



INDULGENCIES OF ST. JOHN THE BAPTIST IN PALUKNYS

**EVENT: THE TITLE INDULGENCES
OF PALUKNYS CHURCH OF JOHN
THE BAPTIST**

DATE:

LOCATION: PALUKNYS

The church of St. John the Baptist is a real treasure of Paluknys village. The opportunity to gather for a common prayer and celebrate indulgences provides the local community and visiting guests with a chance to experience the joy of communality, recognize liturgical traditions and foster as well as preserve them. In 1941, when the German soldiers burned a wooden church that had been standing

there, a temporary church was built after a couple of years. It was reconstructed: the church was extended and widened, a bell tower was built. The church is rectangular plan, basilica-like, a single tower, with a vestibule and a turret. There are three naves inside, separated by pillars, there are three altars as well. Worship services are held in Polish and Lithuanian languages. This church was awarded with the title of St. John the Baptist, therefore the grand indulgences in this parish are dedicated to St. John the Baptist since the ancient times.

Within the Christian tradition, St. John the Baptist is the last prophet of the Old Testament and the first Saint of the New Testament, the predecessor of Jesus Christ prophesied in the Old Testament.

John spent part of his youth alone in the desert, then began the work of a prophet in the lower reaches of the Jordan river, preaching the approaching Kingdom of God, baptizing the penitent in the river. John the Baptist baptized Jesus himself and called him the Messiah.

The Title indulgencies of Paluknys church of John The Baptist are organized every year on the 24th of June, however, if this date ends up in the middle of the week, the indulgences are moved to the upcoming Sunday. Sometimes the indulgences coincide with various anniversary dates of Paluknys village, important commemorations or events. The indulgences start with solemn Mass, after which there is a procession. Traders offer delicious gingerbread, homemade sugar candies wrapped in multicolored papers, sacred pictures, crosses, rosaries and other sacral attributes. In the evening, all Paluknys residents, returning locals, and visiting guests gather at the eldership



for the St. John's Day festival, where a concert program, various entertainment for children and families, sports matches as well as other attractions take place. The concert program involves art groups from both local and foreign countries. Although the indulgences are traditional, they obtain a new spectrum of colors every year. The experience of people enriches traditions of indulgences and allows to create even more placable sacredness, joy and color.





WHILE TRAVELING ON ST. JAMES ROAD, STOP IN ONUŠKIS

EVENT: LITURGICAL CELEBRATIONS
AND CEREMONIES IN ONUŠKIS
CHURCH OF THE APOSTLES PHILIP
AND JAMES

DATE: ALL YEAR

LOCATION: ONUŠKIS

Onuškis church of the Apostles Philip and James was first mentioned in historical sources at the beginning of the 16th century. Over the centuries, it has endured many challenges: Burned, collapsed, stood again and again, like a phoenix that came to life from ashes and ruins. The church was built of brick and stone masonry in 1829. It was also consecrated within the same year. At the begin-

ning of the 20th century, Kipras Petrauskas played organ in Onuškis Church, and Nikodemus Švogžlys-the Giant was the priest as well as publicist famous for his sermons, historical and social activities.

In 1993, the remains of Donatas Malinauskas, a signatory of the Lithuanian Act of Independence, his wife Sofija Malinauskienė (Tanska) and sister Filomena Malinauskaitė were brought from the Altai region and solemnly buried in the yard of Onuškis church. Currently, a special attention in the church of Apostles Philip and James is given to commemorating public holidays and red letter days: The 13th of January – the Day of Restoration of the State of Lithuania, the 16th of February – the Day of Restoration of Lithuania's Independence, the 11th of March –

Statehood Day, and the 6th of July. Mass for the whole Lithuania, for the dead who fought for the freedom of Lithuania, for the living who are fostering and creating the today's Lithuania.

The anniversary of Onuškis church of the Apostles Philip and James was solemnly commemorated in 2019. Before the anniversary, the liturgical vessels, paintings of the Holy Spirit, St. George, St. Anthony and St. Joseph had been restored by the efforts of the priest Algimantas Gaidukevičius, votive offerings polished and neatly hanged, stained glass replaced, and organ of the church was restored as well.

The indulgences of St. Joseph, the Apostles Philip and James, the Revelation of the Holy Spirit to the Apostles (Pentecost) and St. Roch are celebrated in the church. There are beautiful moments from the most famous indulgences of St. Roch in the memory of our parents and grandparents, when a large number people from various nooks of the parish used to gather and relatives one haven't seen for a long time used to meet. People were in no hurry to leave. After the Mass, they used to talk in the churchyard, sat down on the grass or the yards of the relatives in groups. Indulgences of St. Roch are the most memorable ones to the people of the parish.

The most important liturgical celebrations of Onuškis parish's church of the Apostles Philip and James are: the main and the most important, title indulgences of Philip and James, Christmas – the birth of Christ and Easter – the resurrection of Christ. Preparations for them are made responsibly. The main focus is on concentration, worshipping, calmness, the

importance of confession and the Holy Communion. The church is cleaned, and the altars are decorated.

During the Lent, while waiting for the resurrection of Christ i.e. Easter, the believers in the church travel through the Stations of the Cross on every Friday and Sunday before the Mass. A prayer is said at each station, the suffering, death and resurrection of Christ is pondered, the respective songs of the Lent are sung. Celebratory worshipping ceremonies begin at 8 o'clock in the Easter morning. Easter eggs, bread and other food, which will be put on the Easter table, is consecrated. The church is beautifully decorated with early spring flowers once again. The main altar is decorated with a light-colored cloth i.e. white and yellow.

From the early Middle Ages to the present day, the pilgrims are drawn to the Cathedral of Santiago de Compostela, where the apostle James was found buried. The promotion of this road in Lithuania started in 2012, and the church of the Apostles Philip and James was added to the Way of St. James of Europe. In June 1st, 2016, the Government of Lithuania has decided to mark 32 shrines in Lithuania with a yellow shell in a blue background as the sign of St. James' road. Two of the shrines are in the territory of Trakai district municipality: Trakai Church of the Visitation of the Blessed Virgin Mary and the church of the Apostles Philip and James.

Pilgrims walking St. James' road are always visiting Onuškis church in Trakai district. This way the news about the town of Oniškis are spread on the roads of pilgrimage and worshipping in Lithuania.



OLD BELIEVERS COME TO LIFE IN PRAYERS - TO REMEMBER AND HONOR THE DEPARTED

**EVENT: PRAYERS IN DANILIŠKĖS
CEMETERY**

DATE:

**LOCATION: THE VILLAGE OF
DANILIŠKĖS**

The main cemetery of Old Believers of Trakai is in Daniliškės. In the village, which was established after the Volok Reform had been initiated by the Grand Duke of Lithuania and King of Poland Sigismund II Augustus in 1548. Today, those looking to come should say: Western part of Trakai Historical National Park, 8 km from Trakai city, territory of Kudrionys Landscape Reserve.

Documents from 1822 state that the Old Believers lived in the lands of land-

lords of Riomeris family near Trakai. At the time, the community of Old Believers in Daniliškės village comprised of 116 individuals. The village is in endangered, but it's very important in the life of the Lithuanian community of Old Believers since the members living in other parts of Lithuania come to the ceremonies in the Eastern Orthodox church, and their dead are buried in an open rural cemetery.

The cemetery is carefully maintained and is rich in old and modern monuments. The Old Believers meet in Daniliškės several times a year. Community members gather in Daniliškės cemetery during Pentecost, when they remember their dead relatives. Old Believers are in this village only when peo-

ple gather here to honor the dead. Then all the older people from this village, their children and grandchildren, who, now, live in Vilnius, Kaunas, Trakai, Elektrėnai or other cities, gather. The celebration honoring the dead begins with Mass in a Eastern Orthodox church built more than a hundred years ago.

Daniliškės Eastern Orthodox church was and still is the main house of worship for the Old Believers of Trakai region. For many years, the Lithuanian community of Old Believers didn't receive permission to build a house of worship in Vilnius, and only in 1830, they built a small house of worship in the cemetery. They were allowed to perform a service during the holidays in 1835. The building expanded gradually. The Eastern Orthodox church opens its doors only three times a year: During the Day of the Holy Trinity, Easter, and confessions. Religious communities of Old Believers are special because they don't have a church hierarchy and priests. Their functions are performed by an elected member of the communi-

ty called the layman.

After Mass, a group of Old Believers goes to an old cemetery in the village. Here, a community-elected senior consecrates each tomb, and those gathered slowly go from one tomb to another praying, singing songs in a special ancient way. The manner of Old Believers' singing is special for its monotony.

Those gathered pray at one grave for about 10 minutes. Therefore, visiting a small cemetery of Daniliškės village with songs and prayers takes a very long time. According to old traditions, the Old Believers treat the singers with their own dishes and decorated eggs.

By fostering and practicing their deep traditions, the community of Old Believers preserves its roots and strengthens community spirit. These are the guardians of the old Orthodox Church traditions and ceremonies, who have a very good understanding of the importance of a prayer, concentration, and mutual fellowship in today's rushing and constantly transforming society.





WHILE ON OGINSKIS ROAD STOP AT RYKANTAI INDULGENCES OF THE HOLY TRINITY

EVENT: INDULGENCES OF THE HOLY TRINITY IN RYKANTAI CHURCH OF THE HOLY TRINITY (ALL YEAR); RYKANTAI CHURCH IS A PART OF OGINSKIS CULTURAL ROAD ROUTE
DATE: 29TH OF SEPTEMBER
LOCATION: RYKANTAI VILLAGE

With gothic constructions, renaissance forms Rykantai church of the Holy Trinity is one of the oldest churches in Trakai district. It was built in 1585 by the owner of Rykantai manor A.Tolvaišas. The beauty of the church delighted even those who had visited the most import-

ant cities of Europe. Rykantai was in the hands of Oginskis family by the 17th century. Moscow's army destroyed the church in 1655. It was being restored by Marcijonas Oginskis for more than three decades. He handed over the church to Trakai Dominican Monastery in 1688, and then Rykantai church became a Catholic one. Rykantai parish of the Holy Trinity was established in 1921, and the church was restored later in 1935.

Oginskis family name is related to the Grand Duchy of Lithuania (GDL) as well as dukes and noblemen of Lithuania that had a big influence on the cultural and political life of Lithuania from the end of the 17th century. At the usual place for the monuments of the founders, full-length portraits of Marcijonas Aleksan-

dras Oginskis and his wife Marcibelė Glebavičiūtė were painted on both sides of the altar in Rykantai church. Today, almost completely faded and barely visible, damaged by previous restorations, they can be considered not only the epitaphs of a noble family (a short piece of writing or a poem about a dead person, especially one written on their grave-stone) but also fundamental images of deserving spouses of the church, even though they only restored the house of God damaged by the Russians. The latter, in this case the main function of these works of art, is reflected by the proud position of Oginskis and the canopies rising above both figures, depicting the spouses not as humble servants of the Church, but as proud benefactors.

Sunday of the Holy Trinity is celebrated a week after Pentecost in respect of one of the fundamental truths of Christianity – belief in the Holy Trinity. This celebration of the Holy Trinity was declared

universal by Pope John XXII. Every year during the celebration of the Holy Trinity, indulgences are held in the church. During the indulgences, Mass with local priests and guests is solemnly celebrated, there is an ongoing procession as well as diverse spiritual and cultural program.

Rykantai Church is included in the route of the Oginskis Cultural Heritage Road, which looks like this: Elektrėnai district–Vievis Eastern Orthodox church–Plungė district–Manor of Plungė, Trakai district–Rykantai church, the city of Vilnius–Oginskis family palace–ensemble of Vileišis Palace, Eastern Orthodox church of the Holy Spirit, Vilnius district–Observatory of Vilnius University. This educational route and its landmarks are directly associated with Oginskis family and their legacy to Lithuania. It's at least a two-day route, which will present one with a lot of excitement, history and, of course, fun emotions and experiences.





RELAXATION TO THE BODY AND SOUL - INDULGENCES OF ST. ANNE IN DUSMENYS

**EVENT: THE GRAND INDULGENCES
OF ST. ANNE IN DUSMENYS CHURCH
OF THE APOSTLES SIMON AND
JUDAS THADDEUS**

**DATE: THE MONTH OF JULY
LOCATION: DUSMENYS**

A beautiful midsummer celebration – indulgences of St. Anne invites not only the locals, but also their friends and relatives from distant corners of Lithuania to Dusmenys church of the Apostles Simon and Judas Thaddeus. Parishioners and guests gathered for a common prayer commemorate and pay a special tribute to St. Anne.

The legend says that St. Anne was

the daughter of a nomadic shepherd, Akar, born in Nazareth and raised in the temple of Jerusalem. At the age of about 20, she married Joachim of Nazareth. After twenty years of living together, the spouses still had no children and worried very much because of it. Eventually, Joachim decided to go to the desert and pray there for 40 days and 40 nights so that they would be able to have a baby. While he was in the desert, an angel visited Anne and said that God had answered their prayers and that they would have a child. At the age of forty Anne was so happy to have a daughter Mary that she sacrificed her to God.

Depending on the day of St. Anne indulgences, Dusmenys also organiz-

es a traditional festival with almost 60 years of history. The festival honors the name Anne as there are many of those in Dusmenys region. Every year, bread also is duly honored, the jubilees of a current year and owners of beautifully maintained homesteads are traditionally congratulated, there is also a concert.

Dusmenys church was built in 1818 on the initiative and funds of the Camaldolese monks. That year the church was finally furnished and consecrated. Vilnius Consistory formed a commission to determine the territory of Dusmenys parish in 1821. Dusmenys parish had five manors and 192 houses of people in serfdom with 1157 parishioners. The parish was founded in 1925. However, from the 1900s, there was hope of building a new brick church, but that didn't happen. The church itself is of Classicism style with features of folk architecture. Windows of the church are arched with edgings, a rectangular two-part window with edging is only in the main façade. The interior of the church is dec-



orated with three wooden altars. Paintings of St. Romuald and the Blessed Virgin Mary with a baby created in the 18th century are hanging in the grand altar. They are associated with Camaldolese monks.

Those who come to the indulgences of St. Anne not only relax their spirit by attending Mass and a procession but also fill their body and mind with good emotions and fun experiences while participating in an annual traditional festival of St. Anne.





INDULGENCES OF ST. ROCH THE WONDEROUS, PATRON OF THE SICK IN ONUŠKIS

EVENT: INDULGENCES ST. ROCH
IN ONUŠKIS CHURCH OF THE
APOSTLES PHILIP AND JAMES
DATE: THE 16TH OF AUGUST
(IN CASE IT ENDS UP IN THE
MIDDLE OF THE WEEK, THEN
MOVES TO SUNDAY)
LOCATION: ONUŠKIS

Onuškis is a small town in Trakai district, located in Dzūkija's highlands. The town is decorated by many objects that have already become a historical heritage, among which the parishioners can be proud of the town's church named after the Apostles Philip and James. It was built in the 19th century, instead of the first Onuškis house of prayer, which

had burned suddenly. The construction of the church was initiated by a benevolent vicar, thanks to whom the town was decorated by a neoclassical-style church made of stones and bricks. Currently, the church is included in the list of Lithuanian architectural monuments.

For many Onuškis residents their childhood memories are associated with traditionally rippling indulgences of St. Roch at the end of summer. With the efforts of all the parishioners and the priest of Onuškis parish, the celebration of indulgences surprises with its originality and sacred as well as festive mood every year. The town is in impeccable order, and the church altars attract the eye with the beauty of summer flowers from a distance.

St. Roch is a Saint of French origin who lived in the 13th–14th centuries. He distributed his wealth to the poor and became a pilgrim. St. Roch dedicated his life to healing the sick and looking after patients infected with the plague. According to legends, he had a miraculous healing power. He was also infected with the plague, but, with God's help, he healed. St. Roch have traveled a lot while treating the sick. During his travels, the Saint was accused of spying, arrested and sent to prison. He died there. Today, the Saint is considered the patron of the sick. During the indulgences of St. Roch, both locals and guests from neighboring districts who left their daily routine aside and dressed in holiday clothes are rushing to the church to feel the peace of God that's there as well as ask for St. Roch to provide health for them and their loved ones.

Solemn Mass at the church of the



Apostles Philip and James are concluded with a special prayer asking for forgiveness, and an ongoing colorful fair at the square as well as a concert program delight the believers. This annual tradition doesn't fade, but rather goes deeper and deeper into the heart of every participant of the indulgences.

