, summoned by Pope Pius IX, was in session from Dec. 8, 1869, to Oct. 20, 1870; 601 bishops participated.

cannot err. No Pope has ever been mistaken in this respect, nor has the Rock of St. Peter ever floundered. The gates of hell have not and will not prevail against it. Christ himself—the God-Man—has said it. Heaven and earth will pass away, but His words will never pass away (cf., Lk 21:33).

Whatever has been built by the hands of man in time falls apart and disappears. The invincible spears of the Roman legions have turned to dust, and the Roman Empire itself has fallen. The words of the pagan philosophers are heard no more. The terrible heresies which once, like furious waves of the sea roaring and foaming, crashed against the Rock of Peter have all been dispersed. Yet the Rock of Peter remains the same—unmoved, unfaltering. Its divine power becomes ever more evident, and its glory and dignity grow ever greater.

And in our time as well have we not witnessed how the most powerful thrones have come crashing down, how the most powerful states have fallen, while the Pope without an army, without any weapons, still sits upon the throne of Peter and rules the world? War-torn humanity more and more often turns its eyes toward him. Throughout the world, especially among intellectuals, among those who reflect more deeply, one can detect a strong reorientation toward the Faith and the Church. Just as during the times of the early Church, so throughout the ensuing ages up until now, the Pope continues to fulfill his mission as ambassador of God.

While the world is drawing ever farther away from God—the Fountain of Truth—though greatly respecting scientific thought, it sinks ever deeper into the morass of false and irrational theories. The Pope stands guard over eternal truth and unchanging principles and courageously proclaims them. While the world follows high-sounding slogans without the love of God and bases its life on selfishness and greed, promoting already deeply rooted injustices, exploitation, conquest, and violence, having no real regard for justice, the Pope as always guards the principles of justice and bravely reminds the world of them.

While faith in God has declined in the world and pride and hatred have grown, as have egotistical class, party, and national strife. When the terrible World War touched all nations and countries, and despite the loud cries for equality and brotherhood, rivers of blood flowed in battle, only the Pope has courageously called and still calls us to love and mercy, to

tranquillity, and peace.\* He alone speaks to all, both to individuals and to nations, constantly reminding them that we are all children of one Father in heaven and brothers to one another. Among us there should be no freedmen or slaves, no conquerors or conquered, no Greek or Roman or Jew, but we are all brothers in Christ. And we will never have genuine and abiding peace and tranquillity unless it is supported by God's truth and justice. It will not be good to live in this world unless we unite in true brotherly love of God within a harmonious community, working together like the real family of God.

The Holy See, both in ancient times and at present, keeps everything in balance. As people draw away from God, they lose their balance and begin to fall toward perdition both in the sphere of morality and spirituality and in ordinary life as well. If only the whole world would return to the Catholic Church and be supported by the Rock of Peter! If only it would begin really to live according to the principles of faith, then, doubtless, there would be less sorrow in the world, less evil and fewer wars, and the peace and blessings of God would be upon it. The world would then become the paradise we all long for.

We are blessed that as a Catholic nation we belong to the Catholic Church and stand upon the Rock of Peter. We are blessed that our head is Pope Pius XI, who has visited our country and celebrated Mass in our Cathedral, who knows our misfortunes, our weaknesses, and our concerns. Like no one else, he keeps us in his heart and, through my lips, his unworthy servant, sends his fatherly greeting and apostolic blessing to all the clergy and the faithful.

And so, let us cast aside everything that is evil. Let drunkenness, immorality, exploitation, deceit, and every kind of injury disappear from our land. Let all discord and quarrels among us come to an end. Strengthened by the Pope's blessing which is a sign of God's

---

\* Probably a reference to Pope Pius XI's first encyclical *Ubi arcano Dei*, proclaimed Dec. 23, 1922, which admonished the victors of World War I to seek reconciliation of all peoples and to maintain peace among nations.

blessing, let us stand together as befits children of the same country, the same Church and the same God. Let us stand together with one heart and one soul to accomplish our common task in unity.

May the blessing of almighty God, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, descend upon you and remain with you forever. Amen.

Given in Vilnius  
on the feast of the Nativity of the Blessed Virgin Mary,  
September 8, 1923





# Index of Names

Abaravičius, Rev. Mykolas	263, 296, 297, 308, 316, 317, 318
Abramowicz, Witold	291, 295, 307, 326
Abrantowicz, Rev. Fabian	249
Alexander II (Czar)	92
Altmann von (Major)	145
Antonucci, Msgr. Giuseppe	98, 99, 103, 105, 106
Aquinas, Saint Thomas	108
Araszkiewicz, Rev. Władysław	109, 110, 111
Augustine, Saint	346
Bajko, Msgr. Karol	152, 153, 253, 324, 325
Bakšys, Rev. Juozas	201
Baliulis, Rev.	233, 234
Bandurski, Bishop Władysław	291, 293, 298, 299, 302, 304, 309
Bańkowski	311
Baran, Rev.	265, 267, 309
Benedict, Saint	334
Benedict XIV (Pope)	107, 115
Benedict XV (Pope)	10
Bieliauskas, Rev. Pranciskus	205
Bilczewski, Archbishop Józef	102
Biržiška, Mykolas	183, 254, 268, 269, 326
Biržiška, Vaclovas	183, 247
Bizauskas, Rev. Pranciskus	101

Bolich, Rev.	219
Borgia, Saint Francis, S.J.	65
Borgongini-Duca, Archbishop Francesco	332
Bortkevičius, Mrs. Felicija	199, 205, 251
Brazys, Rev. Teodoras	201
Bronikowski, Kazimierz, MIC	98
Butrimowicz, Rev.	227, 259
Bučys, Bishop Pranciskus, MIC	327
Campa, Rev. Luigi	111
Caroli, Msgr. Rodolfo	100, 102, 103, 109
Casimir, Saint	18
Catherine II (Czarina)	175
Chalecki, Canon Lucjan	297, 300, 309, 318, 319
Chardigny, Auguste (Colonel)	306, 313, 315, 316, 319, 325
Charucki, Rev.	197
Chomski, Rev. Leopold	213, 237, 246, 247, 248, 249, 256, 257, 258, 259
Cibulskis, Pranciskus (semin.)	235, 236
Cibulskis (Cybelis), Rev.	327, 328
Cichoński, Rev. Antoni	211, 237
Cieplak, Bishop Jan	331
Ciepliński, Rev.	278
Cikoto, Andrei, MIC	205, 207, 244, 249, 250
Cijunaitis, Rev. Matas	214
Clement, Saint	346
Czarba, Rev. Konstanty	102

Czarnowska, Sister	213, 248
Czerniawski, Canon Antoni	291
Dabrila, Msgr. Matas	152
Dambrauskas-Jakstas, Msgr.	145
Dandini, Msgr. Ascenso	99, 104
Darowska, Sister Macellina	102, 103
De Lai, Cardinal Gaetano	105, 112
De Paz, Alvarez, S.J.	115
Dyakowski, Rev. Napoleon	208, 209, 210, 321, 322
Dmowski, Roman	267
Dogelis, Rev. Povilas	199, 200, 261
Domasevicius, Dr. Andrius	266
Drabas, Rev.	207
Dvaranauskas, Vincentas, MIC	101, 146, 151, 172
Dybowski	219, 266
Eidimtas, Leonas (semin.)	231
Eidukevicius, Dr. Pranas	177, 197, 198
Ellert, Msgr. Juljan	187, 188, 191, 197, 246, 280
Fonck, Leopold, S.J.	115
Fromm	227
Galaune, Rev. Jonas	200
Gasparri, Cardinal Pietro	332
Gira, Liudas	205, 251
Górski, Rev.	21, 296, 297, 308, 317
Grum-Grzymajlo, Rev. Sergei	106

Grudzińska, Duchess	187, 190, 214
Gumbaragis, Rev. Karolis	281
Haller (General)	267
Hanusewicz, Aleksander (semin.)	227
Hanusowicz, Msgr. Jan.	155, 156, 158, 197, 249, 300
Haula, Rev., OFM.	281
Hrynkiewicz, Rev.	225, 279
Hryniewiecki, Archbishop Karol	290, 291, 292, 293, 298, 299, 301, 304, 309
Ignatius, Saint	56, 68, 73, 77, 79, 199, 216
Indrulis, Rev. Jonas	101
Jakavonis, Rev. Ambraziejus	262
Jaleński, Rev.	322
Jamont	276
Jański, Bogdan, CR	103
Janulaitis, Augustinas	177
Janusevičius, Rev. Jurgis	192
Jasiński, Rev.	182, 291
Jesus Christ	17, 18, 31, 32, 44, 45, 59, 61, 80, 82, 86, 88, 90, 91, 152, 301, 338, 339, 340, 344
Jevreinov, Bishop Alexander	111
Joffe, Leo	252, 260
John, Saint (apostle)	346
Jonynas, Ignas	313, 314, 315, 316, 326
Jundziłł, Zygmunt	269

Joseph, Saint	135, 228, 256, 304
Jupavich	242
Jurgutis, Vladas	119
Kaczmarek, Rev. Feliks	201
Kairiukstis, Juozas	245
Kairys	198, 199
Kajsiewicz, Hieronim, CR	103
Kakarieka, Rev. Tomas	320, 325
Kakowski, Archbishop Aleksander	97, 98, 105, 108, 143
Kalinowski, Rev. Leon	98, 111
Kapsukas-Mickevičius, Vincas	163, 189, 190, 191, 228
Karevičius, Bishop Pranciskus	143, 144, 150, 152
Karosas, Bishop Antanas	146, 151
Karska, Sister Jozefa Maria	103
Kazakas, Rev. Julijonas	137
Kepiński, Rev. Władysław	109, 110, 115
Kiersnowski, Rev.	321
Klinger, Zygmunt (General)	172
Kluczyński, Archbishop Wincenty	106
Kolpiński, Rev. Diodor	111
Korwin-Milewski, Hipolit	300
Kościałkowski, Stanisław	181
Koźmiński, Honoratus, OFM Cap.	25
Kraujalis, Rev. Petras	216, 217, 237, 256, 257, 283, 314
Kretowicz, Rev. Jan	152, 153, 192, 248, 256, 263,

	264
Kriščiukaitis, Jonas, MIC	314
Kudirka, Feliksas, MIC	137
Kukta, Bishop Juozapas	149, 156, 172, 189, 199, 228, 252, 256, 258, 267, 300, 314
Kuleszo, Rev. Adam	213, 222, 251, 256, 258
Kuryłłowicz, Rev.	279
Labukas, Bishop Juozapas	314
Laukaitis, Rev, Juozapas	148
Lauri, Cardinal Lorenzo	332
Lai de, Cardinal Cajetano	105, 112
Ledóchowska, Maria Teresa	100
Ledóchowska, Sister Urszula	100
Ledóchowski, Włodzimierz, SJ	105, 106, 107, 108, 109, 114
Leo XIII (Pope)	348
Leszczyński, Juljan	246, 248
Lewicki, Rev. Zygmunt	309
Linartas, Rev.	325
Liutkevičius, Gabrys	189
Łopaciński	263
Łoszakiewicz, Rev.	321
Loyola, Saint Ignatius	68, 79
Łoziński, Bishop Zygmunt	160, 204, 206, 233, 235, 294, 309, 310, 324, 333
Lubianiec, Canon Karol	152, 153, 156, 157, 187 189, 192, 213, 219, 222, 234, 235, 236, 237, 245, 249, 253, 255, 258, 259, 266

Łubieński, Count	193
Łukaszewski, Henryk	182
Lutosławski, Rev. Kazimierz	99, 227, 270, 271, 273, 274, 294
Łysik, Władysław, MIC	98, 111
Maciejewicz, Rev. Stanisław	178, 189, 192, 249, 253, 254, 255, 258, 264
Malecki, Jan	210
Mary, Virgin (Mother of Jesus)	60, 92, 125, 133, 138, 210, 248, 266, 280, 334
Matulaitis, Rev, Kazimieras	233
Matulaitis-Labukas, Bishop Juozapas	314
Meciunas, Andrius	194, 250, 266
Meysztowicz, Aleksander	271, 286
Meysztowicz, Michał	229
Meysztowicz, Szymon	306
Michalkiewicz, Bishop Kazimierz	144, 147, 148, 156, 160, 161, 178, 197, 209, 213, 256, 259, 262, 263, 264, 280, 284, 287, 288, 308, 309, 310, 319
Mickevičius, Vincas (Kapsukas)	189
Mickiewicz, Stefan	164
Miłkowski, Rev. Stanisław	148, 149, 202, 203, 222, 236, 283
Minkštaite, Marijona	232
Mokrzecki, Stefan (General)	167, 289, 290, 291, 297, 298, 303, 304, 308, 310, 316, 318
Moraczewski, Dr.	322
Moriez de, Stanisław	311



Mosser, Rev. August, CR	98, 99, 103, 106, 115
Możejko, Rev. Stanisław	283, 284, 320
Muckermann, Friedrich, SJ	185, 186, 187, 188, 189, 190, 191, 194, 195, 196, 197, 198, 202, 203, 204, 205, 208, 214, 228, 229, 309
Mussolini, Benito	348
Nase, Major	313, 315, 325
Narusis, Rev.	320
Nicholas I (Czar)	108
Nicholas II (Czar)	92
Niedziałkowski, Mieczysław	263, 288
Niger (Tscharny), Samuel	252, 260
Nikiel, Rev. Karol	115
Novickas, Justinas, MIC	146
Obolewicz , Rev.	198
Obst, Jan (Johann)	302
Ołdak, J.	241, 2413
Oleszczuk, Rev. Bonifac	2524
Olszański, Rev. Ignacy	186, 187, 256, 292, 303, 321
Olšauskas, Msgr. Konstantinas	144, 147
O'Rourke, Bishop Eduard	152, 157, 160, 286
Osmołowski, Jerzy	253, 254, 260, 268, 269, 270, 272, 285
Pacelli, Eugenio (Pius XII)	147, 148, 157, 234
Paderewski, Ignacy	267

Papczyński, Stanislaus	33
Paul, Saint	68, 84, 103, 218
Perłowski, Jan	332
Peter, Saint	343, 344, 346, 347
Petrowski, Rev. Antoni	214
Petrovski, Rev. Michał	187, 188, 191, 291, 292, 293, 294, 295, 318
Petrulis, Rev. Alfonsas	147, 149
Piłsudski, Jan	268, 269, 270, 272, 277, 292, 299, 302, 304, 305, 316, 326
Piłsudski, Józef (Marshal)	254, 255, 258, 259, 267
Pius IX (Pope)	348
Pius X (Pope)	33, 134, 144, 348
Pius XI (Pope)	331, 248
Pizzardo, Cardinal Giuseppe	332
Płokarz, Jozafat, MIC	102
Pompilji, Cardinal Basilio	333
Potulicki, Rev. Adam	113
Prystor, Aleksander	326
Przeździecki, Bishop Henryk	332
Puciata, Rev. Leon	216, 217, 309
Purickis, Juozas	147, 164
Rackiewicz, Władysław	260, 311, 316
Radusis, Rev.	214
Rodziewicz (Radzevičiute), Sr.	198
Rafałowski, Vladimir Alexandrovich	138

Raštutis, Rev. Nikodemus	233
Ratti, Achille (Pius XI)	147, 148, 150, 234, 271, 272, 276, 305, 306, 307
Ratuszny, Rev. Antoni	102
Reinys, Archbishop Mėcislovas	205, 217, 237, 251
Reklaitis, Kazimieras, MIC	151, 172
Ropp von, Bishop Eduard	145, 198, 206, 233, 234, 287
Rubenstein (Rabbi)	252, 260
Rudnicki, Rev. SJ	309
Sadowski, Msgr. Jan	178, 248, 277, 300
Saint-Simon, Comte de	134
Sapieha, Cardinal Adam	100, 102, 103, 104, 105, 106, 111, 112, 113, 114, 115, 120
Sawicki, Msgr. Adam	237
Schabad, Dr. Carl	252, 260
Saliewicz, Rev. Jan	200
Semenenko, Piotr, CR	103
Sėkowski, Vincentas, MIC	90
Serafinas, Rev. Pranciskus	328
Siedlecki, Dr. Michał	304
Sienkiewicz, Rev.	260, 291
Skirmunt, Msgr. Kazimierz	113
Skruodys, Rev. Jonas	200
Slabšinskas, Rev. Antanas	282, 283
Smetona, Antanas (President of Lithuania)	147, 158
Smolikowski, Rev. Paweł	102, 103

Songin, Rev. Józef	222, 249, 258, 264, 322, 323
Staniszewski, Stanisław	269
Staniškis, Witold	269
Stankevich, Rev. Adam	297, 318, 319, 324
Stašinskis, Vladas	177, 251
Staugaitis, Bishop Justinas	154, 275
Steckiewicz, Canon Juljan	159, 170, 178, 192, 209, 227, 264, 299, 300
Stephen, Saint	160, 321, 322
Steponavičius, Rev. Jonas	216
Swida	273
Symon, Archbishop Franciszek	99
Szeptycki, Stanisław (General)	274
Szopa, Teofil	216
Sztafinski (seminarian)	225, 226
Śmigły-Rydz, Eduard (General)	251, 252, 260
Świtalski, Kazimierz (Major)	251, 252, 254
Slamas, Rev. Stanislovas	200, 201
Smulkštys, Rev. Antanas	146
Sova (Saldra), Rev. Klemensas	111, 113
Tartakis	211
Taškunas, Rev. Vincentas	323, 333
Teodorowicz, Archbishop Józef	98, 99, 102, 105, 111, 113, 115, 120, 270, 271, 274
Tołoczko, Rev. Władisław	149, 298, 322, 323, 324
Tumas, Rev. Juozas	153, 183, 189, 190, 191, 193, 194, 212, 248, 263

Umiastowski, Bronisław	259
Uogintas, Sister Petronele	172
Urbanavičius, Vincas, MIC	266
Uszyłło, Canon Jan	150, 216
Uzquiano, (Major)	305, 306, 307, 308
Vailokaitis, Jonas	275
Vailokaitis, Rev. Juozas	192, 199, 200, 251
Vaitkevičius, Juozapas, MIC	171, 196, 212, 216, 217, 228, 235, 245, 252, 281
Vaišnora, Jonas (seminarian)	230
Valancius, Bishop Motiejus	218
Varnas, Rev. Alfonsas	201
Varzaitis, Jonas, MIC	266
Vileišis, Mrs. Emilija	189, 228
Viskantas, Rev. Antanas	111, 326
Vyšniauskas	245
Vives y Tuto, Cardinal Giuseppe	107, 108, 109, 110, 111
Vizbaras, Kazimieras	149
Voldemaras, Augustinas	155, 159
Węclawski, Dr.	184, 242, 267
Weiss, Albert Maria, OP	117
Wejtko, Wladyslaw (General)	169
Wiśniewski, Marian, MIC	133
Wojewódzka (Miss)	310
Wołodkiewicz, Gaspar (semin.)	238

Wołodźko, Msgr. Franciszek	150, 155, 208, 209, 246, 261
Wróblewski, Tadeusz	178, 180, 181, 228, 314
Wygodski, Jakob	177
Zadowski, Rev. Władysław	210, 305
Zajančkauskas, Rev. Vincentas	314, 319, 324
Zakarowski, Rev.	320
Zechlin, Dr. Erich	147
Żuk, Rev.	207, 325
Zienkiewicz, Rev. Antoni	321, 322, 323, 324
Ziemacki, Dr. Józef	161
Zadkiewicz, Michał	233
Żarnowiecki, Bishop Longin	105
Żarnowski, Rev.	243, 248, 265, 266
Żebrowski, Rev.	279
Żeligowski, Lucjan (General)	289, 296, 304, 305, 311, 312, 325, 326
Żongołowicz, Rev. Bronisław	305

