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Conflicts over the Language of Additional Services in the Diocese of Sejny or Augustów in the Second Half of the Nineteenth and Early Twentieth Centuries

From the ecclesiastical point of view, the conflicts over the language of the additional service were of a pastoral nature, while looking at it from the societal point of view, one has to search for a connection with the tasks that the formation of the modern nation posed to the Church. The processes in the parishes of the diocese of Sejny or Augustów were no exception. The introduction of the Lithuanian language in some parishes in additional services, especially in hymn-singing, and the reluctance of the Polish parishioners to change the situation was a pressing issue.

As we know, the diocese of Sejny or Augustów seemingly consisted of two equal parts. One of them was densely populated by Lithuanians and the other by Poles. There were, however, mixed parishes, especially in the periphery, where Lithuanians and Poles lived together. In the Lithuanian part of the diocese, there were also parishes where both peoples mixed. In such parishes, the townspeople mainly identified themselves as Poles, while those living in villages mostly perceived themselves as Lithuanians. Naturally, there were no linguistic problems in the parishes inhabited by Poles and Polish was used for the additional service. For various reasons, the Polish language was prevalent in Lithuanian parishes, although, of course, religious services were also conducted in Lithuanian. The rights of the Lithuanian language in the churches became a matter of concern after the suppression of the uprising of 1863-1864. This concern should be linked to the emergence of the Lithuanian national movement. Another circumstance was that in the diocese of Sejny or Augustów, the majority of the priests were Lithuanians who had graduated from the Sejny Theological Seminary. Their Lithuanian origin had a significant impact on the national consciousness of the clergy themselves and on the spread

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of national awareness among the parishioners. The spread of national consciousness, or, in other words, Lithuanian nationalism, placed new demands on the Church to adapt to the changed situation. Here, too, it was pointed out that it was abnormal that Lithuanians, who made up the majority of parishioners, had to listen to sermons in Polish or sing in Polish in church. In most of the purely Lithuanian parishes of the diocese of Sejny or Augustów, the parishioners regained their rights without much effort. The process of the Lithuanisation of additional services continued until the early twentieth century. However, there were also some parishes where conflict situations arose. The parishes of Lazdijai, Simnas, Smalėnai, Seirijai, Meteliai, Veisiejai, Alytus, Vištytis, Kalvarija, Berznykas (Berzniki), Liubavas, and Rumbonys could be seen as such. In all these parishes, conflict situations arose, but to varying degrees. In some of them the issues were resolved peacefully, but there were also parishes where fists and stones were unleashed and even blood was shed.

The issue of the language of the additional services was discussed by Pranciškus Augustaitis, a long-standing professor at the Seminary of Sejny¹. The facts provided by him are important because they are a testimony by a contemporary of these events to the processes in the parishes. The article by Witold Jemielity, a professor at the Łomża diocesan theological seminary, is relevant to the topic discussed². In this work, the author relied on the documents kept in the archives of the Łomża diocese. Among other documents, he uses the answers to the questions from a questionnaire that Bishop Antanas Baranauskas distributed in parishes in 1898. The article discusses disputes between Lithuanians and Poles in the parishes of Alytus, Berznykas, Kalvarija, Liubavas, Smalėnai, and Vištytis over the language of additional services. However, petitions of parishioners written in Lithuanian were not used. The author of this article has published an article specifically on the use of the Lithuanian language and the conflicts that had occurred³. In another article, he also discussed the situation regarding the language of the additional service in the dioceses of Sejny, Samogitia, and Vilnius at the turn of the twentieth century⁴. Biographers of Bishop Antanas Baranauskas discussed the issues of the

¹ P. A. (Pranciškus Augustaitis), *Seinų diecezijos bažnyčių monografija*, „Vadovas” 1911, no. 32, p. 371-377, no. 34, p. 152-166, no. 35, p. 267-278, no. 36, p. 382-395, no. 37, p. 64-70, no. 38, p. 175-180, no. 39, p. 279-283, no. 40, p. 386-387; 1912, no. 41, p. 74-78, no. 42, p. 176-179, no. 43, p. 281-284, no. 44, p. 380-383, no. 45, p. 70-80, no. 46, p. 178-180, no. 47, p. 275-281, no. 48, p. 385-389, no. 49, p. 75-82, n. 50, p. 168-172.

² W. Jemielity, *Język nabożeństw w parafiach mieszanych polsko-litewskich przed I Wojną Światową*, in: *Przeszłość natchnieniem dla teraźniejszości*, ed. K. Brzostek, Elk 1996, p. 260-282.

³ A. Katilius, *Pridėtinių pamaldų kalba Seinų vyskupijos bažnyčiose: XIX a.–XX a. pradžia*, in: *Vyskupo Antano Baranausko anketa dvasininkams (1898 m.)*, ed. A. Katilius, Vilnius 2012, p. 11-58.

⁴ A. Katilius, *Konflikty polsko-litewskie o język nabożeństw w mieszanych (polsko-litewskich) parafiach na przełomie XIX i XX wieku*, in: *Pozostawione historii. Litwini o Polsce i Polakach*, ed. K. Korzeniewska, V. Sirutavičius, Kraków 1999, p. 109-120.

introduction of additional services in Lithuanian and ethnic relations in the parishes. Resorting to the documents from the archives of the Łomża diocese, Regina Mikšytė wrote about the introduction of Lithuanian hymns in the churches of Simnas, Seirijai, Liubavas, Veisiejai, and Alytus⁵. Egidijus Aleksandravičius paid more attention to ethnic relations in Vištytis parish⁶.

This article is focused on four issues. First of all, the situation of the Lithuanian language in the parishes at the end of the nineteenth century is discussed, which will allow us to identify the extent of the problem of the use of languages in additional services. Another issue is the ways in which the conflicts manifested themselves. The main focus will be on the petitions that the Lithuanian and Polish parishioners wrote to the clergy and the authorities. These appeals make it possible to identify the arguments used by the representatives of each ethnic group and to see the specific demands of the parishioners. The most violent conflicts in the parishes are discussed in the section on bloody confrontations. The article concludes with a discussion of the efforts of the clergy of the diocese of Sejny or Augustów in resolving linguistic issues in conflict-ridden parishes.

The situation of the Lithuanian language in churches at the end of the nineteenth century

As far as the situation of the Lithuanian language in the diocese of Sejny or Augustów is concerned, we will refer to the clergy's answers to a questionnaire distributed by Bishop Antanas Baranauskas in 1898, in which, along with various liturgical matters, the clergy were also asked to name the languages used in church practice. The answers to the questionnaire were written in Polish; they are now published with a translation into Lithuanian⁷. The originals of the answers are kept in the archives of the diocese of Łomża.

Firstly, the questionnaire asks which language, Lithuanian or Polish, the majority and minority parishioners spoke. The questionnaire requests data on languages in more than one place. It asks which language – Latin, Polish or Lithuanian – is used for teaching, public prayers, and hymn-singing. What is sung, and in which language, with the Display of the Blessed Sacrament in the octave of the Corpus Christi, at the beginning and at the end of the 40-hour rite, and during ceremonial feast days? What, apart from the Display of the Blessed Sacrament, and in which language, is sung on ordinary Sundays and feast days, on St Mark's Day and the Days of the Cross, All Souls' Day, Shrove Tuesday, Palm Sunday, and thanksgiving days (for example, 10 October)? What language is sung at the exposition of the relics? What is a solemn, modest, or pri-

⁵ R. Mikšytė, *Antanas Baranauskas*, Vilnius 1993, p. 245-250.

⁶ E. Aleksandravičius, *Giesmininko kelias*, Vilnius 2003, p. 241-244; cf. E. Aleksandravičius, *Antanas Baranauskas: szlak wieszczia*, tr. J. Rogoza, T. Błaszczak, Sejny 2014.

⁷ *Vyskupo Antano Baranausko anketa dvasininkams (1898 m.)*, ed. A. Katilius, Vilnius 2012.

vate funeral procession, what is sung during it, and in which language? Which is the language of the public worship of the faithful: when and what do the people themselves say or sing, with the choir, with the priest, with the priest and the choir? Which is the language of the Rosary, chaplet, novenas, and litanies? Which language is used for the Stations of the Cross, the mournful lamentations, the May, June, and October services? Also, which are the languages of sermons, homilies, and the systematic teaching of the catechism? Which language is used to prepare children for First Confession and Holy Communion?⁸ As we can see, the field of the use of national languages in ecclesiastical rites and practice is quite wide.

The archive file contains a total of 67 replies from 65 parishes, as a couple of replies are attributed to the same parish and in one reply the parish is not given. This is a little more than half of the parishes that used to be in the diocese of Sejny or Augustów. The responses from Lithuanian and Polish parishes are almost evenly divided. However, of the Lithuanian deaneries, there were no answers from the deanery of Naumištis (Vladislavovas). No answers came from the Polish deaneries of Łomża and Mazovia⁹.

It is immediately apparent that either Polish or Latin was unequivocally used in church rites in the parishes of the Polish part of the diocese. In Lithuanian parishes or in parishes that were more or less mixed, the use of languages was less clear-cut and more varied. Now we will take a look at the languages used in church services in Lithuanian and mixed parishes. The overview is based on the responses to the above-mentioned questionnaire.

In the church of Prienai, the Gospel was read in Polish and Lithuanian and the sermon was delivered in Lithuanian. The language of the parish was Lithuanian. There were several Poles, temporary residents, who understood Lithuanian well. A number of the townspeople who considered themselves Poles spoke Lithuanian better than Polish. The Lithuanian language was used exclusively in public prayers. Church hymns were sung in Lithuanian or Latin. Instruction was in Lithuanian.

In the parish of Garliava, the language of the majority was Lithuanian. The language of the hymns and all prayers was Lithuanian and Latin. The language of religious instruction was Lithuanian. During processions, hymns were sung in Latin. Hymn-singing on Palm Sunday was in Lithuanian and Latin.

In Pakuonis parish, the language of the believers was homogeneous, Lithuanian. The language of instruction, hymns, and public prayers was Lithuanian, except for the prayers for the ruler's family, which were held in Polish.

The opening answers are missing in the questionnaire sent by the parish of Ūdrija, but even without them it is clear that hymns were sung in Lithuanian and Latin.

⁸ Ibid., p. 429-434.

⁹ Ibid., p. 8.

In the parish of Garliava, the language of the majority is Lithuanian and that of the minority Polish. Almost all men understand and speak Polish; women and children do not understand it. Among the Poles, very few speak Lithuanian. Since long, Polish had been the language of hymn-singing and praying. Religious teaching is done either in Polish or in Lithuanian, depending on people's needs.

In the parish of Kriokalaukis, people speak Lithuanian. Teaching, hymn-singing, and praying are also in Lithuanian.

Lithuanian is the language of the community in Rudamina parish. Public hymns are sung and prayers are offered in Lithuanian. Lithuanian is used in teaching, with the exception of the Polish gospel.

The answer from Simnas parish reads: „Lithuanian is the predominant language in the parish, and Polish is used by a small minority. Regardless of the difference in numbers, by the power of a decree of His Excellency of 2 April of this year, Lithuanians and Poles have assigned times to hold their public service on Sundays and on feast days, as follows: Lithuanians before noon and Poles after noon”.

In the parish of Alytus, the language of the majority is Lithuanian and that of the minority Polish. The Gospel is preached in Lithuanian and Polish, public singing is in Polish, public prayers in Lithuanian and Polish, teaching in Lithuanian and Polish.

In the parish of Rumbonys, the language of the majority is Lithuanian and that of the minority Polish. Languages of hymns and public prayers: Latin, Polish, Lithuanian. Sermons are delivered in Lithuanian and Polish.

In the parish of Daukšiai, the Rosary is recited, hymns are sung, and prayers said in Lithuanian, and the hours of Mary in Polish. Mournful lamentations, May and October services are in Lithuanian.

In Liudvinavas parish, all parishioners speak Lithuanian, with the exception of two people. Hymn-singing, praying, and sermons are also in Lithuanian.

The answers about the linguistic situation in Seirijai read: ‘It should also be noted that all those who speak Polish speak Lithuanian as well as those who speak only Lithuanian. The language of hymns, public prayers and teaching: (a) Latin. Latin is for everything from the Missal, the Breviary, the Ritual, and the hymnal. (b) Polish. The Hours of Mary are sung in Polish, as are all the hymns in the choir during the High Mass, except ‘Pulkim and keliq’ (On Our Knees). Only some children are prepared in Polish for their First Confession and Holy Communion. (c) Lithuanian. Lithuanian is used for the Rosary, hymns during the procession, both with the Blessed Sacrament and without, litanies, lamentations, ‘On Our Knees’ at the beginning of the high mass, and supplications. The Lithuanian language is used for May and October services, the Stations of the Cross, the sermon, [the catechism] teaching; prayers, morning and evening prayers, children are prepared for their First Confession for Holy Communion’.

In the parish of Leipalingis, the majority of the parishioners speak Lithuanian. The language of hymns, public service, and teaching is Lithuanian.

In Liškiava parish, the parishioners speak Lithuanian. Teaching, hymn-singing, and praying are also in Lithuanian.

In the parish of Šventežeris, Lithuanian is the language of the majority and Polish of the tiny minority. The language of instruction is Lithuanian.

In Veisiejai parish, hymns are sung in Polish, the language of prayers and teaching is Lithuanian and, to some extent, Polish.

In the parish of Kapčiamiestis, the language of the majority is Lithuanian and that of the minority Polish. Polish and Lithuanian are used in hymn-singing, public mass, and teaching.

The answer of Berznykas parish reads: 'It seems to me that Lithuanian is spoken by the majority of the parishioners, but among them, especially among the men, there are very few who would not understand, and at the same time would not speak Polish, while, on the contrary, among those who speak Polish, there are relatively few who would understand and speak Lithuanian. Polish is used exclusively in hymns and public prayers, while Latin is used when the liturgy requires it'.

In the parish of Miroslavas, the language of the majority is Lithuanian and that of the minority Polish. As the majority language, Lithuanian is used in hymns, public prayers, and teaching.

In the parish of Meteliai, the language of the majority is Lithuanian and that of the minority Polish. Poles have a better command of Lithuanian. Hymns are sung in Lithuanian and Latin, public prayers, sermons and teaching of religious truths are held only in Lithuanian.

In the parish of Punksk, the language of the majority is Lithuanian. On one Sunday or feast day, religious instruction is in Polish, and on another in Lithuanian. Hymn-singing is in Lithuanian and Polish. The Gospel is preached in both languages.

In the filial parish of Smalėnai, church services are held in Polish and Lithuanian.

In the filial parish of Gudeliai, Lithuanian is the language of all parishioners. The language of hymns, public services, and teaching is Lithuanian.

The questionnaire from the filial parish of Plutiškės reads: 'Since the population of this parish is entirely Lithuanian, the hymns and public prayers are sung only in Lithuanian, since there is not a single Pole in the true sense of the word'.

The language of the believers in the parish of Skriaudžiai is Lithuanian. It is the language used for hymn-singing, public prayer, and teaching.

The answer from Vištytis parish reads: 'The language of the majority of the parishioners is Lithuanian, the language of the minority is Polish; for hymns and public prayers, the parishioners use Polish, except for the Stations of the Cross and lamentations, which are sung in Lithuanian, the supplications,

the alternating chanting of verses in Polish, and the same verses in Lithuanian; for public prayers, Polish is used. Latin is not used at all in teaching; Polish is used for sermons and for catechising the children of the townspeople. Lithuanian: sermons are preached and children are taught the prayers, the Commandments, the Holy Sacraments, and the truths of the Holy Faith’.

The reply from Marijampolė parish reads: ‘The language of most of the parishioners is Lithuanian, while Polish is spoken and prayed in only by those who live in the city, but almost all of them understand Lithuanian. The language of hymns, public prayers, and teaching is mainly Lithuanian, except for May services, which are held in Polish, and on major occasions the sermons are also in Polish’.

In the filial parish of Pilviškiai, Lithuanian is the language of all parishioners, and only very few of them speak Polish. The language of hymns, public services, and teaching is Lithuanian.

The filial parish of Šunskai is entirely Lithuanian. The Rosary, the chaplet, the litany, and various hymns are sung in Lithuanian. Teaching is done in Lithuanian.

The residents of the filial parish of Višakio Rūda are Lithuanians. Therefore, the Rosary, the litany, and other hymns are sung in Lithuanian. Teaching of all kinds is also done in Lithuanian.

In the filial parish of Veiveriai, the language of the parishioners is Lithuanian. The languages of hymns, public prayer, and teaching are Latin and Lithuanian.

In his answer, the dean of Zapyškis parish wrote: ‘The language of most of the parishioners is Lithuanian, with the exception of a few who speak Polish. Prayers are in Lithuanian. Hymns: at the time of High Mass, the choir and people sing ‘O salutaris’, ‘Te Deum’, ‘Rex Christe’, ‘Salvum fac’ in Latin; Polish is for the Hours, the Solemn Service, and the reading of the Gospel after the High Mass, and Lithuanian for everything else. The language of instruction is Lithuanian; if a Polish child turns up for First Confession, he is catechised in Polish’.

With the exception of a few people, the language of all the parishioners is Lithuanian in the filial parish of Igliauka. There is no minority to speak of. The language of hymns, public service, and teaching is Lithuanian.

In the parish of Aukštoji Panemunė, not many people speak Polish, unless they come from the cities, so it is used less. The Gospel, teaching, sermons, prayers, the catechism, and hymns are in Lithuanian. Polish is only used for the Gospel.

In the parish of Balbieriškis, the parishioners generally speak Lithuanian; there are very few people who speak Polish well; there are only a hundred or so courtiers and townspeople who speak broken Polish. The language of hymns, public prayer, and teaching is in Lithuanian. Polish is not practised in public.

The Lithuanian language prevails in the filial parish of Šilavotas. Hymns are sung and teaching is conducted in Lithuanian. During High Mass, hymns are sung in Latin.

As we can see from this overview, there were not many potential parishes where conflicts over the use of languages in overflow services could arise in the diocese of Sejny or Augustów at the end of the nineteenth century. The Lithuanian language was established in those parishes where the parishioners were Lithuanians and in those parishes where there were few Polish believers. That was why Polish was still only occasionally used in church services in these parishes. The Gospel was more often read in Polish. Latin was used in liturgical singing. Even in a parish like Marijampolė, the predominant language was Lithuanian. The problem parishes were those where the majority of the population was Lithuanian and the minority was Polish, but Polish was used in the additional services and especially in hymn-singing. In such parishes, people of Polish nationality spoke out against the introduction of the Lithuanian language. In Polish parishes, no problems arose with the use of the language in additional services.

Petitions of Lithuanian and Polish parishioners

Most often, a dispute or a conflict over the use of a particular language in additional services began with parishioners' petition to the spiritual superiors. It should be noted that the petitions were addressed not only to the bishops and diocesan administrators of Sejny, but also to the Archbishop of Warsaw, and even to the officials of civil authorities: the governor of Suwałki, the governor-general of Warsaw, and even the emperor. Petitions include demands of one side or the other, an explanation of the situation, and a request for a change in the situation regarding one language or the other. Thus the parishioners' requests reveal the essence and the meaning of the conflict situation, and now we will discuss them.

In the petitions of the Lithuanian believers, the justification of the introduction of the Lithuanian language in additional services was that the majority of the believers in the parish were of Lithuanian nationality and that most of the parishioners did not understand Polish. The reason given by the Polish believers in their petitions was the tradition, i.e., that the Polish language had been around for a long time or that their ancestors built the church. In a sense, the Lithuanian petitions can be seen as an expression of Lithuanian nationalism towards the Church, when the public use of the Lithuanian language in churches became an important tool to meet the needs of the revived nation. A nation with growing self-awareness could not be indifferent to the religious needs of its people. Polish nationalism tried not to lose the positions it had held and to maintain the established use of Polish in churches.

In the archival files, the first petition regarding the use of the language was written by the Polish believers of Vištytis parish to Piotr Paweł Wierzbowski,

Bishop of Sejny, in 1881, in which they asked for the restoration of the order in which the sermons were delivered in both languages: Polish and Lithuanian on alternate Sundays¹⁰. The motif of their petition was that the inhabitants of Vištytis spoke exclusively Polish and did not understand Lithuanian. The villagers spoke Lithuanian, but most of them knew Polish. Another argument was that since old times, priests used to deliver the sermon in Polish and in Lithuanian on alternate Sundays. However, parish priest Adomas Šukvietis stopped giving the sermon in Polish and preached only in Lithuanian. In his explanation to the bishop, the parish priest wrote that the sermons were delivered in Lithuanian because otherwise all the Lithuanians would leave the church on the Sundays when the sermon was delivered in Polish. The previous parish priests did not preach in Polish either, and it was only in 1879 that the transferred Vicar Liudvikas Adomavičius started delivering sermons in Polish¹¹. According to the dean of Vilkaviškis, priest Antanas Lesnevskis, the dissatisfaction with the parish priest Šukvietis was fuelled by Vicar Adomavičius, who himself wanted to become the parish priest of Vištytis. He needed to be moved from the Vištytis parish and all would be quiet¹². Indeed, the bishop transferred Adomavičius to another parish. After priest Liudvikas Adamavičius was transferred, the Polish parishioners wrote to the bishop asking for his reinstatement in the parish of Vištytis¹³. The ensuing conflict lasted until 1909. At first, it was the Polish parishioners who sought their rights, and later the Lithuanians became concerned about their own rights.

In the archive file, other petitions by the Polish parishioners are dated 1896, and we have no information on whether there were any more appeals to any other institution between 1881 and 1896. In 1896, the Polish parishioners of Vištytis wrote two petitions, one to the Archbishop of Warsaw and one to the governor-general of Warsaw. We have no record of the appeal to the Archbishop of Warsaw, but in the appeal to the governor-general of Warsaw, the request was for the sermons to be held in Polish and Lithuanian on alternate Sundays¹⁴. On the basis of the data provided by the governor of Suwałki, to the effect that the majority of the inhabitants of the parish of Vištytis were Lithuanians and not Poles, as stated in the request, and that the Poles had a good command of the Lithuanian lan-

¹⁰ Complaint of the Polish parishioners of Vištytis parish to Piotr Paweł Wierzbowski, Bishop of Sejny, 26 December 1881, Archiwum Diecezjalne w Łomży (Diocesan Archive in Łomża, hereinafter *ArŁm*), sign. I 596, l. 167.

¹¹ Letter of Adomas Šukvietis, administrator of Vištytis parish, to Piotr Paweł Wierzbowski, Bishop of Sejny, 9 January 1882, *ibid.*, l. 163.

¹² Report of Antanas Lesnevskis, Dean of Vilkaviškis, to Piotr Paweł Wierzbowski, Bishop of Sejny, 27 January 1882, *ibid.*, l. 165-166.

¹³ Petition by the Polish parishioners of Vištytis parish to Piotr Paweł Wierzbowski, Bishop of Sejny, 20 March 1882, *ibid.*, l. 170, 179. The inscription on this petition reads that due to a shortage of priests the request cannot be granted.

¹⁴ Letter by the governor-general of Warsaw to the diocesan administrator of Sejny, no. 2233, 21 November 1896, *ibid.*, l. 203.

guage, the governor-general of Warsaw ruled that the sermons should continue to be delivered only in the Lithuanian language and that the request of the Polish parishioners was therefore unfounded¹⁵.

The next step by the Polish parishioners took place two years later. On 28 March 1898, they submitted a petition to Bishop Antanas Baranauskas. They wrote in it that Poles had not heard sermons in their own language for sixteen years. It is true that they understand Lithuanian, but not enough to understand the content and every thought of the sermons. The children speak only Polish, the instruction in school is in Russian, so where can they hear the truths of the faith? They are therefore asking the bishop to give at least seven sermons in Polish a year: on feast days and twice during Lent¹⁶. We have no information on Bishop Baranauskas's reply.

In 1898, the chanting of the Stations of the Cross and the mournful lamentations in Lithuanian was introduced in the church in Vištytis, while the supplications were sung alternately, that is, one verse in Polish and the other verse in Lithuanian¹⁷. However, hymn-singing in additional services remained in Polish. Then the Lithuanian parishioners demanded their rights. On 31 January 1899, they sent their appeal to Bishop Baranauskas¹⁸. First of all, they complained that the singing of supplications was 'very hard on us and very much hurtful to us'. The reasons given for this injustice were the following: out of 3000 parishioners, there were only about 300 who wanted to sing in Polish; the villages were far away from the church; the roads were bad. Because, 'due to two sermons, one in Polish before High Mass and the Lithuanian after High Mass, also due to the singing of supplications in two languages, the mass was very long, almost until three o'clock every Sunday. To return home when the days are so short and the roads are so bad is too late for those on wheels and especially for those who have to walk, because each Sunday night falls on the way from Holy Church'¹⁹. Lithuanian parishioners asked for the processions, Holy Mass, and supplications to be sung in Lithuanian on three Sundays and in Polish on one Sunday a month. The bishop's response to this request of the Lithuanian parishioners is not available in the archival file, but singing in Lithuanian was not introduced in the additional service. In 1903, Lithuanian parishioners appealed to Prelate Juozapas Antanavičius, the administrator of the Sejny diocese, with a request written in Russian, to introduce singing in Lithuanian during the additional services²⁰. The petition refers to the decision of 21 November 1896 of

¹⁵ Ibid.

¹⁶ Petition by the Polish parishioners of Vištytis parish to Bishop Antanas Baranauskas, 28 March 1898, *ibid.*, l. 205.

¹⁷ W. Jemielity, *op. cit.*, p. 276.

¹⁸ Petition by the Lithuanians of Vištytis parish to Bishop Antanas Baranauskas, 31 January 1899, *ArLm*, sygn. I 596, l. 214.

¹⁹ Ibid.

²⁰ Petition by the Lithuanian parishioners of Vištytis parish to Prelate Juozapas Antanavičius, diocesan administrator of Sejny, 3 March 1903, *ibid.*, l. 220-221.

the governor-general of Warsaw, although the decision does not refer to singing but only to sermons. There were more petitions from parishioners regarding hymn-singing. Late in 1908, the Lithuanian parishioners of Vištytis parish appealed to the administrator of the Sejny diocese²¹. After the request of the parishioners, Jurgis Krokininkas, the parish priest of Vištytis, sent a letter to the diocesan administrator, in which he noted: ‘There are about 600 Poles and about 1900 Lithuanians, so proportionally every fourth Sunday there are hymns and a sermon for the Poles (besides the sermon in Lithuanian)’²². On 31 January 1909, the Lithuanian parishioners of Vištytis wrote a petition to the governor of Suwałki requesting that singing in Lithuanian be introduced in the church of Vištytis in accordance with the order of the governor-general of Warsaw of 21 November/4 December 1896²³, but this order, as the governor noted, did not concern hymn-singing²⁴. In 1909, Lithuanians and Poles wrote petitions to the Archbishop of Warsaw, who forwarded them to the administrator of the diocese of Sejny²⁵. Bishop Antanas Karosas, the newly appointed pastor of the diocese of Sejny or Augustów, received two more petitions, one from Poles and one from Lithuanians. The petition written by the Poles reads that ‘we Poles have our own Polish church built by our ancestors’. That is why they do not know why Lithuanians not only kick them out of the church but also beat them. The previous year, one person was killed, and this year, Polish blood was shed in the church. Therefore they ask the bishop to restore their right to pray in Polish and not in Lithuanian, as is the case now²⁶. In 1911, during the visitation of Bishop Antanas Karosas on 19-20 June, the Polish and Lithuanian parishioners of Vištytis united and gave the bishop a warm welcome²⁷.

On 1 May 1898, the Polish parishioners of Alytus submitted a petition, signed by 29 persons, to Antanas Baranauskas, Bishop of Sejny. In their appeal, they pointed out that since ancient times hymn-singing in the parish church in Alytus was in Polish and the sermons in Polish and Lithuanian. In recent years, priests refused to deliver sermons in Polish, even on feast days. At Easter that year, the parish priest announced that, according to the bishop’s will, supplications and other hymn-singing would be in Lithuanian. The Polish

²¹ Petition by the Lithuanian parishioners of Vištytis parish to Prelate Juozapas Antanavičius, diocesan administrator of Sejny, [December 1908], *ibid.*, l. 224.

²² Letter by Jurgis Krokininkas, parish priest of Vištytis parish, to Prelate Juozapas Antanavičius, diocesan administrator of Sejny, 10 December 1908, *ibid.*, l. 226.

²³ Petition by the authorised representatives of the Lithuanian parishioners of Vištytis parish to the governor of Suwałki, 31 January 1909, *ibid.*, l. 229.

²⁴ Letter by the governor of Suwałki to the diocesan administrator of Sejny, no. 1437, 6 February 1909, *ibid.*, l. 228.

²⁵ Letter by the Archbishop of Warsaw to the diocesan administrator of Sejny, no. 1348, 27 February 1909, *ibid.*, l. 230.

²⁶ Petition by Anton Koronowski, Jan Wiktorowicz, Jan Narwicz, Michal Szmydt, and Jan Wiza to Antanas Karosas, Bishop of Sejny, 4 October 1910, *ibid.*, l. 264.

²⁷ Kun. J. Krokininkas, *Vištytis*, „Šaltinis” 1911, no. 28 (5/18 July), p. 331.

parishioners went on to try to persuade the bishop not to announce such a decision and to make sure that local priests did not make arbitrary decisions about the Polish language²⁸.

In 1900, the Lithuanian parishioners of the Alytus parish wrote two petitions to Antanas Baranauskas, Bishop of Sejny. The first petition was written in July and signed by around 524 people²⁹. The other appeal was written on 27 October 1900 and was signed by about 352 people³⁰. The Lithuanian parishioners wrote:

It hurts our hearts that almost an entire parish in Lithuania is not allowed to sing the Rosary in its church, and that our neighbours laugh at us because we are so good-for-nothing. If our language is not sung in church, there is no place for our children to learn. We, Lithuanians, submit ourselves to your spiritual judgement and seek justice from you. We ask for permission to worship God in our own language in a way that is understandable, as you have allowed the parishes of Rumbonys, Slabada, Simnas and others to do³¹.

On 11 December 1901, the Polish parishioners submitted an additional petition signed by 81 people to the bishop. In it, they asked for every first Sunday of the month to be Polish from morning to evening, including the sermon; Polish should also be the language of Maundy Thursday, Good Friday, Holy Saturday, and the first day of Easter. The petitioners recalled that previously all hymn-singing was in Polish and only a year ago, due to the larger number of Lithuanian parishioners, singing in Lithuanian was introduced³². A dean was sent to clarify the situation. The Poles then made a new demand: every second Sunday had to be Polish. The Lithuanians were in favour of keeping the previous order; the dean and the parish priest shared a similar opinion³³.

In 1906, the Lithuanian parishioners of Liubavas parish submitted a petition to the diocesan administrator³⁴. According to its authors, the inhabitants of the parish were 'Polonised Lithuanians, who call themselves Poles and Lithuanians'³⁵. Lithuanians outnumbered Poles in this parish. In that petition, the Lithuanian parishioners of Liubavas described their linguistic situation in the following words:

²⁸ Petition by the Polish parishioners of Alytus parish to Antanas Baranauskas, Bishop of Sejny, 1 May 1898, *ArLm*, sign. I 346, l. 141.

²⁹ Petition by the Lithuanian parishioners of Alytus parish to Antanas Baranauskas, Bishop of Sejny, July 1900, *ibid.*, l. 142.

³⁰ Petition by the Lithuanian parishioners of Alytus parish to Antanas Baranauskas, Bishop of Sejny, 27 October 1900, *ibid.*, l. 146.

³¹ *Ibid.*

³² Petition by the Polish parishioners of Alytus parish to Antanas Baranauskas, Bishop of Sejny, 11 December 1901, *ibid.*, l. 158.

³³ W. Jemielity, *op. cit.*, p. 274.

³⁴ Petition by the parishioners of Liubavas parish to Prelate Juozapas Antanavičius, diocesan administrator of Sejny, [1906], *ArLm*, sign. I 245, l. 173.

³⁵ *Ibid.*

We had to learn the prayers in Polish[,] to listen to the sermon in Polish without understanding it[;] our children were learning the catechism in Polish[,] and all other services and hymns were performed not in our mother tongue, but in the Polish language³⁶.

We further learn from the petition written by Lithuanian parishioners that it was already two years since the young priests had introduced the Lithuanian language into the church in Liubavas, that is, every other week the hymn-singing is in Lithuanian. However, ‘the Poles, incited by a few wicked persons, tried to interfere during the procession and during hymn-singing in Lithuanian, by moaning and groaning in inhuman animal voices, wanting to spark fighting in the church and to deprive us of the services in our native Lithuanian language’³⁷. These reasons forced the Lithuanians to ask the administrator of the diocese of Sejny to write to the Lithuanians confirming the services every other week.

The Polish parishioners also filed an appeal to the administrator of the diocese of Sejny. First of all, they pointed out in their petition that since ancient times, hymns had been sung in Polish in the church of Liubavas, and only now the priests introduced singing in Lithuanian. There are no Lithuanian hymn singers in the whole parish, and the priests invited them from other parishes in order to ‘banish the Polish language from our national church and to push [the language] out to the tavern’³⁸. The Polish parishioners further requested that only Polish services be held in the church of Liubavas on all Sundays and holidays, that is, that the old order be restored. For Lithuanians, if some parishioners so desire, sermons may delivered in Lithuanian. They also asked for a Polish priest to be appointed to the parish to lift their spirit.

After the arrangement of the additional service, in 1907, the Polish parishioners of Liubavas petitioned the governor of Suwałki about restrictions on their language in church. The governor forwarded the petition to Prelate Antanavičius, the administrator of the diocese of Sejny. In his reply to the governor, Prelate Antanavičius pointed out that the Poles were to blame for the disorder in the church of Liubavas. They want to remove the Lithuanian language from the church altogether. Lithuanians do not do this and are satisfied with the order of worship established by the administrator³⁹.

The Polish parishioners of Simnas parish could not reconcile themselves to hymn-singing in Lithuanian. They filed as many as three petitions: to the governor of Suwałki, the governor-general of Warsaw, and even to the emperor. In these petitions, they asked to restore hymn-singing in Polish. The text of the peti-

³⁶ Ibid.

³⁷ Ibid., l. 173v.

³⁸ Petition by the Polish parishioners of the Liubavas parish to Prelate Juozapas Antanavičius, diocesan administrator of Sejny, [1906], *ibid.*, l. 175-175v.

³⁹ Letter by Prelate Juozapas Antanavičius, diocesan administrator of Sejny, to Piotr Stremoukhov, governor of Suwalki, no. 884, 04/17 May 1907, *ibid.*, l. 184.

tion addressed to the governor of Suwałki is extant⁴⁰. We learn about the fate of the petitions from the reply of the emperor's chancellery: the petition of the parishioners of Simnas of 12 December 1896 'does not qualify to be satisfied'⁴¹.

Bloody conflicts

As far as can be ascertained, the most notable bloody conflicts took place in two parishes of the diocese of Sejny or Augustów. These were the parishes of Berznykas and Kalvarija, although fights also occurred in other parishes: for example, on 16 February 1896, there was a fight between Lithuanians and Poles in Lazdijai parish when the Poles even broke the windows in the house of the parish priest. After this event, the parish priest fled from Lazdijai to Sejny. Fighting could not be avoided in the parish of Veisiejai in 1899. When Lithuanian hymns were introduced, Poles broke the windows of Lithuanian hymn singers in Vištytis parish⁴². There were also fights in the parishes of Vištytis and Liubavas.

The concrete steps taken by the Lithuanians of the parish of Berznykas regarding the introduction of the Lithuanian language in additional services can be traced back to the actions of Vicar Antanas Staniukynas, who stayed in this position for only three months in 1903⁴³. Priest Staniukynas attempted to say the Rosary in the church in Lithuanian, but this caused great dissatisfaction among the Poles⁴⁴. For this reason, priest Stasiukynas was transferred to another parish. This fact was even included in the report by Colonel Fyodor Ivanovich Leontyev, chief of the Gendarmerie board of the Suwalki gubernia, to the police department. The report reads: 'The Polish parishioners prevented this priest [Staniukynas] from introducing the singing of some prayers in the Lithuanian language during the service and opposed this action so vigorously that the priest was transferred to another parish on their initiative'⁴⁵.

In the church of Berznykas, hymn-singing in Lithuanian was introduced on 21 August 1904, following the instructions of the diocesan administrator An-

⁴⁰ Letter by the parishioners of Simnas parish to the governor of Suwalki, 6 November 1896, *Lietuvos valstybės istorijos archyvas* (Lithuanian State History Archives, hereinafter *LVIA*), f. 1010, ap. 1, b. 1512, l. 6-7.

⁴¹ Letter by the Chancellery of His Imperial Majesty to the governor of Suwalki, no. 30833, 23 May 1897, *ibid.*, l. 19.

⁴² For more on this, see: A. Katilius, *Pridėtinių pamaldų kalba Seinų vyskupijos bažnyčiose: XIX a.–XX a. pradžia*, p. 34, 46, 55.

⁴³ Cf. A. Kučas, *Kunigas Antanas Staniukynas. 100 metų sukakčiai nuo jo gimimo paminėti*, Roma 1965, p. 67-68.

⁴⁴ P. Maksimavičius, *Karališkasis miestas*, „Aušra“ 1997, no. 15, p. 17.

⁴⁵ Political review of Colonel Fyodor Ivanovich Leontiev, head of the Gendarmerie Board of the Suwalki Gubernia, to the Police Department for 1903, no. 31, 23 March 1904, *Gosudarstvennyi Arkhiv Rossiiskoi Federatsii* (State Archive of the Russian Federation, hereinafter *GARF*), f. 102, ap. 3-делопроизводство, 1904, b. 1 ч. 47 л. А, л. 3; cf. *Политический обзор по Сувалкской губ. за 1903-1904 г.г.* (*Жандармские архивы*, № 62), Воронеж 1918, p. 45.

tanavičius⁴⁶. The Poles resisted and interfered with singing in Lithuanian. When the Poles were singing, the Lithuanians did not interfere, but when the singing was in Lithuanian, the Poles would start singing as well, and this led to various incidents in the church. We learn about a couple of such incidents from secret reports of Sergeant Nikolai Vasilyevich Mikhailov, chief of the Gendarmerie board of the Suwałki, Augustów and Sejny districts, to the police department. One of them refers to the events of 29 August 1904. On that day, hymn-singing in the church in Berznykas was supposed to be in Lithuanian. When the Lithuanians parishioners were singing hymns in Lithuanian in the church, the Poles who were there started singing in Polish to drown out the Lithuanians. After leaving the church, the Poles walked away from the Lithuanians and started throwing stones at them. They wanted to start a fight, but the riot was prevented by the police chief of Sejny district and four policemen, who came to the town to maintain order. The policemen were also hit by stones thrown by the Poles. The police chief himself and one policeman were slightly injured. Another incident took place on 26 September 1904. In the service of that day, hymns were sung in Lithuanian, but on the way out of the church, a fight broke out between Lithuanians and Poles. We learn from the report that on that Sunday, the district police chief and eight policemen were present in the town to maintain order. The gendarme chief states the painful fact that most of the Lithuanians were beaten and fled to their homes, while a dozen or so people hid in the church. Moreover, the Poles were waiting for the Lithuanians to leave the church, threatened to attack them, and wanted to beat Vicar Antanas Kudirka, who was still in the church. The policemen outside the church tried to persuade the Poles to disperse, but the persuasion of the police chief did not have any effect and they stayed. Only upon the arrival of the governor of the Sejny district the Poles were persuaded to move away from the church⁴⁷. The correspondent of the newspaper *Vilniaus žinios* thus summarised the results of all the fights in the Berznykas church: ‘Eighteen wounded and scarred *dzūkai* and *dzūkės* have been counted so far, of which four persons with holes in the backs of their heads barely survived’⁴⁸. On the day following the events of 26 September, the administrator of the Sejny diocese appealed to the governor-

⁴⁶ Valentas, *Kodėl uždarė Beržininko bažnyčią*, „Vilniaus žinios” 1905, no. 81 (30 March/12 April), p. 1.

⁴⁷ Secret reports to the police department by Nikolai Vasilyevich Mikhailov, chief of the Gendarmerie Board of the Suwalki, Augustów, and Sejny districts, no. 1332 and 1530, 2 September 1904 and 1 October 1904, *GARF*, f. 102, ar. 3-делопроизводство, 1904, b. 1 ч. 47 л. Б, l. 13, 14; cf. *Политический обзор по Сувалкской губ. за 1903-1904 г.г. (Жандармские архивы, № 62)*, Воронеж 1918, p. 52; W. Jemielity, op. cit., p. 267; M. Gustaitis, *Kunigas Juozapas Galeckas. Dzūkijos darbuotojas*, [b. v.], 1924, p. 7-8; B. Kviklys, *Lietuvos bažnyčios*, vol. 2: *Vilkaviškio vyskupija*, Chicago 1982, p. 397-398.

⁴⁸ Valentas, *Kodėl uždarė Beržininko bažnyčią*, „Vilniaus žinios” 1905, no. 81 (30 March/12 April), p. 1.

general of Warsaw⁴⁹ and received his agreement to close the church in Berznyk indefinitely⁵⁰. Thus, on 1 November 1904, the administrator of the diocese of Sejny, Prelate Juozapas Antanavičius, closed the church in Berznykas for an indefinite period of time. The priests were transferred to the deanery centre in Sejny⁵¹. Despite this, the Polish parishioners continued to oppose hymn-singing in Lithuanian in the Berznykas church.

The decision of the clergy of the diocese of Sejny to introduce Lithuanian hymns in the Kalvarija church was adopted on 5 May 1906⁵², and the dean announced it on 6 May⁵³. According to this decision, the Rosary, mournful lamentations, and all religious hymns were to be sung in Lithuanian. The Poles living in the town could sing in their own language on Sundays and on feast days after vespers⁵⁴.

After the announcement of the introduction of additional service in Lithuanian, the residents of Kalvarija raised a lot of noise in the church; upon leaving the church, they shouted for a long time and even swore in the churchyard.⁵⁵ The following Sunday, 13 May 1906, the Poles obstructed hymn-singing in Lithuanian⁵⁶. The Poles of Kalvarija then appealed to the governor-general of Warsaw and sent a petition to Sejny for the diocesan administrator to revoke his decision on Lithuanian services⁵⁷. The diocesan administrator did

⁴⁹ Letter by the diocesan administrator of Sejny to the governor-general of Warsaw, no. 1444, 27 September/10 October 1904, *ArLm*, sign. I 28, l. 425.

⁵⁰ Letter by the governor-general of Warsaw to the diocesan administrator of Sejny, no. 21566, 15 October 1904, *ibid.*, l. 429.

⁵¹ An order of the diocesan administrator of Sejny, 1 November 1904, *ibid.*, l. 503. This is what it reads: „For the failure of the parishioners to comply with the orders of the spiritual authorities concerning the singing of hymns and for the resulting disturbance inside the House of God, with the shedding of blood, the Administrator of the Diocese of Sejny withholds the celebration of services or vigils in this holy church of Beržininkas, for an undefined period of time”.

⁵² W. Jemielity, *op. cit.*, p. 268.

⁵³ Žinnešys, *Kalvarija*, „Šaltinis” 1906, no. 7 (3/16 May), p. 110.

⁵⁴ W. Jemielity, *op. cit.*, p. 268.

⁵⁵ Žinnešys, *Kalvarija*, „Šaltinis” 1906, no. 7 (3/16 May), p. 110.

⁵⁶ *Ibid.* The newspaper's correspondent concludes: „The townspeople are being incited by the local intelligentsia. In their opinion, Kalvarija is a purely Polish town (*zasadniczo polskie miasto*). But our Polish people are mistaken. Kalvarija is a Lithuanian town, because it stands on Lithuanian land, Lithuanians live around it, and there are more Lithuanians in the town than the so-called “Poles”. After all, the elections to the Duma showed this clearly,,

⁵⁷ Petition by the Polish parishioners of Kalvarija parish to the diocesan administrator of Sejny, 7 May 1906, *ArLm*, sign. I 184, l. 202-203. In their petition, they pointed out that „since olden times, in the church of Kalvarija hymns were sung and sermons in Polish. Some fifteen years ago, the local priests instructed that supplications be sung in Lithuanian and the Word of God from the pulpit be proclaimed in Lithuanian as well. All we have left is the singing of the rosary early in the morning and hymn-singing in Polish during the early prayers and the vespers in May, when intellectuals and urban Poles gather together. On 6 May 1906, priest Jonas Žaliauskas, the dean and the parish priest, forbade the singing of the rosary and the May service in Polish, on the basis of your order of 5 May, the original of which he showed

not rescind additional services in Lithuanian but arranged the time of hymn-singing: the Poles sang until 8:30 pm, and the Lithuanians from 9 to 11 o'clock; he also promised the Poles that there would be sermons on every Sunday and on holidays. The reply from the governor-general of Warsaw instructed him to contact his spiritual superiors. The new order was supposed to be introduced on Pentecost, but the Poles prevented the Lithuanians from singing by their shouting. As if that was not enough, several Lithuanians were attacked and even beaten that day⁵⁸.

Blood was shed in the church of Kalvarija. It happened on 27 August (9 September) 1906, during the vespers of the Feast of the Holy Name of Mary, when the church was still full of people. The *Šaltinis* newspaper reported extensively on the events in the Kalvarija church:

And then, as usual, the hymn-singing townspeople and Lithuanians were gathered around God's table at the high altar. When the organist was singing the first psalm of the Vespers, when all the people were praying quietly and adoring the Saviour who had been displayed on the altar, it seemed that the hymn singers at the altar jostled one another. Radkevičius, a well-known leader of the townspeople, said *juž czas* [it's about time], raised his stick and hit the Lithuanians standing next to him. The hymn-singing townswomen broke into screaming, the whole church was in a hustle, the people were frightened, they hid wherever they could, shrieking... Meanwhile, several armed soldiers entered the church... With their hats on, their guns up, as if they were aiming to shoot, they went straight to the table of God... and the Holiest One was displayed. The townspeople passed one Lithuanian, Kajauskas, who had already covered in blood, over to them. The soldiers took him outside, fired several shots into the air, and were about to go back into the church, some even with their swords drawn out, but priest Naujokaitis, the local vicar, stopped them and told them to leave, because it was not for them to set the church in order. When the soldiers left, the priests succeeded in calming down the frightened and excited people in the church... The people spilled out into the churchyard. Taking advantage of the confusion, the unarmed soldiers, who were bribed by the townspeople and had no right to interfere in any way, began to hurl stones at the people; the armed ones resorted to the stocks of

to the parish meeting held on 6 May in the magistrate's office. In the aforementioned resolution, the motive we discerned was that there are only 400 Poles in the parish. Meanwhile, in the town of Kalvarija alone, not counting the parish, there are 1500 Poles who desire God's word in their native language. Dean Žaliauskas, who came to the parish meeting with the prison chaplain, priest Adomas Tomas Žilinskas, offered the Poles sermons in Polish every first Sunday of the month in exchange for a Polish rosary. We cannot accept this because the Word of God, depending on hymn-singing, must be proclaimed in a language that is understandable to the believers, i.e., in Polish and Lithuanian, every Sunday and holiday.

Our fathers built this House of God where we are now forbidden to sing in Polish. The statue of Our Lady between the church towers and the statue of Jesus Christ on the pediment of the church were built exclusively with our Polish funds. We, Polish Catholics, show our traditional attachment to the Catholic Church at every turn... Finally, the diocesan administrator is asked to reverse his decision of 5 May regarding the abolition of the singing of the rosary in Polish and to leave the situation as it was under the rule of Bishop Antanas Baranauskas.

⁵⁸ Žinnešys, *Kalvarija*, „Šaltinis” 1906, no. 12 (7/20 June), p. 188.

their rifles to hit people's backs, and the dragoons, who had rushed to help, started stomping the churchyard. As the soldiers were beating the Lithuanians on their backs, the townspeople were singing peacefully in the church!... And then, guarded and accompanied by the soldiers, they went home... There were no deaths but a dozen or so injured. Even a couple of townspeople were hit, because the soldiers did not know whether they were townspeople or Lithuanians. This is how the incident seemed to be according to the report of the Lithuanian witnesses⁵⁹.

After the bloodshed, the Kalvarija church was closed, but at the request of Vicar Pranciškus Naujokaitis, and with the permission of the diocesan administrator, it was reopened the following day, and Holy Mass was celebrated after the consecration. Even the minister of the interior was informed of the incident and the diocesan administrator was asked to investigate it. Vespers were suspended for almost a couple of months after this bloodshed⁶⁰. In response to the events of 27 August (9 September) 1906 in the church, at the end of 1906, the Lithuanians of Kalvarija parish declared a boycott of Polish craftspeople and merchants⁶¹, but the results of this boycott were insignificant⁶².

A bloody conflict took place in the parish of Vištytis. During the time reserved for singing in Lithuanian, the Poles would start singing in Polish. On 21 March 1910, Lithuanians decided not to let the Poles sing. When the Poles started singing, the Lithuanians demanded that the Poles stop as that particular time was reserved for the Lithuanians. The Poles did not stop singing and the Lithuanians started pulling them out of their pews. Then fighting broke out. Sticks, the stems of two broken flags, knives, and crosses were used. It was only the border guards who managed to stop the fighting. On 10 May 1912, a trial was held in Virbalis: ten Lithuanians and three Poles were accused of fighting. All were sentenced to two and three months in prison⁶³.

The stand of the spiritual superiors

Conflicts over the language of additional services were primarily pastoral in nature, since the use of one language or another determined the religious awareness of the faithful. In their answers to the questionnaire of 1898, a number of clergymen emphasised the harm of the use of the Polish language in Lithuanian parishes, as the majority of parishioners did not understand it⁶⁴. As

⁵⁹ Skrebenius, *Kalvarija*, „Šaltinis“ 1906, no. 25 (6/19 September), p. 394; cf. Sermėgius [J. Sabiška], *Kalvarija*, „Šaltinis“ 1906, no. 31 (18/31 October), p. 491-492.

⁶⁰ Cf. Sermėgius [J. Sabiška], *Kalvarija*, „Šaltinis“ 1906, no. 35 (15/28 November), p. 554-555.

⁶¹ [Author not given], *Kalvarija*, „Šaltinis“ 1907, no. 1 (20 December 1906/2 January 1907), p. 12.

⁶² J-is, *Kalvarija*, „Šaltinis“ 1907, no. 14 (21 March/3 April), p. 220.

⁶³ [Author not given], *Vištytis*, „Šaltinis“ 1912, no. 23 (29 May/11 June), p. 366.

⁶⁴ As an example, we provide an excerpt from the answer of the parish priest of Liškiava parish to the questionnaire of 1898: „Generally, the parishioners understand the fundamentals of faith very poorly, due to the fact that for about ten years, almost up to the present day, they

a result, the diocesan hierarchy had to take linguistic problems seriously and make appropriate decisions. Linguistic conflicts in parishes should be seen as a kind of recording of the situation and the necessity to take measures to eliminate the causes that had given rise to them. The diocesan hierarchy had to take into account both the demands of the Lithuanian parishioners and the needs of the Polish parishioners. As we have seen, tensions over the use of languages began in the time of Bishop Piotr Paweł Wierzbowski and continued under the episcopate of Antanas Baranauskas and under the administration of prelate Juozaps Antanavičius⁶⁵. By the time Antanas Karosas became bishop of Sejny, the linguistic conflicts had already taken on softer forms.

When dealing with linguistic issues in conflict-ridden parishes, bishops and diocesan administrators tried to take into account the demands of one group of parishioners or the other. Addressing the request of the Polish parishioners of Vištytis parish for a Polish pastor to preach in Polish, Bishop Wierzbowski wrote that there was an old rule: it is not the people for the sake of the priest but the priest for the sake of the people. As a priest, he was sent to the people of the two nations to become an angel of peace, to bring them together in unity and fraternal harmony, and to avoid strife and hatred. Otherwise you will collect only thorns and thistles out of your work⁶⁶. In the same letter, the bishop instructed the parish priest of Vištytis, Adomas Šukvietis, that two sermons should be delivered on Sundays: in Lithuanian and in Polish. Hymn-singing should not change, that is, it should be in Polish⁶⁷. After all this correspondence, only one sermon in Lithuanian was preached in the church of Vištytis, while hymn-singing remained in Polish⁶⁸.

At the beginning of the twentieth century, the problem of hymn-singing in the parishes of Vištytis was solved by the diocesan administrator, Prelate Juo-

have been largely neglected by the clergy who have ruled here; the same is true of the way the believers had been taught. Since the entire parish is Lithuanian, and the education was in Polish, even the prayers were taught in Polish, which is why older people, who did not understand the language, did not have the slightest understanding of the truths of the faith, have a weak grasp of the truths of the faith, and that is why all sorts of superstitions, magic, and incantations thrived, and even to this day it is impossible to radically eradicate them despite the efforts of the clergy. It was for the last 10-15 years, when the Lithuanian language was introduced, when teaching, catechising, and preaching began in the Lithuanian language, understandable to all the parishioners, that the moral situation gradually began to improve, especially the younger generation, who have an entirely different spirit, greater religiosity, a more diligent attendance of the church, they are more eager to read the books and they go to confession quite often". See: *Vyskupo Antano Baranausko anketa dvasininkams (1898 m.)*, p. 512-513.

⁶⁵ The Poles were dissatisfied with Prelate Juozaps Antanavičius, as they sent a telegram against him to Pope Pius X. See: A. Jakštas, *Lenkų ir rusų spauda apie Lietuvą*, „Draugija” 1907, no. 8, p. 374-375.

⁶⁶ Letter by Piotr Paweł Wierzbowski, Bishop of Sejny, to Adomas Šukvietis, administrator of Vištytis parish, 17 January 1882, *ArLm*, sign. I 596, leaf not given.

⁶⁷ *Ibid.*, leaf not given.

⁶⁸ W. Jemielity, *op. cit.*, p. 276.

zapas Antanavičius. The administrator of the Sejny diocese wanted the parishioners of Vištytis parish of both nationalities to reach an agreement on hymn-singing. On 10 February 1909, following the order of the administrator of the Sejny diocese of 17 December 1908, the dean of Vilkaviškis arrived in Vištytis. Polish and Lithuanian authorised representatives gathered there. The dean began to negotiate with the representatives on both sides about the language of the non-liturgical singing in the Vištytis church. However, the Polish representatives 'refused to make any concessions' and wanted everything to remain as it was, i.e., sung in Polish. For their part, the Lithuanians, who constituted the majority of the parish population, were keen to have singing in Lithuanian on most Sundays and holidays: the Rosary, mournful lamentations, and during processions⁶⁹. When the authorised representatives failed to reach an agreement, the dean and the parish priest, who was also the vice-dean, arranged the order of the additional service in the Vištytis church according to the ethnic composition of the parish. This order consisted of six points and was signed by the diocesan administrator. However, the Polish parishioners objected to this arrangement. On 16 April 1909, Prelate Antanavičius, the diocesan administrator of Sejny, passed the second resolution, which was written in Lithuanian and Polish and consisted of 21 points⁷⁰. After this arrangement, too, the Poles protested, and various incidents took place.

Bishop Baranauskas took into account the petitions of the parishioners of Alytus parish. In November 1900, the bishop established the order of services in the Alytus church. In Lithuanian: the Rosary on Sundays and holidays before High Mass; hymn-singing on these days, without the Blessed Sacrament; the 'Angel of God' after the sermon in Lithuanian; singing 'Before the Blessed Sacrament' after the exposition of the Blessed Sacrament; May, June, and October services; hymn-singing on the night of Holy Saturday; the novena before the sending of the Holy Spirit; the mournful lamentations on Lenten Sundays. In Polish: the Rosary in the afternoon before or after the vespers, except during Lent; 'May God be praised' during the exposition before the vespers; 'Angel of God' after the vespers, and after the mournful lamentations during Lent; after the lamentations; Litany of All Saints at St. Mark's procession and the three days of prayer; during the processions of Easter, Ascension, the sending of the Holy Spirit, and All Saints' Day; during the Stations of the Cross in Lent following the mournful lamentations. In Lithuanian and in Polish alternately: supplications on Sundays and holidays; 'Let Him be adored' through adoration of the Blessed Sacrament⁷¹.

⁶⁹ Minutes of the meeting of the authorised representatives of Vištytis parish, 10 February 1909, *ArLm*, sign. I 596, l. 244.

⁷⁰ Decree for the arrangement of non-liturgical church singing in the parish church of Vištytis, 03/16 April 1909, *ibid.*, l. 236, 242.

⁷¹ W. Jemielity, *op. cit.*, p. 273.

Additional services in the Liubavas church were arranged according to the letter of 7 June 1906 by Prelate Juozapas Antanavičius, the diocesan administrator of Sejny. The first point instructs that the Rosary, supplications, the singing during the processions, the Angel of God, as well as the sermons and the evening prayers will be conducted alternately, i.e., in Polish on one Sunday and in Lithuanian on another. The second point states that the morning prayers, when hymn-singing happened to be in Polish, would be read from the pulpit in Lithuanian, and the other way round, when singing is in Lithuanian, the prayers would be read in Polish. The third point notes that when the hymns are sung in Lithuanian, May service immediately after the High Mass would also be in Lithuanian. On the same day, after the vespers, the service would be held in Polish, and always in Polish on ordinary days. The fourth point reads that the novena to the Holy Spirit, when sung in Lithuanian, is prayed after the High Mass in the same language, and in Polish during the morning mass. It is prayed only in Polish on other days. The fifth point specifies that the singing in the processions of the vespers and during the exposition of the Blessed Sacrament must be in the same language as the Rosary sung that day. In case of misunderstandings, the decision should be taken in consultation with the parish priest. The sixth point confirms that neither the parish priest nor the vicar can change this decision without informing the diocesan superiors. The seventh point states that any uncertainties are to be resolved by the local parish priest⁷². However, disagreements over the language of service in Liubavas parish continued for several years, and on 5 May 1907, a fight broke out not inside the church itself, but in the alms-house, and the parish priest blamed the Poles for it⁷³.

The establishment of new parishes was also a form of action used to solve national problems. Due to the fighting between the Poles and Lithuanians of the Berznykas parish and the unwillingness to allow the Lithuanian language into the Berznykas church, a decision was made to establish a new parish of Kučiūnai for the Lithuanians. Thanks to the efforts of Juozapas Galeckas, a church was built in Kučiūnai in 1907. Motiejus Simonaitis, the parish priest of Pusk, supported the wish of the Polish parishioners to establish a parish separate from Pusk. Such a parish was established in the village of Beceiliai (Becejly) in 1908.

Conclusions

In 1898, a questionnaire was sent on behalf of Antanas Baranauskas, Bishop of Sejny, in which, among other things, parish clergy was asked about the local languages used in church practice. An analysis of the clergy's answers

⁷² Instructions from Juozapas Antanavičius, diocesan administrator of Sejny, to the parish priest of Liubavas, 7 June 1906, *ArĖm*, sign. I 245, l. 180, 228; cf. W. Jemielity, *op. cit.*, p. 271-272.

⁷³ Report of Jurgis Narkevičius, parish priest of Liubavas, to Prelate Juozapas Antanavičius, diocesan administrator of Sejny, no. 48, 14 May 1907, *ArĖm*, sign. I 245, l. 186, 237.

shows that at the end of the nineteenth century, there were not many potential parishes in the diocese of Sejny or Augustów where conflicts over the use of languages in the additional services could arise. The Lithuanian language was well established in most Lithuanian parishes or in those with few Polish believers. The problem parishes were those where the majority of the population was Lithuanian and the minority Polish, but Polish was used in the additional service and especially in hymn-singing. In such parishes, people of Polish nationality spoke out against the introduction of the Lithuanian language.

The most important source for studying the causes and development of linguistic conflicts in parishes is the parishioners' petitions written to their spiritual superiors and to the civil authorities. These petitions include demands of one side or the other, explain the situation, and ask for a change in the situation with regard to one language or the other. In the appeals written by the Lithuanian believers, the justification of the introduction of the Lithuanian language in the additional services was that the majority of the believers in the parish were of Lithuanian nationality and that most of the parishioners did not understand Polish. The reason given by the Polish believers in their petitions was the tradition, i.e., that the Polish language had been around for a long time or that their ancestors built the church. Linguistic conflicts can be seen as a manifestation of the national identity of persons of one or another nationality, or even as claims on the Catholic Church arising from Lithuanian or Polish nationalism.

The reaction of the hierarchs of the diocese of Sejny or Augustów to linguistic conflicts in the parishes depended on the number of believers of one nationality or another in a parish. This was to maintain the principle of fairness, so that neither side would be disadvantaged. In the parishes discussed, the majority of the believers were Lithuanian parishioners, and this was taken into account in determining the proportions of sermons, hymn-singing, and other liturgical rites. The use of Polish in additional services was thus given its proper place. In general, the actions of the clergy can be seen as a desire to preserve peace in churches and to maintain harmony among believers of one nationality or another. On the other hand, the hierarchs had to take into account the challenges of the times, whether they were the demands of modernity or the aspirations of the emerging modern nation with regard to the Church.

Translated from the Lithuanian by Diana Bartkutė Barnard

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**Conflicts over the Language of Additional Services
in the Diocese of Sejny or Augustów in the Second Half
of the Nineteenth and Early Twentieth Centuries**

Summary

In 1898, a questionnaire was sent the parish clergy on behalf of Antanas Baranauskas, Bishop of Sejny, in which, among other things, they were asked about the local languages used in church practice. An analysis of the clergy's answers shows that at the end of the nineteenth century, there were not many potential parishes in the diocese of Sejny or Augustów where conflicts over the use of languages in the additional services could arise. The Lithuanian language was well established in most Lithuanian parishes or in those with few Polish believers. The most important source for studying the causes and development of linguistic conflicts in parishes is the parishioners' petitions written to their spiritual superiors and to the civil authorities. These petitions include demands of each side, explain the situation, and ask for a change in the situation with regard to one language or the other. In the appeals written by the Lithuanian believers, the justification of the introduction of the Lithuanian language in additional services was that the majority of the believers in the parish were of Lithuanian nationality and that most of the parishioners did not understand Polish. The reason given by the Polish believers in their petitions was the tradition, i.e., that the Polish language had been around for a long time or that their ancestors built a particular church. The reactions of the hierarchs of the diocese of Sejny or Augustów to linguistic conflicts in the parishes depended on the number of believers of one nationality or the other in a parish. This was to maintain the principle of fairness, so that neither side would be disadvantaged. In the parishes discussed, the majority of the believers were Lithuanian parishioners, and this was taken into account in determining the proportions of sermons, hymn-singing, and other liturgical rites. The use of Polish in additional services was thus given its proper place.

Keywords: Diocese of Sejny or Augustów, Language, Poland, Lithuania.

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