

The Lithuanian Museum Review

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*The belfry of the Vilnius
Cathedral in January
Visit Lithuania!*

MUSEUM EVENTS

“Chronicle of Violence” Exhibit Travels to Toronto, Canada



About two decades ago, Resurrection Parish (“Priskėlimo Parapija”) in Toronto elected to commemorate its 40th anniversary with a commitment to support a soup kitchen in Lithuania for one year. A fundraising event was planned to help fulfill this commitment. This gathering brought the community together to share a simple meal of soup and bread (prepared according to a recipe from the “Betanija” soup kitchen in Vilnius) and to express solidarity with those whose circumstances had brought them to “Betanija”.

The parish’s one year undertaking has extended to almost twenty years, and has grown to include financial support to soup kitchens in Kaunas and Kretinga. The tradition of soup kitchen dinners has become a labour of love for the community – with fundraising goals sharing equal billing with efforts to educate and inform. Over the years, various speakers have shared their experiences - to foster a spiritual connection with Lithuania’s hungry and poor.

As 2011 marked the 70th anniversary of the first mass deportations of Lithuanians to Siberia, it seemed fitting to dedicate this year’s dinner to those whose lives were lost, or irreparably damaged during this tragic period of Lithuania’s history. At the November event, a montage of spoken word, images and music brought to life the experiences of the deportees. We heard the voices of men, women and children telling their stories of being violently uprooted, of their pain, and of the hope and spirit that held them up. We also heard the testimonies of people who eventually returned from Siberia to Lithuania, disabled, frail and homeless, who now rely on soup kitchens for sustenance.

This year’s event was particularly enriched by the loan of banners from the “Chronicle of Violence” exhibit currently on display at the Balzekas Museum of Lithuanian Culture in Chicago as part of the ongoing Hope & Spirit series on Soviet deportations. More than 300 participants of all ages viewed the exhibit during the course of the evening, and even more had the opportunity to see the banners during the two weeks the exhibit was in Toronto.

The event organizers wish to thank the Balzekas Museum and exhibit curator Dr. Audrius Plioplys, for the loan of these materials.

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