



The Holy See

**LETTER OF PAUL VI
TO H.E. MSGR VINCENTAS BRIZGYS
TITULAR BISHOP OF BOSANA**

Sunday, 4 September 1966

*To Our Venerable Brother
Vincentas Brizgys
Titular Bishop of Bosana*

With paternal joy have We learned, Venerable Brother, of the forthcoming solemn blessing, in the grandiose Shrine of the Immaculate Conception - which the Catholics of the United States of America have raised in the Capital city of their noble Nation - of a Lithuanian Chapel dedicated to Our Lady who, according to a pious tradition, is said to have appeared in Siluva, that centre of Marian devotion so dear to the heart of the sons of Catholic Lithuania.

This significant ceremony, which brings together so many Lithuanians dispersed throughout the world, in the spiritual presence of their brothers living in the fatherland, gives Us a most welcome opportunity to address Our words of encouragement to those beloved sons and daughters, Lithuanian by birth or by descent, who, following the example of their ancestors, testify once again, in the spirit of the Second Vatican Ecumenical Council, to their confidence in the Mother of God, Mother of the Church, heavenly Protectress of their beloved land.

Your Chapel will manifest anew your veneration of Mary, as a eloquent witness to your glorious history, inspired no less by national ideals than by attachment to religious beliefs. Completed through the generosity of the faithful transported to the hospitable country where they now live, it is an expression of their gratitude to the Lord, «the giver of every good and perfect gift», as well as to all those in America who have held out a hand to assist Lithuanians.

Now happily completed, this shrine bears witness first of all to the deep love of a whole people for

the Most Blessed Virgin, a love never interrupted through all the centuries, immortalized in monuments and sanctuaries erected and left wherever that people passed by, to the greater honor of a Nation believing in God and loving the merciful Queen of Heaven.

Just as, in the past, filial affection for Our Lady has shed light on your people's path, both in happy times and in moments of sorrow, so will it be the guarantee and pledge of a radiant future. We cherish the hope, Venerable Brother, that Lithuanian aspirations and prayers will obtain from God, through the intercession of Mary, that religious liberty defended by the Ecumenical Council; may they obtain that the spirit of understanding, which all wish for nowadays, permit the Church to live and work in your mother country without obstacles, to carry on there the mission entrusted to her by divine mandate, and favor a continual increase in faith and in religious practice.

The Chapel itself, embellished by the genius and inspiration of artists of your people, will serve meantime as a symbol of firm adherence to Catholic principles, of a Christian life ever more closely patterned on the faith professed, and of an unceasing struggle to become worthy promoters of the great work which previous generations undertook.

The familiar image of Saint Casimir, looking down from the mosaics of the new Chapel, will serve as a reminder of his virtues, and will incite Lithuanian Catholics to help give back to the world the Christian meaning of individual and social life, to maintain and augment the deposit of spiritual and civil riches, handed down by their forefathers as a proud heritage for every Lithuanian.

Let that hymn which Saint Casimir used to chant every day, and even carried with him into the tomb, arise at this very moment from the heart and lips of all Lithuanians, near and far:

“Mano siela, dékok kasdiena Motinai Marijai, garbink jos varda ir stebekis jos dorybemis. O Marija, tu esi garbė ir pasididziavimas visu zmonijos dukteru, isaukstinta virs visu Dievo kuriniu, o gaillestingoji Mergele, isklausyk maldas tu, kurie istikimai tave garbina”.

To you, Venerable Brother, to the Most Reverend Bishops, the clergy, religious men and women, and to all the beloved Lithuanian people, who never fail to place all their hopes and desires in the heart of Our Blessed Lady, in pledge of richest heavenly favors, We impart from Our heart Our paternal Apostolic Blessing.