

# Today's Martyrs

*Resources for understanding current Christian witness and martyrdom*



## Lithuania

Fr Julius Sasnauskas OFM (rector of Bernardine Church in [Vilnius](#), as of [December 10, 2012](#) cannot walk properly despite various surgeries because of torture by the KGB in the 1980s, said at that time "What could be the worst thing that could happen to me now that I have come back? They will discover me and they will kill me. Is this bad? I will be a martyr of God. I will go straight to heaven. I will be an example to my family, my friends, my people and to the whole Church. This is excellent. Also, I will be in heaven doing all the good that I can do for my family, my friends, for my people. So it is good. What the world sees as something terrible, for us Catholics it is excellent")

Archbishop Sigitas Tamkevicius SJ (aged 85 [2019], called to meet with the procurator's office in [Vilnius](#) in [February 1972](#), threatened with prosecution for anti-Soviet activities;

called again to a 'high level warning' at the procurator's office in [Vilnius](#) near the end of [April 1972](#);

summoned to the [Alytus](#) district executive committee on [April 29, 1972](#), lectured about the law, threatened with prosecution;

apartment in [Vilnius](#) searched on [March 20, 1974](#), religious writings seized;

summoned to KGB headquarters in [Vilnius](#) on [April 17, 1974](#) and questioned about the *Chronicle of the Catholic Church in Lithuania* [a history he had secretly commissioned];

the only witness for the defense to be allowed by the prosecution in the [May 6, 1983](#) trial of Fr Alfonsas Svarinskas in [Vilnius](#), said "Essentially I cannot be a witness. It would be an insult for me, a priest, to be a witness against another priest. I can only be accused and sit in the prisoners' dock alongside Fr Alfonsas Svarinskas. That would be an honor for me", summoned to hear the verdict, after the verdict was handed over to the prosecutor's office and taken to the KGB dungeons;

appointed bishop [May 8, 1991](#);

elevated to the College of Cardinals on [September 1, 2019](#))