



The Hill of Crosses, or Kryžių kalnas in Lithuanian, is located 12 kilometers north of Šiauliai and is the Lithuanian national pilgrimage centre. There are hundreds of thousands of crosses standing upon a small hill that symbolize Christian faith, Lithuanian national identity and Lithuanians' fight for freedom. Over the centuries, the place has come to signify the peaceful endurance of Lithuanian Catholicism despite the threats it faced throughout history. The size, variety and the number of crosses is amazing – actually it is not possible to count them all. There are



crosses that are three meters tall and countless small crosses hanging upon the larger crosses. They are beautifully carved out of wood or sculpted from metal. The crosses are brought by Christian pilgrims from all over the world. Rosaries, pictures of Jesus and the saints, photos of Lithuanian patriots also decorate the larger crosses. When the wind is blowing through the forest of crosses and hanging rosaries you can hear beautiful music.

Every year the Hill of Crosses is visited by hundreds of Lithuanians and tourists from all over the world. In 1993 the Hills of Crosses was visited by Pope John Paul II who celebrated Holy Mass here. Then the place became famous throughout the world.

The Franciscan Monastery was established near the Hill of Crosses in 2000. In 2001 this place was included in the List of UNESCO heritage sites.

## The History

