

Capuchins in Tartu

Arnis Paršovs'i tõlge läti keelest.

In 1931, the first capuchin P. Roberts Lencbauers arrived in Tartu, who was dean until 1934. After him was P. Berards Hubers, who was until 1941.

In addition to the dean, there were two more capuchin layman brothers living in Tartu: brother Uto and Maternus. Uto was a cook, but Maternus worked in the printing-house. At the church in Tartu there was a printing-house "Tungal" (Tungal - Torch). Capuchins each month issued magazine "Kiriku Elu" (The Life of the Church). Four times in a year a magazine "Uhine Kirik" (one Church) was issued, whose purpose was examination of the issues of the unification of Christian faiths.

In 1937 in the same printing-house "Tungal" was issued a Catholic prayer and song book "Au olgu Jumalale" - (God's Word), 448 pages thick.

According to in the Est. Church History (p. 240) written data, in 1934 after population census, there were 2327 Catholics in Estonia. The number of Catholic priests was 11, of which 6 were capuchins.

"Immaculate Conception of Mary" congregation sisters in Tartu

The Saint Francis Third Order "Immaculate Conception of Mary" congregation sisters arrived in Tartu on September 6, 1936. They were invited by Monsignor Eduard Profittlich, Estonian apostolic administrator, who in the same year was consecrated as a bishop.

Arrived 6 sisters: 3 stayed in Tartu, 3 went to Parnu, in 1939 two more sisters arrived to Tartu.

The sisters rented an apartment with 4 rooms in Gustav Adolph (now Kingisepa) street No. 49. In 1937, they opened in the same apartment a children's "game hobby group". In the hobby group were taken children irrespective of their nationality and faith. Preference was given to poor children and those whose parents are at work during the day. Spoke in Estonian.

In 1938, the sisters bought a house on the same street No. 53 and moved to it in July. In the same year, the sisters requested permission from the relevant national authorities to open the children's garden. Permission was given. It had to be renewed every year. Parents were keen to entrust their children to sisters. There was already 50 children registered in the third year (the last year of existence of kindergarten).

At the request of parents, at the kindergarten a small boarding school was established. There were 7 children in it.

Sisters were honored by Catholics and non-Catholics. Even recently, more than 30 years later, some intelligent person, meeting a sister and remembering the beautiful time spent with the sisters during the child's days, says: "It was good to be with you at that time."

Events in the church of Tartu during World War 1939-1945

In accordance with the laws of the new government, in 1940 the church and the parish house were nationalized. In the same way was nationalized sisters house. Printing-house "Tungal" on November 15, 1940 was sealed and later taken away.

Sisters managed to rent an apartment in the former kindergarten house.

The dean P. Berards rented a hall in the parish house for church services. Each month the 200 rubles had to be paid. To the hall, in a separate room, moved to live dean P. Berards and brother Utto.

The brother Maternus left Estonia in 1940. P. Roberts from Parnu left as the first one.

The child care center of the sisters had to work until the state authorities (education department) will be able to replace the sisters with the its own work force. However, the sisters soon themselves left the job. At first, one sister was still a worker in the kitchen, until June 1941.

The principal of sisters in 1940 urged the youngest sisters to return to the Czechoslovakia from where they had arrived. Next year she wanted that all the sisters return to their homeland. But since one sister was already an Estonian citizen and she did not get permission to leave, two sisters, who had not left, stayed with her in Tartu. Every year they had to get permission to stay in Estonia.

On the September 5, 1941 there was a Holly Mass in the church again.

Sisters worked at the hospital and, as much as possible, helped to teach a faith lessons to the children, which were held in small groups. In the free time, the sisters went to the forest to provide themselves and the church firewood. Some times they went to help in the field work to earn themselves food.

In 1940, in the Church of Tartu, His Excellency Bishop Profittlich, for the last time, issued a Sacrament of Confirmation.

On February 2, 1941, priest P. Berards Hubers left Tartu, and two weeks after him, brother Utto.

On February 3, 1941, priest Vasilijs Bourgeois (Buržuā) came to Tartu as dean. On June 12, 1942, the Germans arrested him.

On July 3, 1942, the newly consecrated priest Aleksandrs Dordett arrived in Tartu.

After the end of the war in 1944, the priest V. Bourgeois was released, spent two years in Esna and then left for abroad.

On August 15, 1944, the priest A. Dordett left Estonia.

After the end of the war in the autumn of 1944, priest Pater Teadus Kraus O.F.M.Cap. Arrived in Tartu, who until then had been working in Narva. He remained in Tartu as a dean until September 15, 1964.

Thank to God and the most blessed Virgin Mary for the Catholic Church in Tartu. During the war the windows were damaged, the roof was shot in many places, the bomb hits were visible in some places of the brick wall. Otherwise the church was completely intact and looked like new. By contrast, one Lutheran church was burnt down during the war (St. John's Church) and was unusable. St. Paul's Church is severely damaged, but has been renovated and services are taking place there.

Tartu parish after 1945

After the end of the war, the life of the Catholic church in Tartu ran within the bounds of the Soviet laws.

The dean was P. Tadeus Kraus O.F.M.Cap. Since he was old and sickly, on the wish of his principal, on September 15, 1964, he left to Poland and lives in Krakow, in the capuchin Monastery.

On September 15, 1964, in place of him as a dean started to work priest Jānis Pavlovskis (P. Andrejs O.F.M. Cap.).

The biggest gratefulness for preserving the church for the Catholic parish and for its cleaning and decoration goes to three remaining Czechoslovak sisters. Two of them worked in hospitals as nurses, and the third was a housekeeper. One sister (sister Salvatora) performed also the duties of organ player. One sister, who also worked as a nurse, on December 6, 1965 died and was buried in the Tartu cemetery. The other two sisters receive state pension and work in the church: one for an organist, simultaneously fulfilling the duties of the secretary of the church committee, the other for the sacristan and the church cleaner.

In 1955 the church was painted on the inside. Painter jobs were taken by paid workers. One of the painters deliberately hit with a hammer at the foundation of the statute of Our Lady of Lourdes and it split. It is still so up to this time.

In 1965, on the outside of the church's windows, wire mesh was fastened to the frame. This way windows stay more secure.

In 1975, the church was painted on the inside. The main tasks were performed by members of the parish. There was also paid work force.

Since the bishop can not visit the church of Tartu and it is not possible for parish members to go elsewhere to receive Confirmation sacrament, the dean of the parish, using the privilege granted by the Pope to priests of our land, with the special permission of His Excellency Bishop J.Vaivods, in 1972, gave Confirmation sacrament to the faithful.

Some information about the reception of the sacraments and the
attendance of the church

Year	Baptism	Marriage	Burial	Holy communion	Christmas evening service participants	Easter service participants	Church attendance in the year
1945	3	1	1				
1946	2	-	1				
1947	2	-					
1948	2	2	1				
1949	1	1	-				
1950	6	-	2				
1951	4	1	2				
1952	2	-	-				
1953	5	3	1				
1954	1	1	2				
1955	2	-	3				
1956	5	1	1				
1957	8	4	4				
1958	8	3	1				
1959	6	3	1				
1960	13	2	-				
1961	8	4	2				
1962	8	4	2				
1963	8	4	2				
1964	11	-	1				
1965	4	5	4				
1966	3	6	3	1571	46	55	2698
1967	3	1	1	1745	85	64	2037
1968	5	2	3	1865	80	75	2864
1969	11	4	2	1962	109	60	3135
1970	27	4	3	2314	220	153	4038
1971	28	2	-	2098	150	200	3816
1972	26	7	6	2382	240	223	4422
1973	18	6	7	2552	270	270	4540
1974	12	6	3	2396	240	240	4173

1975	8	1	5	1830	220	154	3271
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Note. There are many non-Catholics attending Christmas Eve service. In 1974 and 1975 they were about 70% of the total number of visitors.

The list of priests who have worked in Tartu parish.

Jāzeps Beržanskis c. th.	1849-1851
Feliks Kamenckis	1851-1854
Ildefonss Leščinskis	1854-1860
Henrihs Kossovskis mag. th. Built parish house. Later become the bishop of Vlačlava.	1860-1863
Kazimirs Fr. Soročinskis Mag. th.	1863-1867
Kārlis Marcinkevičs	1867-1868
Eduards L. v. Landsbergs c. th.	1868-1873
Ādolfs Martinovs Mag. th.	1873-1874
Ammanns	1874-1875
Eduards Glass	1875
Hristofors Petkevičs	1876-1892
Aleksandrs Platpirs Mag. th.	1892-1893
Fridrihs Žiskars (Giscard) Built the current church.	1894-1897
Andrejs Kantyniks Mag. th.	1897-1900
Mečislavs Tabenskis	1900-1909
Dominiks Tavjenis Mag. th.	1909-1910
Pēteris Silovičš	1910-1911
Vincas Dejnīs	1911-1912
Fridrihs Žiskars	1912-1915
Alfonss Jendžejevskis	1915
Kazimirs Žilevičs	1915-1920
Miķelis Dukaļskis Mag. th.	1920-1923
Kačinskis	1923
Henrihs A. Verlings	1923-1931
P. Roberts Lenčbauers O.F.M.Cap.	1931-1934
P. Berhards Hubers O.F.M.Cap.	1934-1941
Vasilijs P. Bourgeois (Buržuā)	3.II 1941 - 23.VI 1942
Aleksandrs Dordett	3.VII 1942 -15.VIII 1944
P. Tadeus Kraus O.F.M.Cap.	From autumn 1944-1964 15.IX. On September 15, 1964, went to Poland.

P. Andrejs (Jānis Pavlovskis)
O.F.M.Cap.

From September 15, 1964.