

House of Lithuania

House of Pacific Relations, International Cottages, Inc., Balboa Park, San Diego, California

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Beloved Pontiff Passes

As Pope John Paul II is mourned by the world, he is perhaps most beloved by his Polish and Lithuanian countrymen. Pope John Paul II was born Karol Jozef Wojtyla and known as “Lolek” to his friends in Wadowice, Poland.

The first non-Italian pope in 455 years, John Paul II was born on May 18, 1920. His parents were Karol Wojtyla Sr. (a retired army officer and tailor) and Emilia Kaczorowska (a school-teacher of Lithuanian descent). This unforgettable pope’s birth coincided with a memorable celestial phenomenon—a solar eclipse. Who could have guessed that he would become the pope predicted and described by St. Malachy as *De Labore Solis* “The Labor of the Sun”?

Ordained in 1946, John Paul II labored tirelessly both as priest and as pope. He will perhaps be best remembered for using diplomacy to help end Communism—without the exchange of weapons of mass destruction.

Ironically, Pope John Paul II was controversial for both his changes and his conservatism: He became the first pope to visit a synagogue as well as the Auschwitz Holocaust Memorial, helping heal Jewish-Catholic relations wounded by the Church’s negligence during World War II.

Pope John Paul II also mended the Church’s relationship with science and scientists: Three hundred fifty years after Galileo’s death, Pope John Paul II officially pardoned Galileo, who was convicted of heresy and imprisoned under house arrest by the Church for proving that the planets revolve around the sun. To the consternation to conservative

House of Lithuania UPCOMING EVENTS:

Meeting & Potluck Saturday, April 9th

1 P.M. – Allied Gardens Rec. Center
5155 Greenbriar Ave., San Diego

Spring Means Mushrooms

It has been said that Lithuania is a country of mushrooms. From early spring until late autumn, the ancient forests of Lithuania yield a bountiful harvest of fungi. There are over four hundred edible species of mushrooms in Lithuania. Southern Lithuania (*Dzukija*) produces the most mushrooms, which are called “*grybu*” in Lithuanian. The most popular are from the boletes family, the “king of mushrooms.”

Wild mushrooms are becoming a distinctively Lithuanian export in the European market. Cultivated mushrooms are also growing in popularity. In fact, a single Lithuanian farmer has a 95% share of the Estonian mushroom market, as well as 50% of the Latvian mushroom market.

The Lithuanian people have long loved wild mushrooms, but they are not the only such connoisseurs. Centuries ago the French began cultivating mushrooms in caves. The ancient Egyptians thought the edible fungus to be a dish befitting royalty. The mushroom has even inspired poets and playwrights, such as John Ford: “I am...a mushroom; On whom the dew of heaven drops now and then.” – *F. W.*

Catholics, he went so far as to accept evolution as consistent with the Bible.

Despite his many reforms, Pope John Paul II frustrated liberal Catholics by steadfastly resisting the ordination of married or female clergy, opposing birth control, and resisting acceptance of homosexuality.

The multilingual pontiff was the first to address Lithuanians in their own language, which he learned on his mother’s knee. For all his many good works, it is his very identity that perhaps most endeared him to the people of Lithuania.

F. W.



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