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LIETUVOS BAŽNYČIOS KELIU

Karaliaus Mindaugo krikšto 700 metų ir Lietuvos
bažnytinės provincijos 25 metų sukaktims paminėti

LITHUANIA AFTER SEVEN HUNDRED YEARS
OF CHRISTIANITY

A. L. R. K. Kunig Vienybės leidinys
Brooklyn, N. Y.

1951

Paskaita skaityta Romoje, Šv. Kazimiero Kolegijoj, Karaliaus
Mindaugo krikšto ir Lietuvos bažnytinis provincijos
steigimo sukaktis minint.

MINDAUGO KRIKŠTAS IR LIETUVOS BAŽNYTINIS PROVINCIJOS STEIGIMAS

Dr. Zenonas Ivinskis

“Lietuvi tautai, Dievui padedant, po Didžiojo karo atgavus laisvę, mes, kurie savo akimis esame regėję lietuvių tikėjimą bei religingumą, taip uoliai ir ilgai išlaikytą vairiuose varguose bei nelaimėse ir bėdų sūkurtyje, kad tinkamesnis bažnytinis reikalavimas sutvarkymas bus labai naudingas ne tik Katalikybės reikalui, bet ir pačiai valstybei, laikome labai tinkama ir reikalinga padidinti skaičių vyskupijų ir iš jų sudaryti bažnytinę provinciją”.*)

Šiais žanginiais žodžiais prieš ketvirtą amžiaus popiežių Pijus XI savo apaštališkoje konstitucijoje “Lituanorum gente” nurodė to akto reikšmę lietuvių tautai. Per pačias Velykas, balandžio 4 d., iš pagrindų tada buvo pertvarkyta Lietuvos bažnytinio gyvenimo organizacija. Nepriklausomoji Lietuva, tapusi metropolija su keturiais sufraganais, ir bažnytinio atžvilgiu gijo nepriklausomą pabūd.

1926 metų pavasarį Apaštališkas Sostas sugrąžino Lietuvai bažnytinę ryšį, kuris buvo su ja sumegstas prieš septynis šimtus metų — dar tada, kai vos tik lukštenosi Mindaugo valstybė. Inocentas IV anuomet naujai kūrė “Lietuvos vyskupiją” iš mūsų iš lietuvių kaimynų priklausomybės ir priskyrė tiesiai prie Šv. Sosto. Tuo būdu Lietuvos valstybės pradžia, jos septyni šimtai metų tradicijos, sutampa su reikšmingu faktu: pirmas tikru vardu pažįstamas Lietuvos valdovas nepriklausomai apsisprendė priimti Kristaus mokslą ir užmezgė betarpiškus ryšius su Apaštališku Sostu.

*) “Tiesos Kelias”, 1926 m., Nr. 8, 24 p.

1. Mindaugo kelias krikščionyb

Lietuvos valstybės pradžia vis dar yra dengiama nežinios, vairi prielaid ir samprotavimų. Naujausi Lietuvos praeities tyrinėjimai teikia rimtą pagrindą nukelti į XII ir XIII amžius vart, arba keliomis dešimtėmis metų anksčiau, negu pasireiškė Mindaugas, vadinamos Lietuvos valstybės krikščionyb. Iš praeities kanjis prasikiša tarsi kokia tvirta uola, kuri nuolat traukia ir tebetraukia tyrinotojus. Palyginus su Vytautu Didžiuoju, vienu iš žymiausių Lietuvos valstybės vyrų, jis užima gana stambią vietą istorijos studijose. Mindaugo laikus tyrinėjant net šešios disertacijos šalia daugelio mokslinių veikalų ir straipsnių.

Pirmas buvo Julius Latkovskis, kuris dar 1892 m. mokslininkai apibrėžė laikotarpį. Paskui sekė J. Totoraitis, K. Skirmuntaitis, St. Zajczkowskis, gana originaliai rašė Pilypas Klymenko, plataus žvilgsnio J. Stakauskas, A. Steponaitis, A. Juška. Visa ši gausi mokslinė literatūra gal jo remtis, deju, negausiais šaltiniais. Yra tik dvi pagrindinės kronikos: Ipatjevo arba Volynijos metraštinė ir geriausia tūkstantmečių eilė gražiai suėliuotam poezijos rinkinyje, vadinamam "Livonijos kronika". Čia dar reikia pridėti Mindaugui rašytus oficialius popiežiaus laiškus bei bulenes. Tai ir visos pagrindinės versijos.

Visai aišku, kodėl tyrinėjams dar nepasisekė sutarti dėl visos eilės svarbių metų klausimų: kas vadovavo žymiesiems Saulės ir Durbės kautynėms, kuriose buvo sprendžiama lietuvių tautos laisvė; kur buvo Mindaugo sostinė, katrie yra tikri jo dokumentai, užrašantieji žemi Livonijos ordinui; pagaliau, ar apsikrikščijęs Mindaugas yra atkritęs nuo Bažnyčios, ar ne. Visi šie klausimai yra keli ir tebekelia daug ginčų, nesutarimų, galvos kičių.

Tačiau pats Mindaugo krikšto faktas yra palikęs tokius žymius pėdsakus, kad skirtingos nuomonės gali susidaryti tik dėl pačių tyrinėjimų skirtingos pasaulžiūros, o ne dėl istorijos šaltinių. Taip yra atsitik su sovietiniu ukrainiečių istoriku P. Klymenko.

Kas Mindaugą yra atvedęs prie krikšto, geriausia mums pasako pats Lietuvos valstybės krikščionyb. Tai neatsi-

tiko viena diena. Tai nebuvo vieno kurio apdaresnio Lietuvos kunigaikšio nelauktas žingsnis ar s moningas jo valios apsisprendimas: "Štai, aš kuriu lietuvi tautai valstyb!" Vienos valstyb s mintis pamažu brendo stambesni ir nuolat kylan i kunigaikš i geidžiuose, kaip tai esti ir paprastam žmoni gyvenime, kai kas sinori tur ti vis daugiau turt ir galios. Lygiai tokiu pat b du paskiri Lietuvos kunigaikš iai siek tur ti daugiau galios ir palenkti savo valdžiai kitus. N ra abejon s, kad reik jo neklausan ius iš j žemi išvarin ti, vartoti prievart , gudryb ir net klast .

Tokiu keliu jaunose valstyb se paprastai nueina kuris žymesnis kunigaikštis, kaip Lietuvoje Mindaugas, su kuriu vardu ir rišama politin s istorijos pradžia. Pranc zijoje, pavyzdžiui, tokiu jung ju laikomas Klodvigas. Viduramži istorikas Papee ir teigia, kad Lietuvos vienijimas, kur yra atlik s Mindaugas, primena Meroving laikus Frankuose.

Lietuv jungiant, atskir sri i kunigaikš iai, tarp kuri Žemai i didikai vaidino dar svarbi rol , sudar stipri opozicij . Jauno valdovo pad tis pasidar dar kritiškesn , kai prieš j susidar stipri koalicija iš Žemai i kunigaikš i , nenuoram jotvingi , Volynijos valdov ir Livonijos ordino. K Mindaugas tur jo daryti ir ko griebtis?

Jis grieb si pastang koalicij suskaldyti. Jo konkurentas, kunigaikštis Tautvilas, jau buvo Rygoje pasikrikštij s, bet pas vyskup . Buvo gi žinia, kad Rygos vyskupas (v liau arkivyskupas) ir Livonijos ordinas nebesutaria ir darosi priešai. Tuo priešingumu v liau yra r m sis Vytenis (1293-1316), kuris Rygos mieste yra laik s savo karin gul ir nuo Livonijos ordino riteri gyn s pat arkivyskup . O jo brolis Gediminas (1316-1341) t s jung su Rygos arkivyskupu buvo dar labiau išpl t s.

Mindaugas buvo pirmasis, kuris pasir m ta prasid - jusia Livonijoje nesantaika. Kadangi jo konkurentas Tautvilas prisiglaud pas Rygos vyskup ir iš jo pri m krikšt , tai Mindaugas nusuko pas Livonijos ordin . Jis pareišk nor s taip pat krikštytis. O jo krikštas, bent simboliškai, tur jo reikšti krikšt ir visos jo valdomos tautos.

2. Mindaugo krikštas ir kar nacija

Krikštijant vis taut nebuvo galima apseiti be tiesioginio ryšio su papia popiežium. Deja, Vatikano archyve yra ding originalai rašt , si st popiežiams ano meto valdov . Žuv yra ir Mindaugo laiškai. Ta iau turime nuorašus vis popiežiaus atsakym . Jie yra atspausdinti Theinerio ir Bung s dokument rinkiniuose. Iš popiežiaus Inocento IV laiško matyti, kad 1251 m. pradžioje Mindaugas krikštijosi “su didele pagoni daugybe” (cum numerosa multitudine paganorum).¹⁾

Kunig Lietuvon buvo atsi sta iš Livonijos. Manoma, kad ia pirm kart tur jo progos pasireikšti dominikonai ir pranciškonai, kuri veikla nuo Gedimino laik yra jau žymiai aiškiau paliudyta.

Siekdamas užmegzti betarpiškus ryšius su Apaštala Sostu, Mindaugas 1251 m. išsiunt Italijon savo pasiuntinius. Eil toji Livonijos kronika pamini, kad tai delegacijai vadovav s lietuvis Parnus.²⁾ Inocentas IV apie t delegacij j taip pat užsimena savo laiške Mindaugui: “Nusižemin s prašei mus per ypatingus ir nepaprastus pasiuntinius...” (Quia vero per solemnes ac speciales nuntios nobis humiliter supplicasti...)³⁾

Lietuvos valdovo pasiuntiniai, kuriuos popiežius pirm Milane pataik r pes i sukr st met . Tai buvo tas laikas, kai Hohenštafen kova su popiežiais buvo pasiekusi aukš iausios tampos. Ekskomunikuotas imperatorius Fridrikas II, tiesa, buvo k tik mir s Palerme, bet jo šalininkai tvirtai laik si. Popiežius tur jo su jais nemaža r pes io, ta iau nuo Baltijos krašt atvykusiems pasiuntiniams ir j valdovui parod didelio d mesio ir palankumo. Tai liudijo net šeši popiežiaus Kurijos laiškai, rašyti Mindaugui 1251 m. viduvasaryje.

Tuose popiežiaus laiškuose aptariami vair s Lietuvos krikštijimo reikalai. Pavyzdžiui, naujai steigiamos Lietuvos diecezijos vyskupas, prelatai ir bažny i rektoriai sp jami, kad jie žmon ms b t šveln s. Tur ta galvoje Livo-

1) Theiner, I 50

2) Livl. Reimehr., U. L. Meyer, V. 3505-15

3) Theiner, I 49

nijos ordino dvasiškiai. Jie laikinai buvo pri m Lietuvos krikštijim ir, be abejo, nor jo tai atlikti pagal ordino interesus. kurdamas atskir Lietuvos vyskupij (diecesis Lethoviensis), popiežius 1251 met liepos 17 d. suteik Apaštal Sosto glob bei apsaug .

Gudrus politikas, koks visu savo valdymu pasirod Mindaugas, ordinu nepasitik jo. Livonijos ordino noras prisijungti Lietuv jau buvo išryšk j s. Krikštas gal jo duoti jam dar daugiau pagrindo to siekti. Mindaugas d lto ir papraš , kad apkrikštyta Lietuva priklausyt nuo Apaštal Sosto.

Popiežius Inocetas IV savo ruožtu dar kreip si kaimyninius vyskopus (Eželio, Rygos, Kuršo, Dorpato), kad jie paremt lietuvi pastangas krikštytis. Lietuvos krikštas, kaip popiežiui atrod , gal s b ti gera paspirtimi Apaštal Sostui visoje Ryt Europoje. Volynijos Danielius, tiesa, buvo prisijung s prie Romos Bažny ios ir teik atei iai vil i , bet jis greitai v l atkrito. Lietuva tur jo sudaryti atram katalikyb s skleidimuisi toliau rytus.

Kaip Romos Bažny ios s nus (filius specialis Sanctae Romanae Ecclesiae), Mindaugas buvo pagerbtas karaliaus vainiku. Tik krikštytam valdovui popiežiai gal jo suteikti karaliaus titul — pakelti aukštesn valdov laipsn . line Rygos, o Pr s Kulmo vyskupas Heidenreich buvo galiotas Apaštal Sosto vardu Mindaug vainikuoti karalium. Ta iau užtruko ištisi treji metai, kol Mindaugas išsipainiojo iš kit pretendent . Siekdami savo interes , Livonijos ordinas ir Rygos arkivyskupas taip pat kliud Mindaugui pasidaryti visiškai nepriklausomam. Tik 1253 m. Mindaugas patapo Lietuvos karalium. Popiežius Aleksandras IV po poros met suteik karaliaus vainik ir Mindaugo s nui.

Savotiški buvo tolimesni Lietuvos gyvenimo keliai! Nors ji v liau suk r didel Ryt imperij ir gana pla iai išgars jo, bet atsitiko taip, kad Mindaugas paliko istorijoje pirmuoju ir paskutiniu vainikuotu Lietuvos karaliumi. Vytautui pasiekti tos garb s 1430 metais sukliud smurtas, o 1918 m. numatytas kviesti karalium Wuerttembergo hercogas von Urach, kuris tur jo ir vadintis Mindaugu II, vel tui tik buvo užkalbintas. Pirmojo pasaulinio karo pabaiga

nušlav politini s lyg padiktuot sumanym Lietuvoj monarchij atstatyti. Mindaugas taip ir liko vienintelis valdovas, vainikuotas savu Lietuvos vainiku.

3. Pirmoji Lietuvos vyskupija

Mindaugo valstyb bažnytiniu atžvilgiu buvo padaryta priklausoma tik nuo Romos. Tai reiškia, kad ji sudar užuomazg atskirai bažnytinei provincijai. Bet ir ia kelias nebuvo lengvas! Livonijos ordinas, siekdamas sivešpatauti ir Lietuvoje, s moningai kliud steigti atskir Lietuvos vyskupij . Mindaugas net tre iu atveju kreip si Rom ,⁴⁾ kol veik Livonijos vyskup ir ordino pastangas pagauti savo priklausomyb . Popiežiui sakius, Rygos arkivyskupas Albertas tur jo “Lietuvos diecezijos” vyskupu šventinti ordino kunig Kristijon . Bet ia ir v l susidar painiava, nes buvo peržengti galiojimai. Lietuvos vyskupija buvo prijungta prie Livonijos bei Pr sijos arkivyskupijos ir priesaika iš Kristijono buvo priimta Rygos arkivyskupo vardu. Specialiu raštu papiežius tur jo panaikinti Rygos arkivyskupo jurisdikcij Lietuvai. 1254 met rugs jo 3 d. jis galiojo Neunburgo vyskup iš Kristijono priimti priesaik popiežiaus ir Romos vyskupo vardu.⁵⁾ Pa iam Mindaugui Inocentas IV praneš apie Lietuvos vyskupijos išskirti (egzempcij). Tat tik po trij met Mindaugas nugal jo visas kli tis.

Tuo pat metu pietin je Lietuvos dalyje sik r ir lenk domininkono Vito vyskupija. Bet apie jos dviej met gyvavim mažai k žinome.

Lietuvos vyskupui Kristijonui priklaus visa Mindaugo valstyb . Jis buvo sik r s Mindaugo dovanotose Žemai i srityse, iš vis pusi apsuptose pagoni . Pirmasis Lietuvos vyskupas sunkiai besilaik . 1259 metais jis jau buvo priverstas palikti savo vyskupij . Mir 1270 metais kaip Mainzo (Vokietijoje) sufraganas.

Po jo mirties “Lietuvos vyskupu” dar buvo šv stas vokie i ordino kunigas Jonas. Tokiu titulu jis vadinosi b - damas Konstanzos vyskupo koadiutorium. Iš tos jo veiklos

4) Theiner, I 53 p.

5) LUB, I 355 sk.

(Šveicarijoje) yra naujai paskelbti septyni dokumentai, kuriuose Jonas vis tituluojamas "Lietuvos vyskupu".⁶⁾ Ta iau jam nebuvo lemta savo vyskupijos n pamatyti.

4. Mindaugo apostazijos klausimas

Istorikai yra iškl daug diskusij berašydami ir begvildendami, ar Mindaugas atkrito nuo krikš iony b s ar mir už j kankiniu, kaip samprotauja J. Latkovskis.⁷⁾ Bet ligi šiol nepavyko galutinai to išaiškinti. Žini šykštumas ir kaikurie j prieštaravimai neleidžia klausimo išlukšteni visai tikinamu b du. Vargu taip pat galima tik ti, kad atsirast kuri nauj žini šiam klausimui praskaidrinti.

1934 metais š klausim plaiai išd st Dr. J. Stakauskas. Savo disertacijoje "Lietuva ir Vakar Europa XIII amžiuje" jis band rodyti, kad Mindaugas išliko krikš ionis. Savo teigimui, kaip ir kiti, gal jo pasiremti vieninteliu ir dažnai cituojamu laišku, kur popiežius Klemensas IV raš ekijos karaliui Otokarui II. Patys svarbieji to laiško žodžiai yra šie:

"... vadovaujant šviesaus prisiminimo Mindaugui, kuris, pri mus jam krikšto sakrament , buvo apaštališkojo autoriteto vainikuotas karalium, ta iau nuožmiai nužudytas piktos valios s n .. ." (presidente illi clare memoria Mindota, qui post receptum baptismatis sacramentum auctoritate apostolka coronatus in Regem fuit, tandem a quibusdam preditionis filiis crudeliter interfectus . . .)⁸⁾

Iš ties , Mindaugo darbui paioje Lietuvoje dar buvo priešing veiksniai , ir jis krito kaip sritini (partikuliarni) pagoniškj g auka. Karalius Mindaugas su dviem savo s numis buvo dviej sritini kunigaikš i nužudytas (1263). Jau buvo pra j penkeri metai nuo šios tragedijos, ir Romos Kurija gal jo b ti tiksliai painformuota, kas tolimam Baltijos pakrašty ištiko naujai apsikrikštijus karali , kur buvo sud ta tiek daug vil i . Galvojama, kad popiežius, Mindaugui atkritus nuo krikš iony b s, joki

⁶⁾ Quellenwerk zur Entstegung der Schweizerischen Eidgenossenschaft, Urkunden, Bd. I, 1938

⁷⁾ Krol Litewski, 1892

⁸⁾ Theiner, I 79 p.

b du neb t jo pavadin s “clare memoria Mindota”. Sa-
lia ši žodži dar yra ir popiežiaus liudijimas apie Mindaug-
go uolum Lietuv krikštijant.⁹⁾

5. Lietuvos Bažny ios kelias po Mindaugo

Mindaugo pastangos ne tiktai lietuvi taut apkrišk-
tyti, bet ir kurti atskir Lietuvos bažnytini provincij pa-
siliko kelrodžiu ir tolimesn ms kartoms. Jo vykdytas krikš-
tioninimo darbas joms šviet kaip didelis užsimojimas,
prad tas dar tuo metu, kai Lietuvos valstyb dar tiktai ki-
lo iš nežinios kan . Visišškai suprantama, kad tokiu metu
jis sutiko daug kli i ir jam nepavyko savo užsimojim
pilnai gyvendinti. Ta iau ir jam žuvus, krikš ionyb Lie-
tuvoje išsilaik .

Juk gerai žinoma, kad dar prieš Mindaug rytiniuose
Lietuvos valstyb s plotuose, kurie nuolat augo, jau buvo
sta iatiki . Didžiosios Lietuvos Kunigaikštyst s valdovai
laik si pla ios tolerancijos. Tolerantiška Gedimino politika
leido ir Romos apeig vienuoliams Lietuvoje statydintis
savas bažny ias. Patys didieji kunigaikš iai (Gediminas,
K stutis, Algirdas) nuolat ved derybas d l krikšto. Gim-
davo vairi projekt , bet vokie i ordino užma ios, iš ku-
ri Mindaugas tik su Romos pagalba gal jo išsisukti, vis
stodavo skersai kelio. Vienas iš t projekt buvo vykdy-
ta, kai Jogaila tapo Lenkijos karalium (1386). Jisai su Vy-
tautu pasek pirmojo Lietuvos karaliaus p domis: abu pa-
tys krikštijosi ir sak visai tautai krikštytis (1387). Abu
k r ir pirm sias bažny ias. Jie ir tapo tikrieji Lietuvos
Bažny ios organizatoriai.

Ta iau prad jus vykdyti Kr vos susitarimus (1385),
kurie politiškai suglaud Lietuv ir Lenkij , su Lietuvos
Bažny ios savarankiškumu padaryta tai, ko siek Mindaug-
go laikais Rygos arkivyskupas. Tiktai šiuo atveju abi Lie-
tuvos vyskupijos (Vilniaus ir Medinink) pateko valdži
kito kaimyno — Gniezno arkivyskupo. Vytauto Didžiojo
pastangos sudaryti atskir Lietuvos metropolij nebuvo
s kmingos. Lietuvos Bažny ia paliko priklausoma nuo len-
k dvasin s vyresnyb s iki XVII amžiaus pabaigos. B t

⁹⁾ Ibid. I, 80 p.

atskiras klausimas kalbėti apie tos priklausomybės žalą lietuvi tautai. Šia iškalbingus liudijimus duoda XVI-XVIII amžiaus dokumentai, kaip Komulejaus vizitacijos Vilniuje, Tarkvinijaus Pekulo—Žemaičiuose ir vienuolių žuikmetiniai pranešimai iš Lietuvos ir Lenkijos (Annuaire ditterrae).

Kai Lietuva ir Lenkija XVIII amžiaus gale kaimyn buvo pasidalyta, tai baigėsi ir Lietuvos Bažnyčios priklausomybė Gnieznui. Paskutinis respublikos nuncijus Litta, carui neprieštaraujant, Rusijos katalikams steigė Mohilevo arkivyskupiją (1798) su sostine Petrapilyje. Savo jurisdikcijos plotu ji buvo tada pati didžiausia visame pasaulyje: apėmė tris ketvirtadalius europinės ir beveik visą azijinę Rusiją. Mohilevo arkivyskupijai priklausė ir Žemaičiai bei Vilniaus diecezijos. Dėl autokratiškos Rusijos car politikos Mohilevo arkivyskupo vieta buvo tuščia net keletais atvejais.

Pirmas Didysis karas atnešė naujus politinius santykius. Paskutinis Mohilevo arkivyskupas Edvardas von Ropp, paskirtas 1917 m., po dviejų metų bolševikų buvo suimtas ir ištremtas, o administratorius Cieplik išvengė mirties tik sikišus Romai ir kai kurioms valstybėms. Bet jo generalvikaras K. Butkevičius 1923 metais (Didžioji Penktadienis) buvo žiauriu būdu sušaudytas. Nekaltos aukos kraujuje Mohilevo arkivyskupija užbaigė savo dienas, prasiidėjusi su car priesauda Lietuvoje.

Mohilevo arkivyskupijai nepriklausė tik ta dalis Lietuvos, Suduva, kuri po padalinimo kartu su dalimi Lenkijos (net Varšuva) buvo atitekusiai Prūsijai. Šios srities katalikams buvo steigta Vygrių vyskupija 1798 m. Tačiau po Vienos kongreso, sudarius Lenkijos karalystę, sujungtą su Rusija, 1818 metais kurta Varšuvos arkivyskupija ir prie jos prijungtos 7 pertvarkytos vyskupijos. Joms priklausė ir Augustavo-Seino vyskupija, kuriai priklausė ir Lomžos plotai. Tokia tvarka šia paliko iki Lietuvos nepriklausomybės laikų.

Nepriklausomybės kovų metu lenkams Seinus užgrobęs, vyskupas A. Karosas laikinai sikrė Marijampolėje. Smurtu lenkams už mus dar Vilnių, demarkacijos linija buvo atkiršta ir vakarinė dalis Vilniaus vyskupijos. Lietu-

vos katalikai jau nebegal jo toliau priklausyti nei Varšuvos nei Mohilevo arkivyskupijoms. Tai buvo jau praeities dalykas.

6. Op s bažnytiniai reikalai, Lietuvos valstyb atstai ius

Per nepriklausomyb s kovas naujoji Lietuva buvo atstatyta tik didel mis aukomis. Bet tai dar nebuvo visa. Reik jo sutvarkyti ir dvasinius jos reikalus, kad prisik lusios tautos nepriklausomyb tapt vispusiška. O ia b ta opi r pes i ir nemažos painiavos.

Vis trij Lietuvos vyskupij dalys buvo užgrobtos Lenkijos, su kuria nebuvo joki diplomatiniai ryši . Iš Vilniaus vyskupijos Lietuvos pus je liko tik 215,000 katalik su 82 kunigais. T vyskupijos dal administravo iš Vilniaus ištremtas kan. J. Kukta. Sein vyskupas A. Karosas, si k r s Vilkaviškyje ir netek s dalies parapij , tur jo savo valdžioje 320,000 katalik su 193 kunigais. Didžiausi Nepriklausomosios Lietuvos dal ap m istoriškoji Žemai i vyskupija, kuri vald vysk. Pr. Karevi ius. Ji tur jo 1,215,000 katalik su 346 bažny iom ir 662 kunigais. Bet ir tos vyskupijos viena dalis buvo Lenkijos okupuota, o kita — Latvijos valstybei atitekusi. Keturios parapijos Klaip dos krašte su 8000 katalik buvo Varmijos vyskupo valdžioje. Tad Lietuvos Bažny ia ap m sukapotas dalis net keturi skirting jurisdikcij . Ji buvo ir be jokio vienijan io centro.

Dar karui tebeinant, Roma dom josi išskylaniais naujais santykiais Baltijos kraštuose ir Ryt Europoje. 1918 met balandžio m nesyje popiežius Benediktas XV paskyr Achilles Ratti (v liau pop. Pij XI) vizitatorium Lenkijai ir Lietuvai. Po met jis tapo jau Lenkijai nuncijum, o Lietuvai ir toliau paliko vizitatorium. Roma d l stokos objektyvi informacij , buvo gana atsargi ir sant ri. Juk gerai žinoma, kad Lenkijos politikai ir generolai, niekindami j vadinam “Litwa Kowie sk ”, siek pirmojo padalinimo sien arba 1772 met bendros su Lietuva valstyb s. Tokiu atveju b t užtek ir vieno nuncijaus, kaip tai yra buv praityje per 250 met .

Geriau lietuvius suprasti dar sunkino Vilniaus klausimas ir, apskritai, visi santykiai su lenkais. ia klaidingas

paži ras Lietuv tur jo Antonio Zechini, kuris keturius metus buvo vizitatorium, atseit, apaštališkuoju delegatu Lietuvoje. Kaunan jis atvyko 1921 met pabaigoje. Tai buvo Steigiamojo Seimo laikai. Vizitatorius pamat karo ir okupacij nualint krašt, suskurdusi anuometin Kaun. Krokuvoje noviciat jis vienuolis vaizdavosi, kaip ne vienas lenkas, kad negali b ti Lietuvos be Lenkijos. O Kau no gatv se jis gird davo gana dažnai kalbant dar nelietuviškai. Visuomen s susiskirstymas smulkias partijas vizitatoriui taip pat nedar gero sp džio, nors katalikai Seime tur jo aiški didžium, o bažny ios buvo pilnos tikin i j.

Vizitatorius Antonio Zechini neap iuop lietuvi tautos gyvojo pulso bei siekim ir neslepiamai reišk nuomon, kad Nepriklausomoji Lietuva negal sianti savarankiškai gyventi. Jam buvo skaudu matyti, kai du katalikiški kraštai tarp sav s nesutinka. Jis buvo aiškiai atsistoj s pus je lenk, kuri istorij gerai pažino. Ta istorija dengdamiesi, lenkai Lietuv skriaud ir vienos valstyb s siek. Zechini taip pat ragino lietuvius susijungti su lenkais, kaip tai buvo senov je. Šališk savo paži r jis neatsisak nei tap s arkivyskupu ir paskirtas pilnateisiu delegatu visoms trims Baltijos valstyb ms.

Naujojo popiežiaus, Pijaus XI, delegatui asmeniškai atrod, kad dar n ra pribrend s reikalas steigti atskir Lietuvos bažnytin provincij. Žemai i vyskupas Pr. Karevius ir jo generalvikaras vysk. J. Skvireckas jau buvo apsvarst t reikal ir delegatui pla iai išd st nenormali pad t. Praš j tuos reikalus pad ti Romoje sutvarkyti, ko Zechini nesi m. Tuo tarpu 1925 m. vasario 10 d. buvo sudaryta su Roma atsik rusios Lenkijos konkordatas. Juo buvo steigtos 5 bažnytin s provincijos su 15 vyskupij. Pirm kart istorijoje ir Vilniaus sritis pakilo arkivyskupij. Jai dar buvo prid tos Pinsko ir Lomžos vyskupijos. Kadangi Vilniaus klausimas lietuviams buvo labai jautrus, — aišku buvo ir kurioje pus je teisyb ir kas ia kaltas, — tai nors Vilniaus sritis tik bažnytiškai buvo patvarkyta, vi-soje lietuvi visuomen je suk l didelio nepasitenkinimo. Neaps jo ir be apgail tin incident. Lietuvoje tada ir m s diplomatams atrod, kad užgaunami lietuvi tautos jausmai ir didinama skriauda. Nors Lenkijos konkordatas ne-

sprend politini sien klausimo ir tur jo nuostatus apie galim bažnytini provincij pakeitim . Visa tai sudar toki pad t , kad 1925 m. geguž s m n. arkivysk. Zechini išvyko Rygon ir nebegavo leidimo sugr žti. Jo vietoje paliko sekretorius monsg. Aloyzas Faidutti — šviesus ir labai apdairus vyras.

Nerim Lietuvoje dar padidino žinia, kad Vilniaus vysk. Jurgis Matulevi ius, lenk ver iamas, atsisak nuo savo vyskupijos ir išvyko Rom . Visuomenei apraminti Lietuvos vyskupai išleido ganytojišk laišk , o savo ruožtu kreip si Rom , kad Lietuvos Bažny ios reikalai b t paskubinta tvarkyti. Vyskupas Pr. Karevi ius 1925 m. spalio 13 d. praš iš Žemai i vyskupijos padaryti dvi diecezijas. Po poros savai i Aukštoje Panemun je pas prel. J. Staugait susirinko vysk. A. Karosas, vysk. J. Skvireckas, kan. J. Kukta ir monsg. A. Faidutti. Po šio pos džio, 1925 m. lapkri io 2 d., buvo pasi stas Romai raštas (Karoso, Karevi ius ir Kuktos), kuriame buvo prašoma sudaryti bažnytin Lietuvos provincij ir naujai pertvarkyti vyskupij ribas.

7. Arkivyskupo J. Matulevi iaus misija Nepriklausomoje Lietuvoje

Vienintelis popiežius, kuris yra buv s Kaune ir Vilniuje, buvo Pijus XI, išsivež s savo sp džius, patyrimus ir pažintis. Tai jam labai pravert , Apaštali Sost s dus. Nelaimingoji arkiv. A. Zechini misija popieži gal b t dar labiau palenk pavesti jautrius ir komplikuotus Lietuvos bažnytinius reikalus aptvarkyti patiems lietuviams, o ne svetimiems. Popiežius parinko ir asmen , kur nepaprastai vertino. Tai buvo Jurgis Matulevi ius, jau pasiek s Rom ir pakeltas tituliarinius arkivyskopus. Jis buvo m sis vadovauti marijon kongregacijai, bet Dievo Apvaizda, matyti, buvo jam l musi aptvarkyti painius Lietuvos Bažny ios reikalus. Pijus XI paskyr j Lietuvai apaštališkuoju vizitatorium su labai plaiais galiojimais.

¹⁰⁾ Apie arkiv. Jurg Matulevi i kaip apaštališk j vizitatori Lietuvoje, remdamasis garsia marijon archyvo medžiaga, T. Steponas Matulis, M.I.C. paraš s yra stamb 260 puslapi veikal (Roma, 1938).

Jurgis Matulevičius atvyko Kauną 1925 m. gruodžio 13 d. Kaip ir ark. A. Zeciniui, atstatoma Lietuvos valstybė jam rodė silpną kėdį, tačiau jis mėsė t viškai j glo-
boti ir stiprinti. ia ir buvo didelis skirtumas tarp išvykusio delegato ir atvykusio vizitatoriaus. Jurgis Matulevičius daug geriau negu Zecini pažino lenkus, su jais ilgai gyveno ir mokėsi, j tarpe ir draug turėjo, tačiau Luginis kaimo (nuo Marijampolės) sėnus Lietuvos klausimu toli skyrėsi nuo buvusio delegato. Ark. Zecini nebuvo matė reikalo skubėti steigti atskir Lietuvos bažnytinę provinciją, o ark. Matulevičius laikė tai lietuvių tautos nepriklausomumui būtina sąlyga. Tam pasiekti jis skyrė vis savo sveikatą ir jėgas.

Kliūdi savo uždaviniui jis rado daug, net tarp pačių katalikų. Reikėjo išklaustyti daug priekaištų, išlyginti daug priešingų nuomonių. Didele kantrybe vizitatorius veikė visas kliūtis. Ir visa tai atliko nuostabių uolumu, sumaniai ir nedelsdamas. Nuo 1925 metų pabaigos nedaug buvo ir laiko tokiam dideliui darbui. O jau 1926 metų balandžio 4 d. buvo paskelbta apaštališkoji konstitucija "Lituanorum gente".

Buvo taip pat didelis darbas sutvarkyti seminariją, Teologijos - Filosofijos fakultetą, ordiną ir kongregaciją, lenkų kalbos ir jė pamaldų reikalus ir t.t. Tačiau pats didžiausias darbas buvo suprojektuoti naujas vyskupijas. ia nuolat talkininkavo generalvikaras vysk. J. Skvireckas, kuris apibrėžė parapijas ir dekanatus naujoms vyskupijoms. Atskirais klausimais padėjo prof. Pr. Bėys. Daug naudingo darbo atliko didelio išsilavinimo juristas msgr. A. Faidutti.

Visa tai buvo daroma gana kruopščiai, bet ir nedelsiant. Uždėlus, būt ir visas tas svarbus darbas užkliuvis. Kaip vizitatorius buvo pramats, 1926 metų gegužės rinkimuose katalikiškąją partiją dauguma Seime nebeparėjo. Susidariusi nauja vyriausybė, remiama liaudininkų, socialdemokratų ir tautinių mažumų, Jurgio Matulevičiaus darbo nepripažino, nors vis jau buvo atlikta, Apaštala Sosto užtvirtinta ir tai lietė grynai bažnytinius reikalus. Tikėtai 1927 m. rugsėjo 27 d. Romoje buvo pasirašytas Lietuvos ir Vatikano konkordatas ratifikuotas tą pačią dieną spalio 12 dieną.

8. Bažnytinės Lietuvos provincijos steigimas

Bažnytinės provincijos steigimas Nepriklausomoje Lietuvoje yra vienas iš reikšmingiausių faktų visoje Lietuvos Bažnyčios istorijoje. Lietuvos bažnytinė santvarka nuo to meto visai pasikeitė.

Kauno metropolijai sudaroma viena archidiecezija ir keturios sufraganinės vyskupijos. Suskirstymas buvo padarytas gerai apgalvojus.

Iš šiaurės demarkacijos linijos esanti Vilniaus vyskupijos parapija (su mažomis išimtimis) buvo kurta Kaišiadorių vyskupija (5 dekanatai). Jos vyskupu šv. sta. kan. J. Kukta.

Iš Lietuvos pusės esančios Seinų diecezijos dalies buvo sudaryta Vilkaviškio vyskupija (11 dekanatų). Vyskupu ir palikuoju A. Karosas, o jo koadiutorium šv. sta. prof. kun. M. Reinys.

Iš senosios Medininkų-Žemaičių vyskupijos, kuri buvo pati didžiausia, sudarytos Telšių ir Panevėžio vyskupijos ir Kauno arkivyskupija. Telšių vyskupijai su 13 dekanatais buvo šv. sta. vyskupu prel. J. Staugaitis. Panevėžio vyskupijai (su 10 dekanatais) — prof. kan. K. Paltarokas. Kauno archidiecezijai liko 9 dekanatai (apie 400,000 katalikų). Jos valdytoju ir Kauno metropolitu, pirmuoju Lietuvos istorijoje, tapo generalvikaras vysk. J. Skvireckas, didysis Šv. Rašto lietuviniojas. Buvęs paskutinis Žemaičių diecezijos ganytojas, vysk. Pr. Karevičius, pasitraukė nuošaliai, stodamas marijon vienuolynui.

Nors Žemaičių vyskupija buvo išskirstyta, tačiau paskutinis jos generalvikaras, tapęs Kauno arkivyskupu ir metropolitu, Juozapas Skvireckas kai rašė savo pirmuosius ganytojiškus laiškus kapitulai ir tikintiesiems, atsiradimui Žemaičių vyskupijos garbingas tradicijas. Jis prisiminė: „didį liaudies švietimą ir blaivymą apaštala Motiej (Valanči) dr. su tikėjimo gynėju Meislov (Paliulion), geraširdišką visų mylimą Gasper (Cirtaut) ir nenuilstamą uolumo Dievo garbei Prancišk (Kareviči)...“

1926 m. gegužės 13 d. (Kristaus Dangūnų Žengimo šventėje) Lietuvos metropolitas atliko savo istorišką įngresą Kauno Bazilikai, dalyvaudamas vizitatoriui arkiv. J. Matu-

levi iui, seniems ir naujiems vyskupams, Lietuvos vyriausybei, Seimo nariams, užsienio diplomatams, organizacijoms ir didelei miniai tikinčiųjų.

Ta proga, steigiant Lietuvos bažnytinę provinciją, dail. P. Rimša nuliedino atminimui medalį, kurio vienoje pusėje yra profiliai Inocento IV ir Pijaus XI, o antroje — vysk. Kristijono ir ark. Juozapo. Taip prasmingai buvo atsiųsta Mindaugo laikų pirmoji Lietuvos vyskupijų.

Septyni amžiai ir šimtmečio ketvirtis mums primena šiandien tas reikšmingas sukaktis tokiu metu, kai mūsų tarybiniai kenčia Jobo kančias. Bet Lietuvos, kaip ir visos Katalikų Bažnyčios, istorija rodo, kad statomi namai ant Dievo pagrindo turi tvirtą atramą ir po ilgą laiką atgimsta dvasia ir dar sustiprėja. Ir lietuviai tauta atgims savo laisvę, nes ji stovi ant tvirtos Petro uolos.

Roma, 1951. V. 11.

KING MINDAUGAS AND THE PATH TO CHRISTIANITY

“The Lithuanian Nation after the World War, with the help of God having regained its freedom: We, who with our own eyes have seen the faith and the religious spirit of the Lithuanians so courageously and so long preserved by them despite so many hardships and trials; since We have become convinced that a more fitting arrangement of ecclesiastical affairs will be more useful not only for the welfare of Catholicism, but for the State itself, find it very proper and necessary to increase the number of Bishoprics and from them to form an Ecclesiastical Province.”

(“Way of Truth”—Official Section, 1926, No. 3, p. 24).

In these opening words of his Apostolic Constitution “*Lituanorum Gente*” a quarter of a century ago, Pope Pius XI establishing an Ecclesiastical Province in Lithuania stressed the importance of his act to the newly resuscitated nation. On the glorious Feast of Easter, in the year 1926, the organization of the Church in Lithuania was re-arranged from its foundations. Independent Lithuania became a Ecclesiastical Metropolitate with four suffragan Bishoprics, and thus achieved ecclesiastical independence as well.

In the Spring of that year 1926 the Apostolic See restored to Lithuania those ecclesiastical ties which had been established seven hundred years previously at a time when the Lithuanian State under King Mindaugas was still in an embryonic stage. Pope Innocent IV detached the newly formed “See of Lithuania” from dependence upon neighboring States, and made it directly subject to the Holy See. Thus the beginning of the nation itself, its seven hundred years of traditions are linked with a significant fact: it was King Mindaugas, the first ruler of Lithuania accorded regal recognition, who freely accepted the glad tidings of the Gospel and formed direct relationships with the Apostolic See.

1. Mindaugas' Path to Christianity.

The origin of the Lithuanian nation is still hidden in obscurity and is the subject of varied theorizing and speculations. Latest researches furnish grounds for pushing back her beginning to the 12th or 13th century, at least several scores of years

before the appearance of Mindaugas (1326) the acclaimed creator of the Lithuanian State. This historical character, traceable more and more clearly amidst the mists of the past, towers as it were a rock of strength, ever attracting, in all ages, the interest and study of historians. Compared with a later ruler, Vytautas the Great (1392—1430), he occupies an important niche in historical studies. His times are the subject of no less than six dissertations and numerous historical studies and monographs.

The first was Julius Latkovskis who in 1892 made a scholarly review of the period. He was followed by J. Totoraitis, Miss K. Skirmontaite, St. Zajackowskis, Philip Klymenko who propounded an original theory, J. Stakauskas who expressed comprehensive views, A. Steponaitis, and A. Juška. Unfortunately, this abundance of historical material could not boast of many documented sources. There are extant only two fundamental chronicles: the Annals of Ipatjeva or Volynija, and a good two thousand verses of well styled poetry in a collection called "The Chronicles of Livonia". To these should be added the official Papal communications and bulls addressed to Mindaugas. That is the total source material for the historian to work with.

Hence it is not surprising that a whole series of questions remains unsettled concerning the period: who led the uprisings at Saule and Durbe where the freedom of the Lithuanian nation was being settled; where was Mindaugas' capital; which are the genuine documents of Mindaugas ceding land to the Livonian Order; finally, whether Mindaugas after baptism fell away from the Church or not. All these questions have given rise and continue to stir up discussion, disagreement and puzzlement. However, the fact itself of Mindaugas' baptism, is so indisputable, has left so many imprints that any dispute among historians will center around its effects rather than its authenticity. And this will be colored by the viewpoint of the historian, not the historical evidence itself. An example of this kind is the Soviet Ukrainian historian P. Klymenko.

As to what attracted and drew Mindaugas to accept Baptism we can best discover examining the formation of the Lithuanian State. This was not the work of one day. It was not the result of one single foresighted Lithuanian Prince unexpectedly and judiciously declaring his intent: "I hereby inaugurate the Lithuanian National State". The ideal and the idea of a united nation gradually evolved in the minds of the more important and rising princes in their desire for greater wealth and power, as it does in the life of the ordinary citizen. Individual Princes sought to enlarge their sphere of influence and to subject others to their rule. Undoubtedly it became necessary to use force at least to divest "outsiders" of their lands, and at times strategy and even deceit became the means employed.

In the case of new nations usually some outstanding prince

so overshadows others that his name is inevitably connected with the rise of that nation. Thus it was with Mindaugas of Lithuania. Thus it was with Clovis who is considered the founder of the modern French state. In fact, Papee the historian of the Middle Ages, states that the unifying of Lithuania accomplished by Mindaugas recalls the Merovingian line of Frankish kings.

While this process of unification was going on, opposition was met on the part of princes of separate territories, the Samogetian nobles being especially formidable in their resistance. The young ruler's position became more critical when a strong coalition was formed against him by the Samogitians, the unwilling Jotvingians, the rulers of Volnija and the Livonian Order. What was Mindaugas to do, and what means to adopt?

He set about to split the coalition. His opponent, Prince Tautvilas had been baptized, indeed at the hands of the Bishop of Riga. It was known that the Bishop (later Archbishop) of Riga was in opposition to the Livonian Order with which enmity was increasing. This division was later utilized by the Lithuanian King Vytenis (1295-1316) whose garrison protected the Archbishops and inhabitants of Riga from the knights of the Order. This alliance with the Archbishop was further extended by Gediminas (1316-1341). But it was Mindaugas who first took advantage of the state of war in Livonia (1250). Because his rival Tautvilas adhered to the Bishop of Riga and had been baptized by him, Mindaugas turned to the Livonian Order. He also expressed a desire to become a Christian. And his baptism, at least symbolically, was meant to be the baptism of the whole nation he ruled.

2. Mindaugas' Baptism and Coronation

The baptism of an entire nation being involved, it was impossible to avoid relationship with the Pope. Unfortunately, there are missing from the Vatican archives originals of the letters written to the Popes by the rulers of those times. The letters of Mindaugas are also missing. There are, however, copies of all the Pope's replies, which are published in the documentary collections of Theiner and Bunge. From Pope Innocent IV's letter we learn that in the beginning of the year 1251 Mindaugas was baptized "with a great number of pagans" ("cum numerosa multitudine paganorum" (Theiner, I, p. 50). Priests were sent to Lithuania from Livonia. It is supposed it was then that the Dominicans and Franciscans first exercised their Apostolic zeal; by the time of Gediminas, we find more positive evidence of their activity.

In his endeavors to establish ties with the Apostolic See without the employment of intermediaries, Mindaugas in 1251 sent his emissaries to Italy. The versified chronicle of Livonia mentions

that this delegation was headed by the Lithuanian Parnus (Livl., Reimchr., v. L. Meyer, V, 3505-15). Innocent IV. alludes to that delegation in his letter to Mindaugas: "Humbly you have petitioned Us through particular and extraordinary emissaries" (Quia vero per solemnios ac speciales nuntios nobis humilites supplicasti (Theiner, I, p. 49).

Mindaugas' delegates who were received by the Pope at Milan arrived at a moment of great stress. It was the time when the struggle between the Pope and the Hohenstauffens was at its bitterest peak. The excommunicated Emperor Frederick II. had just died, but his followers were by no means yielding. The Pope had his hands full with them, yet he found time to show interest and attention to both the delegates from the Baltic nation as well as to the ruler they represented. This is born out by the six letters written by the Papal Curia to Mindaugas in the Spring of 1251, treating of various matters affecting Christianization: for instance, the Bishop, prelates and Church rectors of the Lithuanian diocese about to be organized, are reminded to be gentle in their dealing with the people. This was given with the clergy of the Livonian Order in mind, as they having been given the task of baptizing the Lithuanians had undoubtedly carried it out with the interests of their Order uppermost at heart. Erecting the separate Diocese of Lithuania (diecesis Letoviensis) the Pope on July 17, 1251 granted to the nation the patronage and protection of the Holy See.

Able statesman that he was and showed himself to be throughout his entire regime, Mindaugas did not trust the Livonian Order. Its intent to annex Lithuania was becoming more and more patent. Lithuania's Christianization might add a new pretext for this step, hence Mindaugas' petition that the newly evangelized Lithuania be directly subject to the Apostolic See.

Pope Innocent IV in his turn addressed letters to neighboring Bishops (Ezelis, Riga, Kursa, Dorpat) interceding that they aid the Lithuanian efforts to become Christians. Lithuania's entrance into the fold, it appeared to the Pope, would afford the Apostolic See a firm stronghold in Eastern Europe. Daniel of Volynia had indeed joined himself to the Roman Church, but he soon defected. Lithuania had to become the vanguard of Western Christianity's further spread to the East.

Entitled "special son of the Holy Roman Church" (filius specialis Sanctae Romanae Ecclesiae), Mindaugas was crowned King. Only to baptized rulers could the Pope grant the title of King, raise them to a higher sphere of rulers. Not to be Bishop of Riga, but to Bishop Heidenreich of Prussian Cologne did the delegation fall to crown Mindaugas King in the name of the Apostolic See. However, a three years delay intervened before Mindaugas could rid himself of other pretenders. Seeking their own interests, the Livonian Order and the Archbishop of Riga in

all ways saw to it that Mindaugas' goal of complete independence was thwarted. It was only in 1253 that Mindaugas was crowned King of Lithuania. Pope Alexander IV a few years later awarded the kingly crown also to Mindaugas' son.

Strange were the ways of further Lithuanian development! Although she later created a vast Eastern Empire and her fame was wide spread, it so happened that Mindaugas was her first and only crowned King. Vytautas was prevented from attaining this glory in 1430 because of intrigues, while in 1918 the invitation intended to be extended to the Herzog of Wittenberg, von Ulrich, to become king as Mindaugas II. indeed, remained only an empty gesture. The condition in which Lithuania as well as all of Europe found itself at the end of World War I swept away any inclination there may have been toward restoration of the monarchy in Lithuania, leaving Midaugas secure as the sole Lithuanian crowned monarch.

3. Lithuania's First See.

The State, under Mindaugas, moreover, was hierarchically made dependent on Rome only. This meant that it formed a distinct ecclesiastical province. But even here there was not clear sailing. The Livonian Order systematically opposed all efforts toward the establishment of a separate Lithuanian See. Mindaugas had to appeal a third time to Rome (Theiner, I., p. 53) in order to defeat the machinations of the Livonian Order and its Bishops to retain Lithuania within its jurisdiction. Only upon the command of the Pope did Albert, Archbishop of Riga consecrate Christian, an Order priest as Bishop of the "Diocese of Lithuania". Even at this point the political maneuverings did not cease. The Papal directions were disregarded and the Diocese of Lithuania was annexed to Livonia and the Prussian Archbishopric. Christian's oath was received in the name of the Archbishop of Riga. The Pope had to issue a special decree cancelling the jurisdiction of the Archbishop of Riga over Lithuania. On September 3, 1254, the Pope authorized the Bishop of Neunberg to receive the oath from Christian in the name of the Pope as Bishop of Rome. (LUB, I, Chap. 355). The Pope informed Mindaugas himself about the Lithuanian Diocese's exemption. In other words, three years elapsed before all difficulties were overcome.

At that period, in southern Lithuania, there was established the See of the Polish Dominican Vito. Little is known of its two years existence. Christian's spiritual rule concided with Mindaugas' civil government. He established his See in the territories of the Samogitians donated to him by Mindaugas, surrounded on all sides by pagans. The first Bishop of Lithuania was sorely tried by the difficulties facing him. In 1259 he was forced to abandon his See, and he died in 1270 as Suffragan Bishop of

Mainz, Germany. Even after his death, the Diocese of Lithuania had to accept as Bishop a priest of the Teutonic Order named John. His Lithuanian bishopric was merely titular, he in reality being Coadjutor Bishop of Constance. As to his activities in this position from his residence in Switzerland, there have been recently discovered seven documents published in the collection "Quellenwerk zur Entstehung der Schweizerischen Eidgenossenschaft, I, Urkunden, Bd. 1, 1938. In these documents John is referred to as "Bishop of Lithuania". However, he never set face upon his Titular See.

4. Question of Mindaugas' Defection.

Historians have engaged in long discussions debating whether Mindaugas fell away from the faith, or died for it as a martyr as J. Latkovskis (Krol Litewski, 1892) holds. Until now, it has not been possible to settle this question definitely. Lack of source material and certain contradictions preclude final determination of the truth, nor can it be hoped that any new discoveries will be made to shed light on the disputed question.

In 1934 the Rev. Dr. J. Stakauskas attempted to solve the doubt. In this dissertation "Lithuania and Western Europe in the Thirteenth Century", he tried to prove that Mindaugas remained a faithful Christian. His evidence could be the sole and often quoted letter which Pope Clement IV (1265-1268) addressed to the Czech King. The pertinent words of this letter are the following: "under the leadership of Mindaugas of enlightened memory, who, after reception of the Sacrament of Baptism, was by authority of the Apostolic See crowned King, however was cruelly killed by certain children of perdition.. ." Theiner, I, p. 79. (*presidente illi clare memoria Mindota, qui post receptum baptismatis sacramentum auctoritate apostolica coronatus in Regem fuit, tandem a quibusdam perditionis filiis crudeliter interfectus...*)

In truth, Mindaugas had obstacles to overcome arising from the Lithuanians themselves, and it may be said that he fell a victim to the factional native pagan powers. He, together with his two sons, Princes Ruklys and Rupeikis, were murdered in 1263 by two conspiring princes. Five years had passed since this tragedy when Pope Clement IV. wrote, sufficient to allow the Roman Curia to be truthfully informed as to what had transpired in the distant Baltic country and the fate which overtook the newly baptized King in whom such great hopes had been placed. It seems evident that had Mindaugas fallen away from the faith, by no means would the Pope refer to him as "clare memoria Mindota". Besides, there is the acknowledgment by the Pope of Mindaugas' zeal in Christianizing Lithuania. (Theiner, I, p. 80).

5. The Church in Lithuania after Mindaugas.

Mindaugas' efforts to bring Lithuania to Christianity as well as to set up a separate Lithuanian ecclesiastical province, were as beacon-lights for future generations. His Christianization labors shone as the goal first sought in the ages when Lithuania was emerging from its hidden past. It is readily understandable that he encountered many obstacles and he did not fully succeed in accomplishing his ambitious plan. However, even after his demise Christianity survived in Lithuania.

It is well known that even before Mindaugas, in the constantly growing sections of Eastern Lithuania there had been Orthodox adherents. The rulers of Greater Lithuania's principalities were very tolerant in their viewpoint. The tolerant policy of Gediminas (1316—1341) allowed the monks of Roman Rite to build their own churches. The leading Grand Dukes themselves (Gediminas, Kstutis, Algirdas) continuously were negotiating toward acceptance of Christianity. From time to time various projects were set afoot, but the intrigues of the Teutonic Order from which Mindaugas could rescue himself only with the aid of Rome, always delayed final realization of submission to Christianity. One such project attained its end when Jogaila, Grand Duke of Lithuania, simultaneously became King of Poland (1386). He, together with Vytautas the Great, followed in the footsteps of Lithuania's first King; they both were baptized and commanded the entire nation likewise to be baptized. (1387). Both organized the first churches in Lithuania, and thus deserve recognition as the true builders of the Church in Lithuania.

However, when Jogaila's Pact of Kreve with Poland (1385) was carried out, resulting in a political marriage between Lithuania and Poland, the Church in Lithuania was struck a blow at its non-dependence which had been attempted in Mindaugas' times by the Archbishop of Riga. This explains how both Lithuanian Sees (Vilna and Medininkai) became subject to a neighboring Archbishop — that of Gniezen. The efforts of Vytautas to establish an autonomous Lithuanian metropolitane failed. The Church in Lithuania remained subject to the Polish hierarchy until the end of the 17th century. To treat of the injury inflicted upon Lithuania by this arrangement would be a distinct subject of discussion. Revealing evidence is furnished by documents of the 16th-18th centuries, such as the report of Komulejus' visitation to Vilna, that of Tarkvinijus to Pekulis in Lithuanian Samogitia, and the Jesuits' annual relations from Lithuania and Poland (*Annuae Ditterae*).

Only with the partition of both Lithuania and Poland following the Napoleonic Wars toward the close of the 18th century did the Lithuanian Church cease dependence upon the See of Gniezen. The last Nuncio to the Republic—Litta—established the Arch-

bishopric of Mohilev for the Catholics of Russia, with its See at St. Petersburg, the Czar not entering any objections. In the extent of its jurisdiction, it was then the largest in the world: it embraced three quarters of European and all of Asiatic Russia. The Lithuanian Dioceses of Samogitia (Lowland) and Vilna were subject to the Archdiocese of Mohilev. Because of autocratic political moves on the part of the Russian Czars, the See of Mohilev was vacant during several periods.

The First World War ushered in new political relationships. The last Archbishop of Mohilev, Edward von Ropp, designated in 1917, was taken prisoner by the Bolsheviki after two years and exiled; the Administrator of the Diocese, Cieplik, escaped death only due to the intervention of Rome and certain other nations. His Vicar-General, K. Butkevičius, was brutally murdered on Good Friday in 1923. Thus the Archdiocese of Mohilev, inaugurated in the times of Czarist domination in Lithuania, came to an end in the blood of innocent victims.

The only part of Lithuania which did not depend upon the Archdiocese of Mohilev was that of Suduva, which after the partition, together with part of Poland (including even Warsaw) was joined to Prussia. For the Catholics of this territory, the Diocese of Vygriai was set up in 1798. After the Congress of Vienna, when the Kingdom of Poland was formed and joined to Russia, in 1818 the Archdiocese of Warsaw was created. To it were adjoined seven reorganized dioceses, including that of the Lithuanian See of Augustavus—Šeiniai, to which belonged also the district of Lomža. This set-up continued until the restoration of Lithuanian independence in 1918.

While the struggle for independence was waging, Šeiniai was occupied by the Poles, and its Bishop, A. Karosas, temporarily transferred to Mariampolis. The Poles also deceitfully seizing the Lithuanian capital, Vilna, a line of demarcation cut off the western part of the Diocese of Vilna. Lithuanian Catholics could no longer belong to either the Warsaw or Mohilev Archdioceses, which affiliations became a closed historical fact of the past.

6. Necessity of Establishing New Relationships of Church in Lithuania

Independent Lithuania was re-established only with great sacrifices. Nor was this all that was required. It was imperative to reorganize her ecclesiastical status so that independence might be all inclusive. This problem presented both cares and complexities.

Parts of all three Lithuanian Dioceses had been seized by Poland with whom there were no diplomatic relations. In the Lithuanian part of the Diocese of Vilna there remained 215,000 faithful with 82 priests. That portion of the Diocese was admi-

nistered by Canon J. Kutka an exile from Vilna. The Bishop of Šeiniai, A. Karosas, setting up his See at Vilkaviškis, and having lost a part of the parishes belonging to his Diocese, had under his rule 320,000 Catholics with 193 priests. The greatest part of independent Lithuania was included in the historic See of Samogitia (Lowland) under Bishop Francis Karevius. It comprised 1,215,000 Catholics, with 346 churches and 662 priests. But even one part of this diocese was occupied by Poland, while another portion had been given over to Latvia. Four parishes in the Klaipėda (Memel) territory of Lithuania Minor (Prussia) with 8,000 Catholics, were within the bishopric of Varniai. The Church in Lithuania thus consisted of various territories belonging to four distinct jurisdictions. There was also lacking any unifying center.

Even before the cessation of hostilities, Rome was concerned with the question of new relationships in the Baltic countries and Eastern Europe. In April, 1918, Pope Benedict XV appointed Archbishop Ratti (later Pope Pius XI.) as Apostolic Visitor to Poland and Lithuania. After a year he became Nuncio to Poland and remained as Visitor to Lithuania. Rome, lacking objective information, was cautious and unprecipitous. It is well known that Poland's leading statesmen and generals, brushing aside their so-called "Litwa Kowie ska" sought the restoration of the first partition's boundaries, that is, the joint Polish-Lithuanian State which existed in 1772. Under such a situation, a single Nuncio would have sufficed as had been the case for 250 years previously.

A better understanding of the Lithuanian people was hindered by the stormy Vilna question (both Lithuania and Poland claiming that city as their ancient capital). In fact all phases of Lithuanian-Polish relationships contributed to the misunderstanding. Erroneous views were entertained by the Visitor Antonio Zechini, four years Visitor-Apostolic Delegate to Lithuania. He arrived in Kaunas toward the end of 1921, when the Provisional government Congress (Seimas) was in process of formation. The Archbishop-Visitor saw the country devastated by war and occupation, Kaunas shabby of aspect. Having been a religious novice in Cracow, he allowed his imagination to form the opinion that there could be no Lithuania without Poland. On the streets of Kaunas he heard conversations in Polish, Russian, Hebrew. The distribution of the masses into small parties did not leave a good impression upon the Visitor. A positive indication should have been the fact that the Catholics had a comfortable majority in the Congress, and the churches were full of the faithful.

The Visitor Antonio Zechini could not discover the living pulse of the Lithuanian nation, nor understand its aspirations. He therefore publicly declared himself to be of the opinion that independent Lithuania could not exist by itself. It was pitiable to him

that the two Catholic nations of Poland and Lithuania could not agree. He very plainly stood on the Polish side, being well acquainted with her history. Under the guise of that history, the Poles inflicted injustice upon Lithuania, and set for their goal one united nation. Zechini counseled the Lithuanians to unite with the Poles as they had done in the historic past. He did not abandon his biased view even after becoming Archbishop and Apostolic Delegate to the three Baltic nations, which took place after the death of Benedict XV.

Personally, the Delegate of the new Pope Pius XI did not think the time was opportune for instituting a separate Lithuanian ecclesiastical province. The Bishop of Samogitia, Francis Kavevius, and his Vicar General, Bishop Skvireckas, had studied the matter and fully reported to the Delegate the abnormal situation. They requested him to lend his assistance in Rome toward settlement of the matter, which Zechini declined. Meanwhile, on February 10, 1925, a Concordat was concluded between Rome and Poland. According to that agreement there were established five ecclesiastical provinces with fifteen bishoprics. For the first time in history, Vilna was raised to the rank of an Archdiocese. To it were attached the Dioceses of Pinsk and Lomža. The Vilna question was of the utmost importance and significance to Lithuanians. Though it appeared evident on which Side truth and justice lay and who was at fault — the inclusion of Vilna, Lithuania's ancient capital in a Polish ecclesiastical set-up, even though it was taking cognizance only of a political de facto situation, — aroused great dissatisfaction among all classes of the Lithuanian populace. Unfortunate incidents were not lacking. Diplomats stationed in Lithuania considered that Lithuania's rights and feeling were being disrespected, that injustice was being inflicted upon her. True, the Polish Concordat did not undertake to decide what would be the boundaries between Lithuania and Poland, but merely recognized as a de fact accomplishment that Vilna was in Polish hands. The Concordat contained provisions for future possible changes in the constitution of the Polish ecclesiastical province. The situation became so acute that in May, 1925, Archbishop Zechini departed for Riga, without obtaining permission to return. He left in his place, Msgr. Aloysius Paidutti, an enlightened and well rounded diplomat.

The tempest in Lithuania was heightened by the news that the Bishop of Vilna, George, Matulevius, forced by the Poles, had resigned his See and departed for Rome. To calm the Lithuanian faithful, the Bishop of Lithuania issued a Pastoral Letter, and in their own turn appealed to Rome that the affairs of the Church in Lithuania be speedily determined. Bishop Francis Kavevius on October 13, 1925, requested that the See of Samogitia be split into two dioceses. A few weeks later, a meeting was held at the Panuminis residence of Msgr. J. Staugaitis, attended by

Bishops A. Karosas and J. Skvireckas, Canon J. Kukta and the Papal representative, Msgr. Faidutti. The latter sent to Rome, on November 2, 1925, a transcript of this meeting, signed by Bishops Karosas and Karevius and Canon Kukta, petitioning for the erection of a Lithuanian ecclesiastical province and the setting of new boundaries.

7. Archbishop George Matulevius' Mission to Independent Lithuania.

Pope Pius XI is the sole Pontiff who had been in Kaunas and Vilna and retained his impressions, experiences and acquaintances. This came in good stead when he ascended the Papal throne. Zechini's unsuccessful mission perhaps further inclined the Pope to turn over to the Lithuanians themselves the solution of their delicate and involved ecclesiastical affairs, rather than to outsiders. He chose a person whom he highly esteemed, George Matulevius, who had already arrived in Rome and who had been elevated to titular Archbishop. He had undertaken to govern the Marian congregation of religious, but apparently Divine Providence had chosen him to settle the complicated affairs of the Church in Lithuania. Pius XI designated him Apostolic Visitor to Lithuania and conferred upon him vast powers. (Utilizing the plentiful source material in the Marian Fathers' archives, the Rev. Stephan Matulis, M.I.C. has written a 260 page monograph on the activities of the General of his Congregation as Apostolic Visitor to Lithuania. Rome, 1938).

The Archbishop arrived in Kaunas on December 13, 1925. As to Archbishop Antonio Zechini, the Lithuanian nation in the process of rebuilding appeared to him a weak infant, yet he began to protect and strengthen it paternally. Herein lay the different approaches of the two Visitors. Archbishop Matulevius understood the Poles far better than had Zechini. He had long lived and studied with them, had friends among them, and thus this peasant son of the Lithuanian village of Luginis in the district Mariampol was better equipped than the former Papal Delegate. Archbishop Zechini had not perceived the need for speedily erecting a separate Lithuanian ecclesiastical province, whereas Archbishop Matulevius considered this step an essential condition of Lithuanian independence. To this goal he sacrificed his health and strength.

He met with obstacles even on the part of Catholics themselves. He had to listen to many objections, iron out different opinions. The hot headed leaders of governing groups, on purely political grounds, would postpone the inauguration of an ecclesiastical province until after the 1926 Spring elections. With much patience, the Visitor overcame such difficulties. He accomplished his assigned task with remarkable speed, tact

and insight. There was not much time for such a stupendous work, but by April 4, 1926 the Apostolic Constitution "Lithuanorum gente" was already proclaimed.

Other matters requiring reorganization included the Seminaries, the faculties of Theology-Philosophy, religious orders and congregations, the use of the Polish language, order of services, etc. Of course, the greatest problem was the formation of new episcopal sees. In this, the Archbishop had the assistance of the Vicar General, Bishop Joseph Skvireckas, who distributed parishes and deaneries into new dioceses. Prof. Francis Buys, M.I.C. acted as consultant on special matters. Msgr. A. Faidutti contributed invaluable aid as an expert canonist.

The whole undertaking was energetically pushed without any undue delays. In fact delay would have defeated the very purpose of the project. As the Visitor had foreseen, the Catholic Party did not gain a majority in the May, 1926 elections to Congress. The government which was then formed, with the backing of the Populist, Social Democrat and Nationalist minorities, did not approve of Archbishop Matulevičius' work, even though it was an accomplished fact, had the sanction of the Apostolic See and was concerned purely with ecclesiastical affairs. Only on December 17, 1926 did conditions change permitting the organization of the ecclesiastical province. On September 27, 1927, a Concordat was signed between Lithuania and the Vatican, ratified on October 12th of the same year.

8. Institution of the Ecclesiastical Province

The erection of an ecclesiastical province in independent Lithuania is one of the most significant events in Lithuanian Church history. The whole order of church affairs in Lithuania was changed.

The Metropolitanate of Kaunas comprised one Archdiocese and four suffragan Dioceses. The division had been made only after a great deal of weighing. The parishes in the Vilna diocese on the Lithuanian side of the line of demarcation (with a few exceptions) were formed into the Diocese of Kaišiadoriai with five Deaneries. Its Bishop was to be Canon J. Kutka.

The Lithuanian portion of the Diocese of Šeiniai became the Diocese of Vilkaviškis, its Bishop remaining A. Karosas, who received a Coadjutor Bishop in the person of Prof. M. Reinys.

From the ancient see of Medininkai of the Samogitian (Lowland) district, which was the largest, there were formed the Dioceses of Telšiai and Panevėžys, and the Archdiocese of Kaunas. For the See of Telšiai with 13 deaneries, there was consecrated as Bishop Monsignor J. Staugaitis; for the See of Panevėžys with 10 deaneries, Prof. Canon K. Paltarokas. The Archdiocese of Kaunas retained 9 deaneries, with, about 400,000 faithful. Its

Archbishop and Metropolitan, the first in Lithuanian history, became the Bishop-Vicar General, Joseph Skvireckas, noted Biblical scholar and translator. The former Bishop of Samogitia, Francis Karevius, withdrew from active service and retired to the Marian monastery.

The ancient See of Samogitia thus became extinct, yet its last Vicar General, now designated Archbishop of Kaunas and Metropolitan of Lithuania, in his first Pastoral to the Archdiocesan Capitular and the faithful, did not fail to allude to that See's glorious traditions. He memorialized "that great teacher of the populace and apostle of temperance, Matthew (Valan ius); the brave defender of the faith Ma i slavas (Paliulionis); the good hearted, beloved of all, Gasparas (Cirtautas); and the indefatigable, zealous for God's glory, Francis (Karevi ius)."

On May 13, 1926, on the Feast of the Ascension, the first Metropolitan of Lithuania was solemnly installed in the Kaunas Basilica, in the presence of the Apostolic Visitor, Archbishop Matulevius, the former and new Bishops, Lithuanian government officials, members of the Congress, foreign diplomats, representatives of organizations and a vast outpouring of the faithful.

For the occasion, to commemorate the institution of Lithuania's ecclesiastical province, the sculptor P. Rimša struck a memorial medal, on one side of which are the profiles of Popes Innocent IV and Pius XI, and on the other, those of Bishop Christian and Archbishop Joseph, bridging the era of the first Lithuanian ecclesiastical province under King Mindaugas with the present.

Seven centuries, and now a quarter of a century, recall to us today the two events. Sorrowfully, today Lithuania suffers as did Job of old. Still, the history of Lithuania, as that of the Catholic Church itself, depicts again and again that the edifice built on God's foundation has firm supports, and after many ages, renewed in spirit, flourishes apace. Lithuania likewise will rise again, for it rests on the solid rock of Peter.