

Eastern Christianity and Politics in the Twenty-First Century

**Edited by
Lucian N. Leustean**

First published 2014
by Routledge
2 Park Square, Milton Park, Abingdon, Oxon OX14 4RN

and by Routledge
711 Third Avenue, New York, NY 10017

Routledge is an imprint of the Taylor & Francis Group, an informa business

© 2014 Lucian N. Leustean

The right of the editor to be identified as the author of the editorial material, and of the authors for their individual chapters, has been asserted in accordance with sections 77 and 78 of the Copyright, Designs and Patents Act 1988.

All rights reserved. No part of this book may be reprinted or reproduced or utilised in any form or by any electronic, mechanical, or other means, now known or hereafter invented, including photocopying and recording, or in any information storage or retrieval system, without permission in writing from the publishers.

Trademark notice: Product or corporate names may be trademarks or registered trademarks, and are used only for identification and explanation without intent to infringe.

British Library Cataloguing in Publication Data

A catalogue record for this book is available from the British Library

Library of Congress Cataloguing in Publication data

Eastern Christianity and politics in the twenty-first century / edited
by Lucian N. Leustean.

pages cm. – (Routledge contemporary Russia and Eastern Europe series ; 54)

Includes bibliographical references and index.

1. Eastern churches–History. 2. Orthodox Eastern Church–History.
3. Oriental Orthodox Churches–History. 4. Catholic Church–Oriental
rites–History. 5. Assyrian Church of the East–History.

I. Leustean, Lucian, editor of compilation.

BX101.E378 2014

281'.509051–dc23

2013040106

ISBN: 978-0-415-68490-3 (hbk)

ISBN: 978-1-315-81903-7 (ebk)

Typeset in Times New Roman
by Out of House Publishing



Printed and bound in Great Britain by
TJ International Ltd, Padstow, Cornwall

Contents

<i>List of figures</i>	xv
<i>List of tables</i>	xvi
<i>Notes on contributors</i>	xvii
<i>Acknowledgements</i>	xxxii
<i>Abbreviations</i>	xxxii
1 Eastern Christianity and politics in the twenty-first century: an overview	1
LUCIAN N. LEUSTEAN	
PART I	
Chalcedonian churches	21
2 The Ecumenical Patriarchate	23
LUCIAN N. LEUSTEAN	
3 The Russian Orthodox Church	38
ZOE KNOX AND ANASTASIA MITROFANOVA	
4 The Serbian Orthodox Church	67
KLAUS BUCHENAU	
5 The Romanian Orthodox Church	94
LUCIAN TURCESCU AND LAVINIA STAN	
6 The Bulgarian Orthodox Church	114
DANIELA KALKANDJIEVA	
7 The Georgian Orthodox Church	140
PAUL CREGO	

8	The Orthodox Church of Cyprus VICTOR ROUDOMETOF AND IRENE DIETZEL	161
9	The Orthodox Church of Greece VASILIOS N. MAKRIDES	181
10	The Polish Orthodox Church EDWARD D. WYNOT	210
11	The Orthodox Autocephalous Church of Albania NICHOLAS PANO	231
12	The Orthodox Church in the Czech Lands and Slovakia TOMÁŠ HAVLÍČEK	240
13	Orthodox churches in America ALEXEI D. KRINDATCH AND JOHN H. ERICKSON	251
14	The Finnish Orthodox Church TEUVO LAITILA	280
15	Orthodox churches in Estonia SEBASTIAN RIMESTAD	295
16	Orthodox churches in Ukraine ZENON V. WASYLIW	312
17	The Belarusian Orthodox Church SERGEI A. MUDROV	334
18	The Orthodox Church in Lithuania REGINA LAUKAITYTĖ	357
19	The Latvian Orthodox Church INESE RUNCE AND JELENA AVANESOVA	370
20	Orthodox churches in Abkhazia, South Ossetia and Transnistria KIMITAKA MATSUZATO	387
21	Orthodox churches in Moldova ANDREI AVRAM	402
22	The Macedonian Orthodox Church TODOR CEPREGANOV, MAJA ANGELOVSKA-PANOVA AND DRAGAN ZAJKOVSKI	426
23	The Orthodox churches in China, Japan and Korea KEVIN BAKER	439

24	Orthodox churches in Australia JAMES JUPP	453
PART II		
	Non-Chalcedonian churches	469
25	The Armenian Apostolic Church HRATCH TCHILINGIRIAN	471
26	The Ethiopian Orthodox Tewahedo Church and the Eritrean Orthodox Tewahedo Church STÉPHANE ANCEL, GIULIA BONACCI AND JOACHIM PERSOON	498
27	The Coptic Orthodox Church FIONA MCCALLUM	521
28	The Syrian Orthodox Church ERICA C. D. HUNTER	542
29	Syrian Christian churches in India M. P. JOSEPH, UDAY BALAKRISHNAN AND ISTVÁN PERCZEL	563
PART III		
	The Holy Apostolic Catholic Assyrian Church of the East	599
30	The Holy Apostolic Catholic Assyrian Church of the East ERICA C. D. HUNTER	601
PART IV		
	Greek Catholic churches in Eastern Europe	621
31	The Ukrainian Greek Catholic Church NATALIA SHLIKHTA	623
32	The Romanian Greek Catholic Church CIPRIAN GHISA AND LUCIAN N. LEUSTEAN	656
33	The Bulgarian Eastern Catholic Church DANIELA KALKANDJIEVA	681
34	The Hungarian Greek Catholic Church STÉPHANIE MAHIEU	704

PART V

Challenges in the twenty-first century	721
35 Orthodox churches and migration KRISTINA STOECKL	723
36 The Greek Catholic churches in post-war Catholic–Orthodox relations THOMAS BREMER	737
37 Secularism without liberalism: Orthodox churches, human rights and American foreign policy in Southeastern Europe KRISTEN GHODSEE	754
38 Orthodox Christianity and globalisation VICTOR ROUDOMETOF	776
<i>Bibliography</i>	795
<i>Index</i>	810

Regina Laukaitytė is a Senior Research Fellow in the Department of Twentieth-Century History of the Lithuanian Institute of History. She is the author of *Lietuvos vienuolijos: XX a. istorijos bruožai* [Monastic Institutions in Lithuania: Features of their History in the Twentieth Century], Vilnius: Lietuvos istorijos institutas, 1997; *Stačiatikių Bažnyčia Lietuvoje XX amžiuje* [The Orthodox Church in Lithuania in the Twentieth Century], Vilnius: Lietuvos istorijos institutas, 2003; *Lietuvos Bažnyčios vokiečių okupacijos metais (1941–1944)* [Lithuanian Churches under German Occupation (1941–1944)], Vilnius: Lietuvos istorijos institutas, 2010. Her recent publications include '1863-ieji metai Lietuvos stačiatikių vyskupijos istorijoje' [The 1863 Uprising in the History of the Diocese of Lithuania's Orthodox], in *Dvasininkija ir 1863 m. sukilimas buvusios Abiejų Tautų Respublikos žemėse* [The Clergy and the Insurrection of 1863 in the Lands of the Former Republic of the Two Nations], Vilnius: Lietuvos istorijos institutas, 2009, pp. 169–89; 'Lietuvos religinės mažumos 1918–1940 m.: valstybės globoje' [Lithuania's Religious Minorities in the Care of the State in 1918–1940], in *Bažnyčios istorijos studijos* [Studies in Church History], Vilnius: LKMA, 2010, vol. 3, pp. 243–70; 'The Restitution of the Status of the Church in the Republic of Lithuania', in *Restitutions of Church*

Property, Michaela Moravèikova (ed.), Bratislava: Ustav pre vzťahy statu a cirkvi, 2010, pp. 203–14; ‘Rusai Lietuvoje vokiečių okupacijos metais (1941–1944)’ [Russians in the German Period of Occupation of Lithuania (1941–1944)], in *Lietuvos istorijos metraštis*, 2010 metai [The Yearbook of Lithuanian History, 2010], vol. 1, Vilnius: Lietuvos istorijos institutas, 2011, pp. 57–69; ‘The Interest of Lithuania’s Church in the Apostolic Activity in Russia and among Russians’, in *Church History between Rome and Vilnius: Challenges to Christianity from the Early Modern Ages to the 20th Century*, Vilnius: LKMA, 2012, pp. 103–20; ‘Rytų apeigų vyskupo Petro Būčio misija Lietuvoje (1930–1940 m.)’ [Mission of the Eastern-Rite Bishop Petras Būčys in Lithuania in 1930–1940], *Istorija* [History, Vilnius: Lietuvos edukologijos universitetas], 2012, 84, 26–37.

18 The Orthodox Church in Lithuania

Regina Laukaitytė

Lithuania is a mono-ethnic, Catholic country. Despite periods of Russian occupation over the past 200 years, the majority of the population – over 80 per cent – is Lithuanian Catholic.¹ The Orthodox faith has deep roots in the history of the Grand Duchy of Lithuania; however, after the 1596 Union of Brest it yielded to the pressure of the state authorities, which promoted the Uniate Church, and it declined in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. The fiercest struggle between the Orthodox and Uniate churches then occurred in the Slavic lands of the Grand Duchy of Lithuania, in particular along the short eastern border of the region and in Vilnius, while in the rest of the country, in the depths of Lithuania, there were hardly any Orthodox communities.

Despite its relatively small spread in ethnic Lithuanian lands, Orthodoxy played an important role in the nineteenth century when the modern Lithuanian nation, seeking statehood, was being formed. The status of state religion, which Orthodoxy had during the tsarist period, forced Lithuanian Catholics to perceive their identity in a sensitive manner separate from the religion promoted by occupying authorities.

Lithuania's Orthodox diocese

The Orthodox Church in Lithuania was linked to the national rebirth ideology in the second half of the nineteenth century. In the eyes of the predominantly Catholic population, Orthodoxy was one of the most important instruments of Russification carried out by the tsarist authorities. The position of the Orthodox faith was strengthened by drastic measures which took place after the uprisings of 1831 and 1863 when the tsarist authorities issued a number of decrees discriminating against the Catholic Church. They settled Russian and Belarusian colonists in Catholic villages, and founded Orthodox churches, often providing them with the properties of closed Catholic monasteries and churches. Orthodoxy acquired the image of a 'Russian', thus foreign, aggressive faith, and did not cross ethnic boundaries. It remained mainly the religion of the country's Russian-speaking ethnic population.

As a result of ethnic hostilities, the heritage of the Russian Empire in Lithuania did not last long,² and, after 1917, many Russian emigrants fled to the countries of Western and Central Eastern Europe rather than remain in the country. After the re-establishment of an independent Lithuanian state in 1918, Orthodox parishes lost almost all of the properties that the tsarist authorities had entrusted to them, although this loss was not paralleled by restrictions on the Church's religious, social or cultural activities. The numbers of Orthodox faithful remained small and did not pose a threat to Lithuanian Catholic identity. Political leaders saw no reason to pursue a separation of the Lithuanian Orthodox diocese from the Moscow Patriarchate, or to interfere in church life, such as removing the old calendar.³

The Orthodox diocese took a new turn after the Soviet occupation of Lithuania. Between 1944 and 1990, Lithuania was part of the Soviet atheist state. In the first years of this period (1944–8), the Orthodox Church in Lithuania seemed to benefit from the support of the new regime. A spiritual seminary was founded, the Orthodox churches damaged by the war were rebuilt and repaired, relics of saints were returned from Moscow for adoration by believers and priests were appointed to those communities which numbered between forty and ninety parishioners.⁴ These actions aimed to strengthen the Orthodox position in the country, enabling church leaders to carry out tasks assigned by the Soviet authorities.⁵

The backing of the Soviet authorities discredited the Orthodox Church. Soviet support for the Orthodox communities was not welcomed by the local Lithuanian SSR authorities, which in many cases opposed privileges for the Orthodox diocese. Two Orthodox monasteries were permitted in Vilnius, while Catholic monasteries were closed throughout the country with a continuous discrimination against the scattered monks and nuns.

In autumn 1948, the Lithuanian SSR authorities succeeded in persuading the central USSR government to give up its preferential support for the Orthodox Church. Although in the following years the Orthodox Church was not officially promoted, the strengthening of its structure in post-war years (rather than its radical weakening as occurred for all other confessions) helped it to survive under the harsh religious conditions of the Soviet regime. The Orthodox diocese was not entirely spared religious pressure, and between 1944 and 1990 the Soviet authorities closed nineteen Orthodox churches and houses of prayer; however, four of them were small parishes while the others were without a permanent priest. In addition, the Vilnius convent for nuns was liquidated in 1960 and its possessions were transferred to the monastery in the city which continued its activities.

Orthodox communities were impoverished by the loss of church land and forced to pay high taxes on their properties and income. Furthermore, advancing secularisation and urban migration mercilessly affected most of them. With the loss of believers and priests the map of the diocese's parishes began to change: one after another churches became without clergy, most of whom, except in Vilnius, were in charge of between two and six churches. The

Orthodox faithful continued to be present in the main Lithuanian cities and, particularly, near the Kaliningrad oblast, because during the Soviet period the region did not have a single active Orthodox church and believers would travel to Lithuanian border towns, such as Tauragė and Kybartai.⁶

Lithuanian Orthodoxy and political changes 1989–1990

The most favourable period for the Orthodox Church in Lithuania was during the *perestroika* of Mikhail Gorbachev at the end of the 1980s when even Soviet Army officers and teachers became interested in their cultural roots, more people were baptised and received the sacraments and Orthodox churches began to be filled with people. However, political emancipation and efforts to restore an independent state raised more negative than positive emotions among the local Russians, who did not view favourably the new state borders appearing in 1990, dividing them from family members who remained in Russia.

The rebirth of the Lithuanian state in 1990 came at the same time as the appointment by the Moscow Patriarchate of a new hierarch for the Lithuanian diocese to Vilnius Cathedral, namely Archbishop Chrysostom (Georgij Martishkin), who publicly supported state independence. Upon his arrival he encountered strong KGB pressure to support the local communists and the pro-Soviet local Russian political organisation *Edintsvo* [Unity], even to the extent that a warning shot was fired at the windows of his residence. At the end of 1990 he was elected a member of Lithuania's *Sajūdis* [Reform Movement of Lithuania] Council. He did not hesitate to condemn the crimes of the Soviet regime and the direct intervention of the Soviet Army in January 1991, when, in an attack on the Vilnius television tower, fourteen people were killed.

The stance of Archbishop Chrysostom led to complaints directed to the Moscow Patriarchate which entailed his resignation from in the *Sajūdis* Council.⁷ During the following years, the Archbishop continued to face criticism from supporters of the previous Soviet system and was even attacked during the liturgy.

Despite opposition from local Orthodox believers, Archbishop Chrysostom played a positive role in shaping the political sentiments of ethnic Russians in the transitional post-Soviet period. With his unambiguous political line he earned the sympathy of Lithuanian society and neutralised political passions. The Archbishop admitted that out of the twenty-eight clergy of his diocese, only two (Monk Hilarion (Alfeyev) in Kaunas and Archimandrit Antonij (Buravcov) in Klaipėda) expressed support for Lithuania's independence. In his own words, 'The others ... were silent.'⁸ This silence was marked by opposition to him, although he, nevertheless, succeeded in convincing the diocese's clergy to remain neutral, and not to join the political opposition hostile to independence. A number of clergy left Lithuania (such as the leader of the Vilnius Holy Spirit Monastery, Adrian Uljanov). A neutral position

remained constant over the following years, as the Orthodox clergy refrained from participating in the political life of the state and from being involved in the numerous Russian social and political organisations in the country.⁹

Archbishop Chrysostom has claimed that the Orthodox diocese of Lithuania is fully independent. According to church law, the Moscow Patriarch is entitled to change its leader, although he is unable to interfere in internal Lithuanian matters and may only make recommendations.¹⁰ Close contact with the Moscow Patriarchate was evident in July 1997 when Patriarch Aleksii II of Moscow and All Russia paid the first official visit of a Russian Patriarch to Lithuania. Furthermore, in 2000, Chrysostom was raised to the rank of metropolitan by the Moscow Patriarchate.

Independent Lithuania positioned Russian Orthodox believers in the midst of social, religious and political changes, such as the radically altered juridical status of the Orthodox diocese, new church–state relations and the encouragement given to religious, social and cultural activities. All ethnic minorities were given the right to become citizens, with the majority of ethnic Russians accepting Lithuanian citizenship.

Article 43 of the Constitution states that ‘there is no state religion in Lithuania’ and guarantees that churches and religious organisations have the right to manage their own affairs according to their canons and statutes; to proclaim freely the teachings of their faith; to conduct ceremonies; to have houses of prayer, charity offices and schools for the training of clergy.¹¹ Current legislation assigns a different status to Christian churches, dividing them into three, namely ‘traditional’, ‘state recognised’ and only ‘registered’. The Orthodox Church along with the Catholic Church and seven other religious minorities are considered ‘traditional’ religions, i.e. with a recognised contribution to the historical, spiritual and social heritage of Lithuania. ‘Traditional’ religions enjoy a number of privileges, such as the ability to register marriages, regular financial support from the state determined according to the number of believers, the possibility of teaching religion in state schools, tax exemptions and the employment of clergy chaplains in the Army.¹² The Orthodox diocese receives annual financial support from the state, although this has seen a decrease in recent years (86,700 litas,¹³ around €25,000 in 2012).

In the 1990s the churches which were closed during the Soviet period and nationalised properties were returned to the Orthodox diocese. In particular, the restitution of properties has been an important financial resource for the small diocese, as many buildings are in the old town of Vilnius and their rental fees comprise primary revenues. This stable income into the diocese treasury enabled Archbishop Chrysostom to undertake economic reforms, most significantly releasing the parish clergy from payments to headquarters. This decision was a significant incentive for the less populous and rather poor parishes, although, at the same time, the Archbishop seemed to encourage the clergy to administer their parishes more independently and not to expect automatic financial support.¹⁴

The issue of lustration, the first wave of which rolled through Lithuania between 1988 and 1992, did not affect the Orthodox diocese of Lithuania, as most public attention focused on the Catholic clergy. In 1991 Archbishop Chrysostom publicly admitted that he had contact with the KGB.¹⁵ The following year, during the Assembly of the Russian Orthodox Church in Moscow he agreed with the proposal to establish a special commission in charge of disclosing contact between security agents and Orthodox clergy, especially hierarchs. However, the commission did not produce any results. Archbishop Chrysostom remains the only member of the Russian Orthodox Church hierarchy to have admitted his cooperation with the state security system, pointing out in one of his interviews that 'I maintained contact with the KGB, but I was not a sneak.'¹⁶ He stated that he had no alternative and had to behave according to the rules of the political regime. These ties allowed him to behave more bravely and to defend the rights of the Church effectively.

Despite Archbishop Chrysostom's admission of cooperation with the KGB, he did not start a lustration process in his own Orthodox diocese.¹⁷ Such efforts would have brought him into conflict with the lower clergy, with whom he was in tense relations at the beginning of his appointment, as revealed in an 1994 interview when he stated that 'I practically do not have any contact with my brother clergy.'¹⁸

Over the coming years, a new generation of clergy began to alleviate the tension between the Archbishop and the most clergy. As the Orthodox Diocese of Lithuania does not have a spiritual seminary, most clergy come from other Russian dioceses and between 1990 and 2005 Archbishop Chrysostom ordained as many as twenty-eight deacons and priests.¹⁹ Most clergy have completed their theological studies at the Zhirovichy, Minsk, Moscow or St Petersburg seminaries. Even during the Soviet period a relatively large percentage of Orthodox clergy working in Lithuania completed a higher theological education (while the USSR average of clergy with higher theological education was around 50 per cent, between 1966 and 1985 the diocese of Lithuania boasted around 72 per cent).²⁰

Religious life

In the post-Soviet period Orthodox parishes in Lithuania decreased significantly in size because many Russian inhabitants left the country to live abroad. According to national statistics, Russians are, in general, less religious than the other inhabitants of Lithuania. In the last two decades, Lithuanian society has shown clear signs of becoming increasingly secular. According to official data, each Lithuanian Orthodox parish has around 2,400 believers, although this figure remains disputed; at the same time, only the Orthodox churches in the large cities have a high number of worshippers.

In recent years the parishes of villages and small cities have decreased dramatically, to the extent that in almost half of the diocese, churches do not hold regular services. In 2011, the liturgy was officiated frequently in only

twenty-seven of the fifty-three registered parishes; in six parishes the liturgy was officiated only once or twice per month, in fifteen parishes once or several times during the year; while five churches have stopped officiating the liturgy altogether.²¹ Even though after 1990 the Orthodox Church regained all of its churches which were closed by the Soviet authorities, the hope of a religious rebirth has not been fulfilled. The small number of believers in villages and other smaller cities, many of whom are of an older age, are unable to financially support their church, let alone a priest.

On the other hand, between 1990 and 2011, new Orthodox churches were built in those cities which had a stable Russian community and where the Soviet authorities had refused to allow churches. During this period, around eight Orthodox churches and houses of prayer were opened.²² Their construction was carried out with the support of the local community, businesses and volunteer donations.

Religious education has been a major area of concern for the Church leadership. In Lithuania, classes on the Orthodox faith are conducted in forty-four Russian secondary schools.²³ Teachers of religion are prepared through two-year courses organised by the Church in cooperation with the St Tikhon Orthodox Theological Institute in Moscow. Moreover, Orthodox parishes organise Sunday schools intended not only for children, but also for adults. In addition, the Holy Spirit Monastery in Vilnius has a number of courses on the Holy Scriptures. The church leadership has also tried to renew the life of smaller parishes, organising summer camps and visits of children and secondary school pupils to churches in Vilnius, Kaunas and other cities.

Since 23 January 2005, the Sunday Orthodox liturgy has been frequently given in the Lithuanian language in one of the churches in Vilnius. This has proved to be an important event in the history of the Orthodox diocese. During the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, this decision would have been perceived in only one way, namely as an attempt of the occupying political authorities to impose their religion. The John Chrysostom Liturgy was translated into Lithuanian in 1887;²⁴ however, it did not spread because there were no Lithuanian-speaking Orthodox clergy. In 1946, the political authorities tried to implement the new liturgy, but it was not accepted by the local community. The 2005 decision shows the efforts of the Orthodox Church not to remain only associated with the Russian-speaking population but also to appeal to the younger generation, which speaks Lithuanian. This move has been supported by changes in education, namely, in the early 1990s there were thirty-three Russian secondary schools in Vilnius while in 2011 there are only thirteen; in Kaunas the numbers dropped from four schools to one. It is difficult to ascertain whether demographic identity is changing – the Orthodox faith ‘becoming Lithuanian’ – helping the Church to address successfully societal challenges. Between 2005 and 2011, the numbers show that the Lithuanian liturgy was attended by a regular small community of around thirty believers.²⁵

The Orthodox Church does not have its own theological publications. Information about the diocese's life is published on the internet.²⁶ After Archbishop Inokentij (Vasiljev) took over the diocese at the beginning of 2011, texts also began to be issued in Lithuanian. A number of parishes – in Vilnius, Visaginas, Kaunas, Palanga – have websites in which local news is interspersed with historical facts.²⁷

The lack of an official church press has been counteracted by the Orthodox Brotherhood in Vilnius, an active organisation established in 1995 providing aid to parishes, organising religious education and cultural events, and, between 2005 and 2011, publishing a monthly newspaper *Vstrecha* [Getting Together]. In addition, another significant religious organisation active in Vilnius is Lithuania's Orthodox Education Society *Zhivoi kolos* [Live Ear],²⁸ which promotes cultural projects in cooperation with the Church and religious bodies in Russia and Belarus.

Orthodox monasteries

In Lithuania there are two active Orthodox monasteries, both in Vilnius: the Holy Spirit, a monastery established around 1597 and with only a male population, and St Mary Magdalene, established in 1865 for nuns. Both monasteries are rather small and are often visited by pilgrims from Belarus, Russia, Ukraine and Poland.

The Holy Spirit Monastery had a significant role during the Soviet period, when a limited number of monasteries existed in the USSR. Vilnius was seen as a centre of religious importance and the Holy Spirit Monastery was especially significant, as in 1946 the relics were brought there of Sts Ivan, Antony and Eustachius. Many people from the USSR, even from remote corners of the country, travelled to the monastery. The monastery was also important because after a six-month training programme a significant number of people were ordained and would later graduate from spiritual seminaries. The monastery received financial support from Orthodox communities throughout the Soviet Union, an income which was essential for the survival of Lithuania's Orthodox diocese after 1962, when the Soviet authorities categorically forbade the Moscow Patriarchate from financing Lithuanian parishes. However, the monastery suffered a significant blow after 1990, when the stream of financial support from the Soviet Union decreased, and in 2011, the monastery had only nine monks. Nevertheless, the Holy Spirit Monastery remains a significant site, as the diocese's Chancellery and the residence of the archbishop are located there. Since 1993, the monastery's library has made public its wealth of spiritual and historical literature, while a youth hostel welcomes students studying in Vilnius.

The St Mary Magdalene Convent was officially closed in 1960 and its population was transferred to one of the buildings of the Holy Spirit Monastery. The monastery was widely recognised as a revered centre of spirituality and seven nuns were later appointed as heads of other convents in other republics

of the USSR. The monastery was restored in 1989. In 2011 it had eleven nuns, a drop from twenty-eight in 1960 and seventeen in 1990.²⁹

In addition to the two monasteries in Vilnius, the Orthodox Church has an Orthodox monastery in Mikniškės, around 30 km from the capital. This monastery represents a unique religious phenomenon of Orthodox expression in Lithuania. In the early 1920s Fr Pontii Rupishev established a small community, with members drawn from farms who wished to preserve celibacy, attend a daily liturgy and observe the other sacraments. After the Second World War, the Soviet authorities tried several times to liquidate the community; however, it succeeded only in halting the admission of new members. In 2011, it remains active, officially registered as a 'Christian Agricultural Community' and supported by pilgrims from Russia, Belarus and other countries.³⁰ In 1997, the community comprised around sixty people; this figure also has to take into account that for the last twenty years there have been no new members.³¹

Ecumenical dialogue

Religious minorities in Lithuania have lived quite isolated from one another. In 1928, representatives of the Orthodox, Evangelical Lutheran, Reformist and Methodist churches held the first solemn ecumenical service in the history of Lithuanian churches. However, the gathering did not have a long-term impact. Metropolitan Elevferiy (Bogoyavlenski), who led the Orthodox Church, refrained from other ecumenical activities in the interwar period because of his close ties with Moscow. The Soviet regime encouraged a presence in the ecumenical movement only in the 1960s and until the 1980s contact with other Lithuanian churches increased, mainly in the form of exchange visits and church leaders attending other bodies' religious services.

Since 1990, the Orthodox Diocese of Lithuania has been an active promoter of relations with Lithuania's Catholic and Evangelical churches. Although Archbishop Chrysostom was present at many ecumenical conferences, some of which were more important than others, such as in 1992, when eight Christian churches decided to establish the Lithuania Bible Society, his presence was mainly polite and pragmatic. Archbishop Inokentij (Vasiljev) has developed the ecumenical dialogue, and from the first year of his leadership met with the leaders of Lithuania's Catholic Church and attended a number of Catholic ceremonies. In his first interviews he spoke in favour of active cooperation between churches in defending the spiritual values of all Christians.

After 1990, relations between the Lithuanian Orthodox diocese and the re-established Greek Catholic Church became tense, particularly around the 1991 restitution of the Holy Trinity Church in Vilnius Old Town, which was located close to Orthodox headquarters. The restitution, which took place with the support of the political authorities, dissatisfied the Orthodox diocese. The Greek Catholic faithful celebrate the liturgy in Ukrainian and its numbers are relatively small, with the 2001 census indicating only 364 believers

in Lithuania.³² Tensions between the Orthodox and Greek Catholics have remained constant over the last two decades, as evident in the decision of an Orthodox priest in Kaunas to enter the Greek Catholic Church in 1995; however, his congregation was very small, with only five members.³³ A reconciliatory approach became more evident in 2003, when Archbishop Chrysostom declared in an interview: 'In my opinion Greek Catholics are Christians, brothers of our blood, Slavs. What will happen if we Slavs split up?'³⁴

Conclusion

The 1989–90 political events which led to the re-establishment of an independent Lithuania were a veritable challenge for the country's Orthodox diocese. The diocese represented the small Russian-speaking religious minority, with around 4 per cent of the population identifying itself with Orthodoxy. Archbishop Chrysostom had strongly and unambiguously supported the goals of Lithuania's statehood and distanced himself from pro-Soviet sentiments dominating the diocese and the Russian community.

The adaptation of the Orthodox to independence was without doubt eased by the radically changed legal status of the Church and by religious, social and cultural opportunities. The Orthodox diocese received its previously expropriated property back from the Soviet authorities, while the state also ensured that the Church enjoyed tax benefits and financial support.

However, favourable contemporary religious conditions in Lithuania are at odds with a significant decrease in the number of believers. The diocese's leadership had begun to look for solutions which could even affect the identity of the Church: the diocese is attempting to 'become more Lithuanian'. Since 2005 for the first time in the history of the diocese, in one of the Orthodox churches in Vilnius the services have been in the Lithuanian language, while Lithuanian texts have been published in the Orthodox press. Although the Lithuanian Orthodox diocese has close ties with the Moscow Patriarchate, the church leadership claims to be fully independent. However, there has been no discussion about the issuing of an autocephalous status from Moscow, mainly because the Lithuanian Orthodox diocese is too small and the faithful has no experience of separation from the jurisdiction of the Russian Orthodox Church. Such a discussion would split the Orthodox community and raise tension between Lithuania and Russia.

Appendix

1 Religious leaders

- Metropolitan Chrysostom (Georgij Martishkin) (1934–), in office 1990–2010
- Archbishop Inokentij (Valerii Fedorovicz Vasiljev) (1947–), in office 2010–.

2 *Biography*

Title: Archbishop of Vilnius and Lithuania.

Archbishop Inokentij (Valerii Fedorovicz Vasiljev) was born in the city of Staraya Russa in the Novgorod district on 7 October 1947. In 1975 he graduated from the Moscow State International Relations Institute and in May 1981 was ordained deacon. Between 1982 and 1985 he worked in the chancellery of the Kursk diocese and later in Orthodox churches in Irkutsk, Chabarovsk and Chita. In 1989 he graduated from the Moscow Spiritual Seminary as a part-time student. On 15 January 1992 he took monastic vows and on 26 January was ordained Bishop of Chabarovsk and Blagoveshchensk. In 1995 he was appointed Bishop of Dmitrov, Vicar of the diocese of Moscow, and Deputy Chairman of the Moscow Patriarchate's Foreign Church Relations Section. In 1996 he was appointed Bishop of Chita and Trans-Baikal, and in 1999 Bishop of Corsun in France (the Russian Orthodox Church parishes of Italy, Switzerland, Spain and Portugal belong to the Corsun diocese). On 25 February 2002 he was elevated to Archbishop and between 2006 and 2007 he also temporarily headed the Surozh diocese in Great Britain and Ireland. On 24 December 2010 the Holy Synod of the Russian Orthodox Church appointed him Archbishop of Vilnius and Lithuania.

3 *Theological publications*

No theological publications.

4 *Congregations*

Structure of the Church: one diocese, 3 deaneries, 53 registered parishes, but services only regularly take place in 27 parishes.

Number of clergy and church buildings: 47 clergy and 6 deacons. Holy Spirit Monastery, Vilnius has 9 monks while St Mary Magdalene Convent, Vilnius has 11 nuns. The diocese has 49 Orthodox churches and 4 houses of prayer.

5 *Population*

In 2011 84.2 per cent of the Lithuanian population considered themselves as Roman Catholics, 4.1 per cent Orthodox (125,189 people). The census also revealed that 88.6 per cent Poles, 82.9 per cent Lithuanians and 11.9 per cent Russians are members of the Roman Catholic Church; 51.5 per cent of Russians are members of the Orthodox community; and 11.8 per cent of Russians are members of the Old Believers community.³⁵

Notes

1 Although Lithuania was part of the Russian Empire from 1795 to 1914 and of the USSR from 1944 to 1990, the size of the ethnic Russian population remained

small. According to the 1923 census almost 84 per cent of the population of the Republic was Lithuanian (1.7 million) while Russians numbered around 2.5 per cent (about 50,000) with around 23,000 people considering themselves Orthodox. Almost 80 per cent of Lithuania's Orthodox were Russians (18,020 people), 8 per cent Lithuanians (1,747 people) and 7 per cent Belarusians (1,625 people): *Lietuvos gyventojai: Pirmojo 1923 m. rugsėjo 17 d. visuotinio gyventojų surašymo duomenys* [Lithuania's Population: Data from 17 September 1923, the First Census of the General Population], Kaunas: Lietuvos Respublikos Centrinis Statistikos Biuras, 1926, pp. 27–34, available at http://www.stat.gov.lt/uploads/leidiniai/Lietuvos_gyv_sur.pdf?PHPSESSID=20ac386af43677d21a688d729f85b408 (accessed 9 November 2011). According to the 2011 census Lithuanians comprise 84.2 per cent of the population of the Republic of Lithuania with 6.6 per cent Poles and 5.8 per cent Russians. No data were collected on the religious beliefs of Lithuania's population between 1923 and 2001. In 2001 almost 84 per cent of the Lithuanian population considered themselves as believers, with 79 per cent declaring themselves Roman Catholics (82.9 per cent in 2011) and 4 per cent Orthodox (in 2001 and 2011; 125,189 people in 2011): '2001 m. surašymas: Romos katalikų daugiausia' [The 2001 Census: Roman Catholics Most Numerous], the Lithuanian Department of Statistics, available at <http://www.stat.gov.lt/lt/news/view/?id=292> (accessed 3 October 2011); *Lietuvos gyventojai 2011 metais* [Lithuanian 2011 Population Census in Brief], Vilnius: Lietuvos statistikos departamentas, 2012, pp. 20, 26, available at http://www.stat.gov.lt/uploads/Lietuvos_gyventojai_2011.pdf (accessed 11 January 2013).

- 2 It was much more numerous in the Slavic lands of the Grand Duchy of Lithuania. When Lithuania was annexed by tsarist Russia at the end of the eighteenth century it did not have a single Orthodox parish church and the religious needs of Orthodox believers (numbering around 400) were met by four monasteries. The monasteries lacked monks and discipline and two of them were closed at the beginning of the nineteenth century. However, between then and the First World War, in the 'Lithuanian' part of the Orthodox Diocese of Lithuania and Vilnius, i.e. in the borders of the independent Republic of Lithuania founded in 1918 (without Vilnius and the Vilnius region, which until 1939 were part of the Republic of Poland), forty-eight parishes and three monasteries were founded. Moreover, there were eighteen additional Orthodox churches for the army garrisons and forty-one non-parish churches (school, hospital, prison, cemetery chapels), for a total of 110 Orthodox churches: 'The Appeal to the President of the April 4, 1927 Meeting of the Orthodox Diocese of Lithuania', Lithuanian Central State Archive, fond 377, inventory 9, file 87, leaf 182.
- 3 Regina Laukaitytė, *Stačiatikių Bažnyčia Lietuvoje XX amžiuje* [The Orthodox Church in Lithuania in the 20th Century], Vilnius: Lietuvos istorijos institutas, 2003, p. 36. In the brief 1918–40 period a new net of parishes was created. There were thirty-one parishes, but the structure essential for full Church and spiritual life were not created. There were no monasteries, no spiritual seminary (spiritual courses conducted in 1930–2 prepared some clergy of the younger generation). In the fall of 1939 after Vilnius and the Vilnius region was joined to Lithuania, the diocese added fourteen Orthodox churches, two monasteries, and about 12,000 believers.
- 4 Laukaitytė, *Stačiatikių Bažnyčia*, pp. 122–35.
- 5 *Ibid.*, pp. 122–4.
- 6 *Ibid.*, pp. 135–64.
- 7 Nikolaj Zhukov, 'Archiereiskie problemy i zaboty. Beseda s mitropolitom Vilenskim i Litovskim Chrizostomom' [Problems and Concerns of the Archbishop. Talk with Metropolitan of Vilnius and Lithuania Chrysostom], *Respublika* [The Republic], 21 October 2005, p. 8.
- 8 *Ibid.*

- 9 There are around seventy Russian cultural, social and local organisations in Lithuania. See the website 'Lithuania's Russians' at <http://www.ruskij.lt/index.php?cp=rusorgkontakt> (accessed 5 October 2011).
- 10 Zhukov, 'Archiereiskie problemy i zaboty', p. 8.
- 11 *Lietuvos Respublikos Konstitucija* [The Constitution of the Republic of Lithuania.] available at <http://www3.lrs.lt/home/Konstitucija/Konstitucija.htm> (accessed 5 October 2011).
- 12 *Religinių bendruomenių ir bendrijų įstatymas* [The Law of Religious Communities and Associations], *Valstybės žinios* [State News], 4 October 1995, no. 89-1985; *Tikėjimo laisvė ir religinių bendruomenių bei bendrijų statusas Lietuvoje* [Freedom of Religion and the Status of Religious Communities and Associations in Lithuania]. the Lithuanian Centre for Human Rights, available at <http://www.manoteises.lt/index.php?lang=1&sid=535&tid=600> (accessed 7 November 2011).
- 13 *Lietuvos Respublikos vyriausybės nutarimas dėl lėšų paskirstymo tradicinių Lietuvos Bažnyčių ir religinių organizacijų vadovybėms* [Decision of the Government of the Republic of Lithuania on the Distribution of Funds to the Leaders of the Traditional Churches and Religious Organisations of Lithuania, Government of the Republic of Lithuania site], 27 June 2012, available at <http://tar.tic.lt/Default.aspx?id=2&item=results&aktoid=E8B18682-BDB3-4080-8305-DF6EBDB6A974> (accessed 22 December 2012).
- 14 Mitropolit Vilenskii Chrizostom, 'Pastyrstvo est kontakt s licznostju' [Spiritual duties are contact with someone's personality], *Christianstvo v istorii* [Christianity in History], 1994, available at <http://krotov.info/spravki/persons/bishops/martish.html#55> (accessed 9 November 2011).
- 15 Michail Pozdniaev, 'Ja sotrudnichal s KGB ... no ne byl stukachiom' (interviu archiepiskopa Vilenskogo i Litovskogo Chrizostoma) ['I maintained contacts with the KGB ... but I was not a sneak' (interview with Metropolitan Chrysostom of Vilnius and Lithuania)], *Russkaja mysl* [Russian Thought], 24 April 1992.
- 16 Chrizostom Martishkin, 'Sovershenno sekretno' [Completely secret], July 2003 [Interview with the journalist Leonid Velechov], available at <http://krotov.info/spravki/persons/bishops/martish.html> (accessed 4 November 2011).
- 17 The KGB infiltration in the small Orthodox diocese of Lithuania was almost open: the leaders of the diocese could not appoint to an important role any person whose candidacy had not been coordinated with the 'organs'.
- 18 Mitropolit Vilenskii Chrizostom, 'Pastyrstvo est kontakt s licznostju'.
- 19 German Szlevis, *Pravoslavnyje chramy Litvy* [Lithuania's Orthodox Temples]. 2006, p. 7.
- 20 Laukaitytė, *Stučiatikių Bažnyčia*, p. 158.
- 21 Author's interview with Fr Vitalijus Mockus on 12 October 2011.
- 22 Two Orthodox churches appeared in Klaipėda and Visaginas (in the latter city there is an atomic power plant and the larger population, of which 56 per cent is Russian; 21 per cent in Klaipėda). In some places (Palanga (nearly 7 per cent). Šalčininkai (5 per cent)) new Orthodox churches were built, while in other places churches are under construction (Klaipėda, Visaginas) or modest Orthodox chapels have been arranged in schools (Klaipėda, Jonava, Šilutė).
- 23 Author's interview with Fr Vitalijus Mockus on 17 October 2011.
- 24 As was the case with other official publications at that time, it has been printed in Cyrillic since the tsarist authorities forbade publication in Latin characters. This prohibition lasted for forty years and had the opposite effect of that anticipated as these measures encouraged Lithuanian resistance, the boycott of Russian schools and the extensive illegal distribution of the Lithuanian press.
- 25 Author's interview with Fr Vitalijus Mockus, St Paraskeva Orthodox church in Vilnius on 12 October 2011.

- 26 See: <http://www.orthodoxy.lt> (accessed 20 November 2012).
- 27 These include, in the Vilnius parishes, the Holy Mother of God Assumption into Heaven Cathedral: <http://sobor.lt/>, Sts Konstantin and Mikhail: <http://www.kimp.lt/> and St Eufrosin: <http://www.cerkvica.lt/>; in Visaginas parish, the Birth of St John the Baptist: <http://orthodox.vndv.com/> and St Pantaleimon: <http://orthodox.tts.lt/>; in Kaunas Annunciation Cathedral: <http://www.blagovest.lt/>; in Palanga parish: <http://www.cerkov.lt/> (accessed 20 November 2012).
- 28 Lithuania's Orthodox Brotherhood: <http://www.pbl.lt/>; Lithuania's Orthodox Education Society 'Zhivoi kolos': <http://www.kolos.lt/> (accessed 20 November 2012).
- 29 Author's interview with Fr Vitalijus Mockus on 17 October 2011; Laukaitytė, *Stačiatikių Bažnyčia*, pp. 173 and 177.
- 30 Laukaitytė, *Stačiatikių Bažnyčia*, pp. 165 and 177–80; Irina Arefieva, 'Kliashtor. Rasskaz ob obshchine mirian v mestechke Michnovu, Litva' [Monastery. Story of the Lay Community in the Small Town of Mikniškės, Lithuania], available at <http://www.miloserdie.ru/index.php?ss=20&s=30&id=2540> (accessed 3 October 2011).
- 31 Author's interview with Fr Vitalijus Mockus on 17 October 2011.
- 32 'Lietuvos gyventojai pagal tikybą' [Lithuania's population according to religion], <http://www.religija.lt/straipsniai/tyrimai-analize-nuomones/lietuvos-gyventojai-pagal-tikyba> (accessed 22 October 2011).
- 33 'Prichody i obshchiny Belorusskoi greko-katolicheskoi cerkvi' [The Greek-Catholic Church parishes and communities of Belarus], available at <http://www.hierarchy.ru/h-uniat-belprihodi.html> (accessed 26 October 2011).
- 34 Martishkin, *Sovershenno sekretno*.
- 35 Lietuvos gyventojai 2011 metais.