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Saints in the National Memory Cultures of the 20th Century: The Cases of Saint Casimir and Saint Josaphat

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Summary. The article examines the 20th-century histories of the veneration of Saint Casimir and Saint Josaphat Kuntsevych, seeking to answer the following questions: *Does the development of these cases correlate with tendencies to instrumentalize national patrons in other contexts, or does it challenge them? Where do the 20th-century trajectories of the veneration of St. Casimir and St. Josaphat overlap, and where do they diverge? And why were neither of them included among the top-tier people of the pantheons of national heroes in the 20th century?* The review analysis essentially confirms the insights of other researchers regarding the adaptability of such sites of memory across different contexts and their particular relevance to diasporic communities. The analysis also reveals the obstacles which prevented St. Josaphat from transcending the boundaries of religious veneration and becoming a national hero. Although the research found that St. Casimir did surpass these boundaries, he did not attain the status of a national patron due to competition with other sites of memory.
Keywords: memory culture; saints; national patrons; the Holy See.

Studies on the collective memory of national and social groups have developed into a fairly broad academic field over the past few decades. However, research focusing on religious sites of memory and their integration into nationalist and other discourses which come under the label of modernity remains very rare, both in international and Lithuanian historiography. When it comes to the integration of saints into different 20th-century memory cultures, the case of St. Catherine of Siena is perhaps the best studied, though this is largely due to the work of a single researcher:[1] the British historian Gerald Parsons used St. Catherine's example to demonstrate that the use of saints for secular purposes can be a highly adaptive process. The same saint can effectively support very different nationalist narratives and, when necessary, can also be successfully interpreted within transnational

1 G. Parsons, 2017.

contexts. With this idea, he argued his thesis that ideological projects described by the term 'civil religion' are not necessarily solely segregated, and thus support the exclusivity of a particular national group, but can also take on an integrative, supranational dimension. Another study, by Cronin et al., which is also relevant to the issues addressed in this article, deserves mentioning too. It revealed that making saints into national patrons is significantly, perhaps even decisively, influenced by members of a nation who have found themselves living as emigrants. It is these individuals who particularly need prominent symbols to sustain their national identity under diasporic conditions who play a crucial role in this process.[2]

It should be noted that the region of Central and Eastern Europe is particularly well-suited for studies on the intersections of religious and national memories. Due to its characteristic, high level of multiconfessionalism, this region offers numerous examples of syncretism, mutual adaptation, and fierce competition between the different religious traditions. This is confirmed by the results of a research project conducted by a consortium of several German universities, compiled into a substantial book, which can be described as a kind of reference work on the religious sites of memory of Central and Eastern Europe.[3] Another specific characteristic of collective memory in this region is that national and religious identities are closely intertwined. This is most clearly evidenced by the tradition of venerating saints as national patrons, which was revitalized with new strength at the end of the 20th century after the fall of communist dictatorships (Saints Cyril and Methodius in Bulgaria and Slovakia, King St. Stephen in Hungary, and St. Sava in Serbia).

Based on the findings of the aforementioned research, this article attempts to take a closer look at the histories of the cults of St. Casimir and St. Josaphat Kuntsevych, from the rise to the decline of nationalism (in its neutral sense), i.e., from the end of the 19th century to the end of the 20th century, within Lithuanian and Ukrainian national discourses. To achieve this goal, three objectives were set, which can be formulated as the following broader questions:

1. Does the development of the cases examined here correlate with the conclusions drawn from studies on the instrumentalization of national patrons in other contexts, or does it challenge them?
2. Where do the 20th-century trajectories of the veneration of St. Casimir and St. Josaphat overlap, and where do they diverge?

2 M. Cronin et al., 2002.

3 Religiöse Erinnerungsorte in Ostmitteleuropa, 2013.

3. Why were neither of these saints included in the top-tier of the respective pantheons of national heroes in the 20th century?

One can start with the assertion that, in both cases, until the mid-20th century and even later, during the Cold War years, these saints were more significant in diasporic memory cultures than in the countries which claimed their patronage. According to researchers, the canonization process of St. Josaphat – successfully completed in 1867 – was an international project initiated by Polish aristocrats and bishops who had fled to the West after the January Uprising. Meanwhile, among the Galician Greek Catholics themselves, the figure of Josaphat Kuntsevych did not become popular for a long time.[4] During the interwar period in Galicia, which was then ruled by Poland, neither was this saint particularly relevant to the Ukrainian minority, as the greatest threat at that time was felt to come from the Polish Catholics rather than from Russia, which was, at that time, carrying out the Soviet experiment. In the Orthodox part of Ukraine, which was under Bolshevik rule, it was, of course, difficult to imagine any dissemination of the cult of St. Josaphat. In this case, until World War II, the main supporters of the transnational and transdenominational cult of St. Josaphat should be sought in Rome.

A significant boost to the relevance of St. Josaphat was provided by the papal encyclical *Ecclesiam Dei*, issued in 1923 on the occasion of the 300th anniversary of his death. In this document, which was also responding to the weakening of the Russian Orthodox Church (hereinafter referred to as *ROC*) in Bolshevik Russia, the promotion of a union between Rome and the separated Eastern Christians (referred to at that time as schismatics) was once again declared. On the one hand, the encyclical provided the ideological basis for the Jesuits' coordinated so-called *Missio Orientalis*, with its main support points being Albertyn (currently in Belarus), Dubno, and Vilnius. On the other hand, St. Josaphat's anniversary became a reference point from which to observe the Vatican's revived attentions towards the Pontifical Ruthenian College in Rome, which had been active since the end of the 19th century, and the Basilian Order which administered it. In the 1930s, the reorganized college was renamed *St. Josaphat Ukrainian College*, and a new complex of buildings for the college and the order's general curia, including a church dedicated to St. Josaphat, was constructed on Gianicolo Hill (Janiculum Hill). This complex would eventually become the main centre for the preservation of the memory of St. Josaphat (Figure 1). The efforts of the Ukrainian spiritual centre on Gianicolo Hill

4 K. S. Jobst, 2012, p. 15–16.

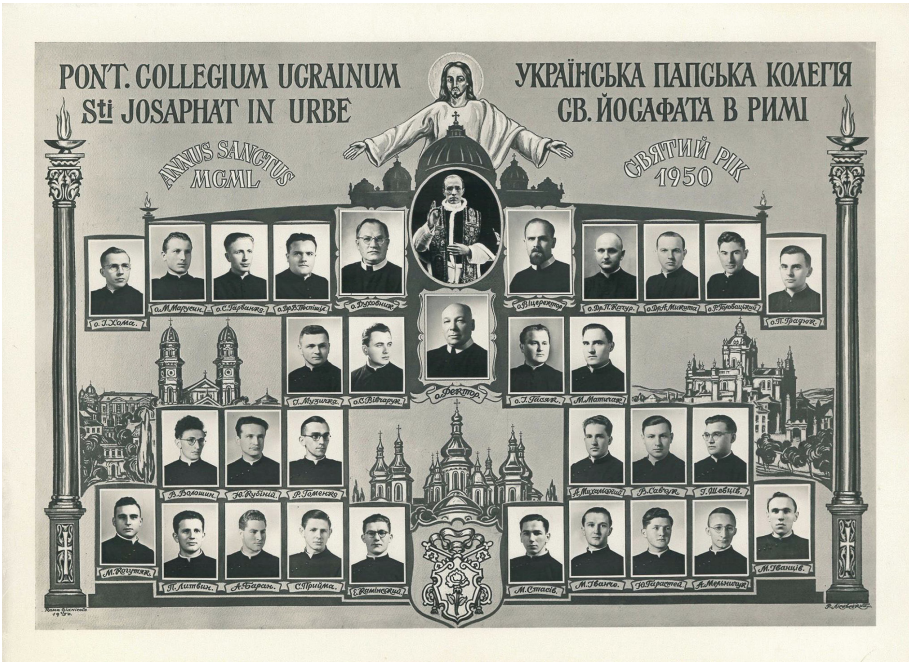

Figure 1. A vignette of the Ukrainian Pontifical College of St. Josaphat, featuring images of the faculty and students, 1950.

In: Archives of General Curia of the Basilian Order of Saint Josaphat.

to preserve the saint's memory would find a much more favourable environment in the Ukrainian diaspora after World War II, when the entire territory of Ukraine was annexed by the USSR, and the Ukrainian Greek Catholic Church (hereinafter referred to as *UGCC*) was forcibly merged with the ROC.

It could be argued that St. Casimir also only fully attained the status of patron of the modern Lithuanian nation through the efforts of the Lithuanian diaspora after World War II. In interwar Kaunas, in Lithuania, St. Casimir was not particularly emphasized or visible as a site of memory in either the public or the ecclesiastical environment. St. Casimir did not attain the top-tier status of national heroes such as Vytautas the Great and other grand dukes, or Jonas Basanavičius and other figures of the national revival. His instrumentalization within the secular sphere has not come close to those efforts made in other countries to create or maintain national patronal rituals, for example, St. Catherine of Siena's festivals in Fascist

Italy.[5] Sure, 4 March was on the calendar of public holidays; and, of course, the ordinary of the new diocese of Panevėžys, Bishop Kazimieras Paltarokas, succeeded in having St. Casimir declared the patron of the diocese, and personally put significant effort into promoting his cult;[6] nevertheless, it seems that, at the time, the cult of St. Casimir was not significantly more widespread among the faithful, and even less so in the public sphere.

Darius Liutikas, who studied the geography of the cults of saints of 20th-century Lithuania, provides data clearly showing that St. Casimir only became one of the most popular subjects for folk artists' work in the 21st century. During the first half of the 20th century, St. Casimir did not even make it into the top ten most popular figures found in objects of popular veneration in Samogitia (a historical region of Lithuania), which, during the Soviet era, at best ended up in museum collections.[7] The St. Casimir Society was established by priests and was perhaps the most powerful publisher and distributor of Catholic literature at the time, with 12 bookstores across the country. It contributed significantly to the spread of the cult of St. Casimir; but even though it was active in interwar Kaunas, there was no street named after St. Casimir in the Provisional Capital (as there is still none today). The year 1934 was the 450th anniversary of the saint's death, and it might have been more widely commemorated if the first National Eucharistic Congress had not taken place in Kaunas at the same time, drawing away much of the Church community's attention. According to Skirmantė Smilingytė-Žeimienė, the iconic image of the saint, created by artist Jonas Mackevičius in 1938, was the only church artwork from the first half of the 20th century to become a popular prototype. However, she also acknowledges that this artwork only began to be reproduced in large quantities and in various ways during the second half of the 20th century.[8] The bishops began to draw greater public attention to the heavenly patron of the nation once the Soviet and Nazi occupations began. In March 1944, there were plans to widely commemorate the 460th anniversary of St. Casimir's death and the 340-year anniversary of his canonization. As a result, several pastoral letters from bishops were published on the topic, and an art competition was organized. However, due to the rapidly advancing front line, it was not possible to achieve a significant breakthrough at this time, either.

5 G. Parsons, 2017, p. 63–83.
6 S. Maslauskaitė, 2007, p. 73–87; A. Streikus, 2010, p. 134–142.
7 D. Liutikas, 2016, p. 123.
8 S. Smilingytė-Žeimienė, 2009, p. 174–175.

Much like the case of St. Josaphat, from 1945 onward, for a long period of time, all Lithuanian efforts to revive the memory of St. Casimir were, understandably, only possible on the other side of the Iron Curtain. On 13 October 1945, during an audience with Pope Pius XII, Archbishop Juozapas Skvireckas, among other things, presented a request to the Holy Father to declare St. Casimir the principal patron of Lithuania and its youth. It seems that the unexpected request somewhat unsettled the Roman Curia; and the day after the audience, the Under-Secretary of State and Secretary of the Congregation for Extraordinary Ecclesiastical Affairs, Prelate Monsignor Dominico Tardini, communicated the following instruction from Pope Pius XII: "Regarding the request of the Archbishop of Kaunas concerning St. Casimir. To consult with the Congregation for Rites and analyse what inconveniences concerning the Poles would be caused by the eventual granting of the request in the sense set out therein".[9] The reaction of the Congregation for Rites was also quite cautious: while not opposing the possibility in principle, it was explained that, according to the existing procedure, it would be necessary to have petitions representing the desire of the clergy, the majority of the nation, and the government, to have St. Casimir declared the principal patron of the state.[10]

In response, Monsignor Antonio Samorè, who was a curator of Baltic affairs and was well-acquainted with the situation in Lithuania, prepared a detailed internal memorandum for the Congregation for Extraordinary Ecclesiastical Affairs. In this document, he outlined arguments supporting the Lithuanians' exclusive right to St. Casimir and the relevance of their request given the current geopolitical situation. In concluding the memorandum, he noted: "If I were allowed to express my opinion, I would think that, taking into account all the elements of the current situation, including a certain rapprochement between the Poles and the Lithuanians, the 'disputed' nationality of St. Casimir should not be an obstacle to declaring him the patron of Lithuania or, better yet, the 'Lithuanian nation'".[11] Indeed, the latter possibility – to declare him the patron of the nation rather than the country – seemed to Prelate Tardini a viable solution under the conditions of occupation, when it was not possible to consult the opinion of the political

9 Prelate Dominico Tardini's excerpt from an audience with the Holy Father, 14 October 1945, in: Archivio Storico della Segreteria di Stato [Historical Archive of the Secretariat of State], f. AA. EE. SS, Pio XII, Paesi Baltici, b. 135, l. 9.

10 A letter from Cardinal Carlo Salotti, Prefect of the Sacred Congregation of Rites, to Prelate Dominico Tardini, 23 October 1945, in: ibid., l. 11.

11 A confidential memorandum from Father Antonio Samorè, 12 November 1945, in: ibid., l. 15.

authorities. The Congregation for Rites did not see any difference in this solution, reiterating, once again, its principled position that approval must be given by all three parties – the clergy representing, the Church; the laity; and the political authorities. Due to these apparent formal obstacles, as well as to a desire to avoid the risk of offending the Poles, the decision was ultimately made to declare St. Casimir only the special patron of Lithuanian youth – and this was implemented through a special papal breve issued by Pope Pius XII in June 1948.

The pope's decision gave new impetus to the spread of the cult of St. Casimir among Lithuanians in the West; even though the saint was already significantly more prominent in the Lithuanian and Polish diasporas before World War II than in Lithuania itself. This was similar to how St. Patrick and his feast day (17 March) were far more significant for the large Irish communities in the U.S. and Australia than in Ireland itself.[12] Incidentally, in the 1960s, the historian Zenonas Ivinskis even made the following prediction: "the feast of St. Casimir, for Lithuanians scattered abroad, could be transformed into the national feast of the Patron Saint of Lithuania, which would unite them in the same way as St. Patrick's Day does for the Irish".[13] In the Soviet-occupied country, the knowledge of the Pope's decree, apparently, also spread quite quickly. This is evidenced by the Litany of St. Casimir, which was approved by Bishop Paltarokas on 8 September 1948 and by an altarpiece painted in 1949 in the Church of St. Casimir in Kamajai, depicting the patron of Lithuanian youth. The Soviets, in turn, responded to the news of St. Casimir being declared the patron of Lithuanian youth in their usual way. In 1949, the most important sites for the cult of St. Casimir in Vilnius were closed, specifically, the Church of St. Casimir and the Cathedral.

Efforts by the Ukrainian Eastern Greek Catholics to 'nationalize' the cult of St. Josaphat were linked, as in the case of Lithuanians, to the arrival in Rome of the former head of the UGCC, the metropolitan of Lviv, Yosyf Slipyi, at the beginning of 1963, who had been imprisoned in Soviet labour camps until that time. Additional impetus for this initiative was provided by the transfer of the saint's relics to a location beneath the altar of St. Basil in St. Peter's Basilica on 22 November of the same year, as mandated by Pope Paul VI. This act demonstrated that this apostle of Christian unity could not be separated from either St. Peter, to whose See he had always been loyal, or his teacher and predecessor in monastic life (Figures 2, 3).

12 M. Cronin et al., 2002.

13 Z. Ivinskis, 1955, p. 170.

Figure 2. Transfer of St. Josaphat's remains to a location under the altar of St. Basil in St. Peter's Basilica, 1963.

In: Archives of General Curia of the Basilian Order of Saint Josaphat.

Figure 3. A holy card dedicated to St. Josaphat, published in Rome in 1964, and approved by Archbishop Yosyf Slipyi.

In: Lietuvos nacionalinis muziejus (National Museum of Lithuania), LNM PA 5806.

Finally, the dissemination of information about St. Josaphat's life and cult was undoubtedly encouraged by the upcoming centenary of his canonization (1967) and the 350th anniversary of his death (1973). In this context, perhaps, the greatest contribution belonged to Father Athanasiy Welykyj, who was appointed General Superior of the Basilian Order in 1963. By 1967, he had prepared and published a comprehensive three-volume collection of documents related to St. Josaphat's beatification and canonization;[14] additionally, he published a book, in Toronto, also about Josaphat's life and legacy.[15]

On the other hand, the anniversaries of St. Josaphat's canonization and his martyrdom did not receive any significant attention from the Holy See, and therefore, in Rome, were marked rather modestly. A certain (temporary) cooling of relations between the Vatican and the UGCC, which was particularly evident in the latter half of the 1960s and into the 1970s, was caused by two factors. The relationship between the Roman Catholic Church (hereinafter referred to as *RCC*) and the Eastern Rite Church was significantly altered by the new approach to Christian unity which had been enshrined in the documents of the Second Vatican Council. The RCC abandoned the term 'schismatics', which had been used for centuries in Catholic ecclesiology to describe the Christian communities which had broken away from Rome. Their return to Rome's fold had previously been considered the only possible path for restoring Church unity, with the historical unions in Eastern Europe seen as inspiring examples of such a scenario. Instead, the decree *Unitatis Redintegratio* established the concept of 'communio', which expressed the desire to seek common ground on faith while respecting and valuing each other's differences. After the Second Vatican Council, at least in the minds of Catholic ecumenical activists, doubts grew about whether it still made sense to view the Eastern Churches as two distinct branches which had almost identical liturgies and forms of devotion, especially since the Orthodox Church was now considered part of the common Christian family, and deserving of the greatest respect and love from all Catholics.[16]

At that time, on the other hand, the Vatican's prevailing belief was that strengthening ecumenical dialogue and solidarity with the ROC was the best way to expand the boundaries of religious freedom in the Soviet Union as a whole,

14 *S. Josaphat Hieromartyr. Documenta Romana beatificationis et canonizationis*, vol. 1–3, ed. Athanasius Welykyj, Romae: PP. Basiliani, 1952–1967.

15 М. М. Соловій et al., 1967.

16 В. Роод, 1995, с. 245.

while also believing that only an overall improvement in the situation could leave hope for the legalization of the UGCC. Thus, the Holy See sought to make the issue of religious freedom not only part of the international relations agenda but also a task of ecumenical cooperation. The 1970s were marked by an abundance of mutual contact between the RCC and the ROC. Against this backdrop, the Holy See avoided demonstrating its support for the UGCC in exile, declined to grant Cardinal Slipyi the status of the patriarch, and, notably, refrained from showcasing unionist heroes, such as St. Josaphat. Naturally, all this led to dissatisfaction among the leaders of the UGCC in exile and the Ukrainian diaspora as a whole, which manifested itself in increasingly radical actions and tone. The gradually deteriorating relations hit rock bottom in 1977 when Cardinal Slipyi, without the knowledge of the Holy See, consecrated three new bishops.

The crisis in relations was at least partially resolved only after John Paul II ascended to the papal throne, as he paid significantly more attention to the Catholic communities persecuted by communist regimes in Eastern Europe than his predecessors ever had. Even at the very beginning of his pontificate, he showed special affection for Lithuanians and Ukrainians through several symbolic gestures. Immediately after the conclave at which he was elected, he sent his cardinal's *zucchetto* as a gift to the Chapel of Mother of Mercy of the Gates of Dawn in Vilnius, and, on 6 May 1979, he visited the Lithuanian Pontifical College of St. Casimir. Meanwhile, the Ukrainian Greek Catholics' hopes that the new Pope would not ignore them were revived by a letter he wrote, published in *L'Osservatore Romano* on 16 June 1979, addressed to Cardinal Slipyi on the occasion of the upcoming millennium of the Baptism of Kyivan Rus'. Moreover, in early 1980, John Paul II paid great attention to the 1,600th anniversary of the death of St. Basil, and also to the extraordinary synod of Ukrainian Greek Catholic bishops held in early March 1980, which was tasked with selecting Cardinal Slipyi's successor. Contrary to what is sometimes claimed in academic and popular literature, in none of the public statements made by the Pope concerning these occasions did John Paul II mention the name of St. Josaphat or refer to him as the 'Apostle of Unity'. Some space was given to St. Josaphat only in John Paul II's speech delivered on 16 January 1983, during his visit to St. Josaphat Ukrainian College. St. Josaphat was presented to the students of the college as an example of a living commitment to the truths of the faith: "St. Josaphat is indeed presented according to the Basilian tradition as an example of scholarship and holiness. He managed to fulfil his personal commitment to the point of heroic martyrdom, which became the seal of the Church unity he

so desired".[17] On the other hand, in the same statement, the brief passage about St. Josaphat was immediately followed by a reference to the "new perspectives for achieving perfect Church unity" which had been opened up by the Second Vatican Council, as if to counterbalance the radical nature of the path shown by St. Josaphat.

The cautious integration of St. Josaphat's name into the new ecumenical discourse[18] in the final decades of the 20th century allowed his title to be used more boldly in establishing new structures within the UGCC in exile. For example, the new Diocese of Parma (Ohio, USA), established in 1983, and its cathedral were officially given the title of St. Josaphat. This became the third cathedral, after the two Ukrainian Greek Catholic cathedrals in Canada (in Edmonton and Toronto), to bear the title of St. Josaphat. However, even during this final acute phase of the Cold War, St. Josaphat did not become the national hero who would unite the Ukrainian diaspora, nor did he transcend the framework of the religious-confessional tradition of veneration. It is likely that at least three obstacles impeded this. First, there was the confessional heterogeneity which existed among Ukrainians and the collision of the different narratives about St. Josaphat's memory which existed among the Uniate and Orthodox communities. Second, the Ukrainian diaspora had to continuously compete with the Polish diaspora's efforts in the U.S. to claim this Christian hero as their own. Suffice to say that the only two sanctuaries in the U.S. to possess relics of St. Josaphat were the Basilica of St. Josaphat in Milwaukee, which served the Polish Catholic community, and the Holy Trinity Church in Chicago. Third, the conditions for the commemoration of St. Josaphat still made it impossible to develop in Ukraine itself, where the UGCC was forced to operate underground until the end of 1989.

Almost none of the aforementioned obstacles were present in the case of St. Casimir; thus, after he was declared the patron saint of Lithuanian youth, St. Casimir's commemoration across the diaspora developed along an upward trajectory. Some of the significant visual markers on this dotted line included the following: the 1959 Vatican postage stamp designed by the artist Kazimieras Vytautas Jonynas, created to commemorate the 500-year anniversary of St. Casimir's birth, and a mosaic by the same artist which became one of the key decorative

17 John Paul II's speech, delivered during his visit to the Pontifical Ukrainian College of St. Josaphat on 16 January 1983, access online: https://www.vatican.va/content/john-paul-ii/it/speeches/1983/january/documents/hf_jp-ii_spe_19830116_collegio-san-giosafat.html.

18 For example, *The Oxford Dictionary of Saints* describes Josaphat Kuntsevych as one of the patrons of contemporary ecumenism.

Figure 4. Part of the interior of the Lithuanian Chapel in St. Peter's Basilica in Rome, featuring images of St. Casimir and St. Josaphat. Photo by Augustinas Žemaitis, 2024.
In: *Global True Lithuania*, access online: https://global.truelithuania.com/lt/tag/vatican-lithuanian-chapel/.

elements of the Lithuanian chapel (established in 1966) in the Catholic National Shrine in Washington. In the first case, if there was any remaining competition with the Poles over the sharing of initiatives in this field,[19] the selection of the symbolic figures of St. Casimir for the national chapel in the Washington Shrine meant that the Poles no longer had any claim to St. Casimir; in the context of the commemoration of the millennium of the Baptism of Poland, the image of Our Lady of Częstochowa was much more relevant to them.

19 On the eve of the anniversary, the Lithuanian expatriates cautiously indicated to the Vatican Secretariat of State that the Pope should address them exclusively, and that the Vatican postage stamp intended for the anniversary should not be printed according to the design prepared by a Polish artist, despite the fact that its iconographic and verbal content did not conflict with the Lithuanian narrative.

Figure 5. A holy card dedicated to the Year of St. Casimir, published in the USA in 1984.
In: Lietuvos nacionalinis muziejus (National Museum of Lithuania), LNM GRD 113688/193.

A few years later, and again thanks to the artist Kazimieras V. Jonynas, the images of St. Casimir and St. Josaphat met in the same space for the first time. The modernist-style bas-reliefs of these saints became a significant part of the décor of the Lithuanian chapel which was opened in 1970 in St. Peter's Basilica (Figure 4). Undoubtedly, the curve of St. Casimir's trajectory of commemoration and instrumentalization reached its highest point in 1984, during the 500-year anniversary of his death. At that time, in the context of increased tensions in the Cold War, the commemoration heightened the emotions of the diaspora to the maximum. However, it is of importance to note that, in all these cases, largely due to the ecclesiastical context in which St. Casimir's commemoration was emphasized, he was presented either as proof of the maturity of Lithuania's Christianization or as an ideal of chastity, while consistently avoiding the geopolitical dimension associated with the saint as Defender of Lithuania – the White Knight, an image which was quite popular in pre-war Lithuania (Figure 5).

After the occasion of the 500-year anniversary of his death, St. Casimir began to appear more frequently in the underground Catholic periodicals distributed in

Lithuania, which had not previously paid any significant attention to him. Katarzyna Korzeniewska, who studied his image in this context, also noted the intriguing 'demilitarization' of St. Casimir's image, which was clearly visible in the texts of the underground press devoted to this theme. According to Korzeniewska, "the abandonment of these motifs is interesting because they provided the patron of Lithuania with pronounced anti-Russian overtones, which, it would seem, should have been relevant in the underground press, as at least some of the journal publishers did not hide their political anti-Russian stance".[20] In the late Soviet period, poetry on the theme of St. Casimir ("Šv. Kazimiero bažnyčia" ("The Church of St. Casimir") by *Marija Katiliūtė-Lacrima* and "Karališkoji poema" ("The Royal Poem") by Nijolė Cicėnaitė-Vaidilutė), distributed through samizdat, also directed the reader's attention more toward St. Casimir as a pillar of the nation's spiritual resistance and moral rebirth[21] rather than fostering expectations that the heavenly patron would arrive on a white horse and free them from the clutches of the invader.

St. Casimir's 500-year anniversary coincided with what was likely the greatest crisis in USSR-Vatican relations. Thus, it was, on the one hand, that in 1984, the Soviet Lithuanian media featured a significant number of harsh attacks not only against St. Casimir himself but also against the Pope and the Vatican.[22] While, on the other hand, every possible effort was being made to suppress information about the exceptional attention the Holy See was giving to this anniversary. The Pope's greeting telegram on the occasion of St. Casimir's anniversary, likely delayed due to Soviet security efforts, was received late and, therefore, was not read during the solemn service held on 3 March at the Church of St. Peter and St. Paul in Vilnius. In the autumn of 1984, upon returning from the Vatican, four videotapes belonging to the Bishop Liudvikas Povilonis were confiscated by the customs office of the Soviet Union. These tapes contained recordings of a Solemn Mass celebrated by the Pope in St. Peter's Basilica in Rome. A shipment of a special postage stamp issued by the Vatican, dedicated to St. Casimir (designed by Romas Viesulas), was also sent back. There was indeed something to suppress because, according to Stasys Lozoraitis Jr (who at the time was the secretary of the Lithuanian legation by the Holy See), Lithuania had never before received such

20 K. Korzeniewska, 2017, p. 159.

21 R. Malickaitė, 2006, p. 123, 125.

22 Most of these articles were prepared by Ivanas Tichonovičius, head of the Vatican Eastern Policy, Communism, and Counter-Propaganda Section of the Institute of Scientific Atheism, Vilnius Branch (he later became infamously known as Jan Ciechanowicz).

attention from the Vatican or the Italian media.[23] Although the special apostolic letter requested by the bishops of Lithuania for this occasion was not received, it was fully compensated for by the Pope's comprehensive sermon to the participants of the Mass. Part of the sermon was delivered in Lithuanian, which made a strong impression indeed. At the risk of angering the Soviet authorities, the Holy Father also publicly spoke at the end of the summer of 1984 about his cherished plans to visit Lithuania on the occasion of the anniversary and the authorities' refusal to grant him entry to the country.

The image of St. Casimir as the exceptional heavenly patron of Lithuania (*Primarius Lituaniae Patronus*) was clearly emphasized in the discourse accompanying the anniversary celebrations which took place in the Lithuanian diaspora. However, Pope John Paul II, who, since the beginning of his papacy, had been implementing a consistent program to revitalize the religious sites of memory of Central and Eastern Europe – in a similar way to the case of St. Josaphat – sought to highlight the universal and significant aspects of St. Casimir's memory for the entire RCC. In this way, St. Casimir and St. Josaphat were included in the pantheon of heroes of the history of Christianization for this part of Europe, alongside other prominent protagonists of this history, such as the brothers Saints Cyril and Methodius along with St. Benedict, all of whom John Paul II declared co-patrons of Europe in his apostolic letter, *Egregiae Virtutis*, written at the end of 1980, or Queen Jadwiga of Poland, who was beatified in 1979 and canonized 18 years later. All of this was an important part of the Pope's program to enhance the self-esteem of Christians in the Central and Eastern European countries under communist regimes, thereby reintegrating them into an indivisible Europe, which, according to him, must breathe with both lungs.

Conclusions

This article provides a review of the 20th-century commemoration of St. Josaphat and St. Casimir, and essentially confirms the findings of other researchers. In a similar way to other cases where saints have transcended the framework of religious worship and have become significant figures in different civic religions (such as

23 Stasys Lozoraitis Jr. pro-memoria, 12 March 1984, in: Lietuvos centrinis valstybės archyvas [Lithuanian Central State Archives], f. 673, ap. 2, b. 80, l. 187.

St. Catherine of Siena and St. Patrick), neither St. Casimir nor St. Josaphat can be considered purely national patrons. The history of their memory also represents the significant adaptability of religious sites of memory to the different major narratives of the 20th century. In both cases, they only attained a status akin to that of national patrons within diasporic contexts. On the other hand, this study has revealed something that is often overlooked by other researchers – namely, that the stance of the Holy See and the intended message it wished to convey through a particular saint play an exceptionally significant role in shaping that saint's secular memory. This influence is particularly evident in the case of St. Josaphat, but it undoubtedly also affected the forms of St. Casimir's commemoration.

Upon comparing the veneration trajectories of these two saints who exemplified different Christian virtues but were revitalized in similar 20th-century contexts, several commonalities have been revealed: on the one hand, these saints enjoyed relatively modest popularity in Lithuanian and Ukrainian national and religious communities during the first half of the 20th century; on the other hand, there was a significant increase in attention concerning the saints during the Cold War period. In both cases, under the unfavourable conditions which persisted during the Soviet occupation of Lithuania and Ukraine, the memory of the saints was primarily preserved in the diaspora.

Meanwhile, the comparative analysis clearly shows that St. Casimir had significantly more chances of becoming a typical national patron than St. Josaphat did. St. Josaphat's path to the rank of a national hero faced two major obstacles: first, the new concept of Christian unity which took hold during the second half of the 20th century in the Catholic Church made St. Josaphat, inspired by the ideal of a union, a less convenient figure within the context of the Holy See's priorities; second, the confessional diversity within the Ukrainian nation made it difficult for St. Josaphat's memory to serve as a unifying instrument for the nation. None of these barriers were to be found on St. Casimir's path, yet he also did not secure a place in the top echelons of Lithuanian memory culture in the 20th century. Before World War II, St. Casimir's image in Lithuania was overshadowed by the grand dukes and heroes of the national revival. During the Soviet era, it was eclipsed by figures who grew up in the soil of Protestant culture, such as Martynas Mažvydas and Kristijonas Donelaitis, who successfully occupied those places in the national hero pantheon left vacant by the memory politics of the occupying regime. During the post-Soviet period, it was further overshadowed by the heroes of both armed and unarmed anti-Soviet resistance. Under such circumstances, neither the tradition of St. Casimir's memory, maintained and strengthened in the diaspora, nor

the efforts of Pope John Paul II to place him alongside other major figures in the history of Christianization in Central and Eastern Europe, proved helpful.

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