

CELEBRATING THE 400th YEAR OF THE APPARITION OF OUR LADY AT ŠILUVA

The Lithuanian communities throughout the world, and of course Lithuania, celebrated this very special Jubilee with prayerful respect and unbounded joy. LCRA was proud to provide financial support for those organizations that found a way to celebrate this special event. There were those who made pilgrimages,



"Nazareth Family Movement" members gathered in prayer

for example, the young people from the Kaunas Petrašiūnai Mercy Home's Sunday Children's Center. The archdiocesan youth center of Kaunas always participates in the celebration of the Feast of Our lady of Šiluva, but this year, instead of a one-day program they planned an intensive two-day event during

which they met with other youngsters from other parishes on a pilgrimage from Raseiniai to Šiluva, and eventually all prayed together in Šiluva. The Catholic organization "Living Rocks," together with similar groups, organized Renewal of Faith Days in honor of the Jubilee and children from a parish in Kupiškis felt it would be very appropriate to have their summer camp in Šiluva. Finally, a family group called the "Nazareth Family Movement" decided to implement their mission statement to increase family member spirituality, by consecrating themselves to Our Lady of Šiluva and organizing a family retreat in Šiluva.

WORLD YOUTH DAYS

In July 2008 the World Youth Days were held in Sidney, Australia where Pope Benedict the XVI was the main participant. Thousands of young people gathered and, of course, the Lithuanians also wanted to send their representatives. Thus



Youth from St. Theresa's Parish in Lourdes

Vilnius Bernardin Youth Center turned to LCRA for financial help and, with the financial help received, were able to send a number of representatives. LCRA also provided financial help to Šiauliai Diocesan Youth Center and Vilnius Archdiocesan Center so that they too would be

able to send young adults to this worthy conclave. In addition, LCRA provided much needed financial help to the Lithuanian Bishops Conference so that plans for the World Youth Days could be implemented. As always, many wanted to go but due

to cost restraints were unable to, so St. Theresa's parish in Vilnius stepped up and organized a trip by bus to Lourdes where a twin World Youth Days was celebrated. All those who went on this trip are extremely grateful to LCRA, and

LCRA is grateful to our generous benefactors for providing the necessary financial support. God bless you all.



Members of the Kaunas Archdiocese youth center prepare to present the gifts at Mass



Lithuanian youth on parade in Sydney, Australia

LCRA BOARD OF DIRECTORS

LCRA is governed by a board of 15 directors elected for a three-year term. At least eight directors must be of religious vocation and the the rest can be lay people. An advisory finance committee and two office employees round out the governing personnel.

Current Board of Directors:

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 Vida Jankauskas

Office personnel: Vida Jankauskas, administrator; Josephina Senken, assistant

THE BOARD OF DIRECTORS AND ADMINISTRATION
 WISH ALL OUR FRIENDS A MERRY CHRISTMAS AND HOPE THAT THE NEW YEAR 2009
 IS FILLED WITH COUNTLESS BLESSINGS FROM GOD

Lithuanian
 Catholic
 Religious
 Aid



64-25 Perry Avenue
 Maspeth, NY 11378-2441

ADDRESS CORRECTION REQUESTED



Some of the board members with guests at LCRA's Annual Meeting in Putnam, CT on May 17, 2008 (l.to r): Msgr. E. Putrimas, V. Matusaitis, Msgr. G. Grušas, J. Senken, Rev. V. Volertas, V. Jankauskas, Rev. S. Russell, sr. B. Matiukaitė, I. Laucis, S. Kungys, R. Kulys, Bishop P. A. Baltakis, OFM

LCRA NEWS

Newsletter of Lithuanian Catholic Religious Aid
 Winter 2008

Lithuanian
 Catholic
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I HAVE NO OTHER HANDS – BUT YOURS...

Lithuanian Catholic Religious Aid, organized in 1961 has helped Jesus spread his gospel of love, peace and justice in the Land of the Crosses – Lithuania.

During the soviet occupation, LCRA provided support for families of prisoners of conscience, underground religious activities, and informed the free world of the ongoing religious, cultural, social, and ethnic genocide.

Since the restoration of national independence and religious freedom, LCRA provides much needed assistance to the Lithuanian Catholic Church, as it seeks to free the nation from over 50 years of atheistic soviet oppression and indoctrination, and bring it to embrace a Christian, democratic society. LCRA's generosity is geared toward the younger generation through support of summer camps, Catholic viewpoint schools, social organizations, as well as much needed scholarships.

Due to the generosity of our donors, LCRA was able to provide **\$1,361,866** in financial grants during the reporting period (10/1/07–9/30/08) to worthy projects in Lithuania.



SCHOLARSHIPS



Aldona Žalaitė, Kazimieras Šešelgis and Kotryna Šešelgytė

To this very day one of the most important fields for financial aid are the scholarships because the students have a difficult time securing state financed scholarships. And even if they do, they still usually have high cost of living expenses, and require necessary study supplies. In the reporting period of this newsletter LCRA gave out 82 \$400, two \$2,000, and four \$3,000 scholarships. Altogether they added up to \$48,000 – a very nice help for Lithuanian students. Much thanks to all who gave to LCRA in the past, and please continue to do so in the future.

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NEW INVENTORY

As the story goes, nothing lasts forever. Thus as a person grows old, with him also ages some of his wordly inventory. Thus it is with organizations. After 18 years of independence in Lithuania,



A new organ at St. Edward's parish of Švenčionėliai



A new car for the Franciscan sisters of Our Lady of Perpetual Help in Kretinga

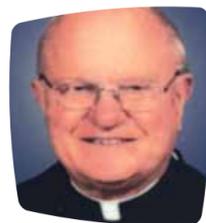
the time has come to go out with the old and in with the new and replace or upgrade initial gifts or purchases of various inventories. As always, this entails financial outlays. LCRA understands this and is therefore very helpful in providing financial assistance for the following: The Family Center of Panevėžys Diocese changed their computers, and programs — \$3,700; Newly established day care center of St. Anthony in Kretinga, various technology and furniture — \$5,000; A. Lipniūnas center in Panevėžys, computers and associated technology — \$5,000; Panevėžys

Caritas ceramic firing oven and other items — \$3,200; Šiauliai Diocese Curia finally had to get a new computer and programs — \$1,500; The Third Order Franciscan Academy needed office furniture, full complement of computer technology, and 12 months of rent payments — \$10,000; A multimedia projector for the youth center of Rokiškis parish of St. Matthew the Apostle and Evangelist — \$1,500; The delinquency prevention youth program "Pagoda" of Rumbonys parish of the Blessed Trinity wanted to purchase a computer, scanner, printer, and copy machine — a grant of \$4,000 was given; St. Edward's parish of Švenčionėliai desperately needed a new organ in order to better celebrate the liturgy

and a grant of \$15,000 was given; The Franciscan sisters of Our Lady of Perpetual Help needed to get a new car as the old one was beyond repair — \$6,000; and the youth center of Kybartai was very happy to receive financial aid and was thus able to purchase some new instruments. All of the recipients are very grateful for monies received and pray often for their benefactors — **THAT'S YOU.**

IN MEMORIAM

This last year has been exceedingly sad to LCRA because the Lord decided to call to their eternal reward the following former directors: Rev. Vytautas Palubinskas, former executive director of LCRA; the centenarian Rev. Stanislovas Raila; Rev. John Rikteraitis; Loretta Stukas. Also departed, an extremely generous supporter of LCRA — Rev. Simon Saulenas and Rev. Albinas Gurklys, MIC, a highly dedicated priest who helped so many parishes in New England, especially Holy Trinity church in Hartford, to celebrate the liturgy and preach retreats in Lithuanian. May they all rest in God's loving care!



Rev. Stanislovas Raila



Rev. Albinas Gurklys, MIC



Rev. John Rikteraitis



Director of the Panevėžys Family Center, Jūratė Šaumanienė, works at the center's new computer



Children with new instruments at the Kybartas Youth Center

HELP FOR SENIORS

Even though the young people are the priority of LCRA it would be unfair and even unchristian to turn away and neglect the problems of the older generation. In Lithuania there are quite a number of organizations involved with providing care and sustenance to the older people and LCRA joins in their efforts with financial support. Sisters of the Immaculate Conception in Marijampolė have initiated a



A new treadmill at the Sisters of the Immaculate Conception facility in Marijampolė

program of excursions for the older people under their care and periodically they visit special places of interest such as the Hill of Crosses, Šiluva (where our Lady appeared in 1608), the monastery at Tytuvėnai, and many others. This is a very happy experience for the people and of course the sisters always try to be responsive to the needs of the older generaton. The sisters are also active in Vilnius. There they have a recently renovated house in the Holy Cross complex (right by the Presidential palace) where older adults gather for various lectures, socialize over a cup of tea and some snacks. Great news! Recently, an opportunity presented itself to the sisters so that seniors can now learn how to use computers! People are overjoyed. What a fantastic idea! And in the rural town of Rumbonys, the sisters who help out in the Church of the Holy Trinity, operate a home for

COMMUNICATION

the elderly and are always in need of financial support. LCRA provided a grant to pay a year's wages for the cook, and to also change the decrepit kitchen inventory.

It is quite understandable that in order to disseminate Christian words and ideas, the press and other forms of communication must receive proper moral and financial support. LCRA is cognizant of this fact and has many times in the past, as well as the present, provided meaningful financial aid to various newspapers, journals, Catholic radio and TV, as well as a daily Internet newspaper. It is with hope that our readers will understand the importance of these communications, and financially support this very special sphere of influence in today's world. One of the most influential newspapers is the bi-weekly "XXI Amžius" with three Catholic Friday supplements "Pro Vita" "Žvilgsniai" and "Kristaus Pasaulis". To offset the cost of paper and printing LCRA granted \$20,000 in financial aid. A struggling children's newspaper Kregždutė also received



Using the new computer at the Sisters of the Immaculate Conception complex in Vilnius

\$4,000 in much needed aid. Since the Internet is now so important, an \$80,000.00 yearly grant was given to www.bernardinai.lt, with \$20,000 being transferred quarterly to their account. The popular Catholic radio "Mažoji Studija" received financial aid for the preparation of the daily program "Word of God. Daily readings". The monthly newspaper "Lietuvių Godos" is distributed free of charge in the ethnic Lithuanian regions of Belorussia, where people are quite poor and unable to provide much support for a newspaper—LCRA was happy to provide \$5,000 in financial aid. There is a very high quality history newspaper in Lithuanian called "Voruta" and it too needed some help, so LCRA provided some financial support. All of this can only be done with the support of our benefactors. Please send LCRA your donation TODAY.

CAMPING!!! FUN TIME!!! AND EVEN PRAYER!!!

Children, teenagers, and even young adults, are very well aware that LCRA provides generous financial help to the various projects involving the younger generation, and thus, upon returning from a fun summer camp, they are already questioning the leaders and organizers if they will be able to go again next year! From October 1, 2007 to September 30, 2008 a total of nearly \$189,000 was allocated for various camps, retreats, marches, pilgrimages, weekend workshops, tours, as well as many other innovations. This year was very special for the poor children from the primary school in Naujoji Ūta (Prienai region) because their dream of a summer camp by the Baltic Sea was realized when LCRA came through with funding for their travel expenses. A home for mildly or severally handicapped adults is part of an organization called "Betzata Community" and the home where some of them live is located in a rural area called Čiobiškės. A request for funding of three summer camps, as well as work on the surrounding landscape was met with a quick approval. Some of the home residents were lucky to attend an international work and evangelization camp in Poland. The children from the Vilnius Blessed Jurgis Matulaitis parish spent their summer camp days in Verubė by Lake Skaistė. The theme for their camp was the number "7" (the seven gifts of the Holy Ghost). A special project involving parents was a great success and made the organizers very happy. The parents were asked to come to camp early on Sunday morning and then everyone walked to Lentvaris (5km). This was their pilgrimage. Along the way the parents and children were given special tasks to complete and in prearranged groups they prepared for Mass. In a very special homestead "Jaunimo sodyba" started by the Rev. Henrikas Šulcas, large families from Kretinga, Kaunas, Telšiai, and Šalčininkai were happy to spend some quality time and learn about the importance of ecology and a clean environment. Together they also learned to celebrate religious feasts, pray, and become familiar with God's creation. In another camp, children from Kaunas under the guidance of Franciscan Sisters of the Sacred Heart spent their summer vacation days in Kaulakis village where everyone learned to play together and enjoy nature. And finally, the Telšiai Youth Diocesan center, in conjunction with Telšiai Seminary, organized a camp for youngsters who were altar servers. A highlight in their schedule was a prayer march through the hills of Kalvarija.

Betzata Community camp participants



Naujoji Ūta campers

Children from Blessed Jurgis Matulaitis parish in Vinius carefully study their "7" booklet



"Jaunimo sodyba" campers improve the environment

Children frolic at a camp organized by the Franciscan Sisters of the Sacred Heart in Kaunas



Altar servers from Telšiai Seminary march in prayer

- Annual report—LCRA 2007 fiscal year (2/1/06–1/31/07) is available upon request at LCRA's office: 64-25 Perry Ave., Maspeth, NY 11378-2441

- H. E. Bishop Paul A. Baltakis, OFM offers Holy Mass for living and deceased benefactors every Tuesday.

- Please remember LCRA when making out your will. This way you'll be able to participate in the work of LCRA on behalf of the Church in Lithuania.