

Denomination: €5	On the edge of the coin: POST TENEBRAS SPERO LUCEM * PO TAMSYBIŲ VILIUOSI ŠVIESOS (AFTER DARKNESS, I HOPE FOR LIGHT)	
Silver Ag 925	Quality: proof	
Diameter: 28.70 mm	Weight: 12.44 g	
Mintage: 2,500 pcs	Designed by Marija Marcelionytė-Paliukė	
Issued in 2020		

Denomination: €1.50	Edge of the coin: rimmed	
Cu/Ni alloy	Quality: unc	
Diameter: 27.50 mm	Weight: 11.10 g	
Mintage: 30,000 pcs	Designed by Marija Marcelionytė-Paliukė	
Issued in 2020		



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Lithuanian Collector Coins
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Brochure designed by Liudas Parulskis

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Lithuanian Collector
Coins

HOPE



Light after darkness



Anchor in an ancient Roman house in Delos
(Charles Walker Collection, Alamy Limited)

Is it true that the darkest hour comes just before the dawn? Since ancient times, people have suffered through a lot: floods and droughts, volcano eruptions, hurricanes and typhoons, locust plagues and earthquakes, not to mention the evil that human beings can deliberately inflict upon one another. In recorded history, there have been around 14,400 wars with an estimated death toll of 3.5 billion, which makes it roughly 1 in 13 people on a global scale.

Indeed, even recent events are indicative of that. Almost 150 million lives were lost just in the 20th-century wars – by bullets, bayonets, tanks or due to exhaustion and epidemics. The dreadful horrors also included the Holocaust and the Holodomor, the Khmer Rouge and Pol Pot, the Rwandan genocide and the Kosovo war, which had left the country in ruins. Still, we continued searching for shelter, bringing children into this world and dreaming of a brighter future, just to start all over again when all this turned to dust. How many times have people become victims of their close ones due to religion, beliefs, their skin colour or social status? It takes only one signature on a fateful agreement to literally wipe the entire nation off the map or leave several generations with deep mental scars. And even in peacetime, we can never know what the future holds. We cannot be sure that we or our loved ones will not become victims of a fatal accident, deadly disease or pandemic that will rob us all of our plans and precious time with friends and family.

So what could counteract the overwhelming darkness? What gave strength to sailors lost in the middle of the ocean, or to explorers stubbornly heading north and ignoring unbearable conditions? How did their families endure the unknown while waiting for them at home? It was all hope – the most humble of the three theological virtues for it hides itself in this life, as claimed by Pope Francis. However, hope is not an illusion. It is a

virtue that never disappoints if nurtured. Hope is one of the most important aspects of the Christian civilisation, a gift that helps us survive when everything seems lost. In Christian iconography, the symbol of hope is an anchor – it provides stability, a safe haven and calmness in a stormy sea. Of course, it can and should be looked at as a metaphor. The most miserable people of all are those who rest their hopes on lifeless things (Wisdom 13). Hope may be invisible, yet it is exactly what helped Job through all the difficulties and gave people strength to survive in concentration camps or partisan dugouts. Hope empowers us to stay on our lifelong path. But what is its visible form?

Hope manifests itself through our actions and selfless deeds. In every catastrophe,



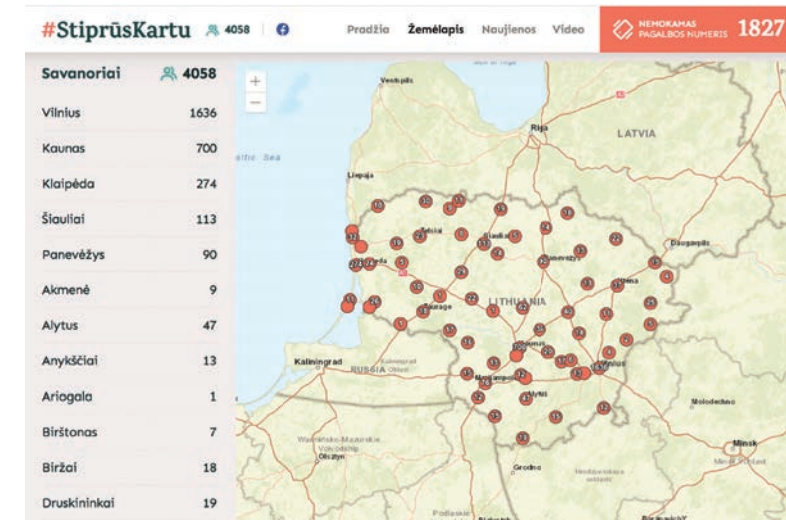
Postcard "Love, Faith, Hope", Kaunas (1921),
from the Local History Museum of Utena



Medal of the Righteous Among the Nations with an inscription from the Talmud: "Whoever saves one life saves the world entire", from Šiauliai Aušros Museum (designed by Nathan Karp)

there are people dying and those taking advantage of that. But there are also people who help those in trouble. Take, for example, the Righteous Among the Nations, as Chiune Sugihara, who risked their own and their families' lives, or Doctors Without Borders – people who leave their safe homes to go where they are most needed and give hope to others. Some may see a donor's card as a symbol of hope to live. It is that same metaphorical anchor that holds the life of someone's child or a loved one.

Finally, let's take a closer look around. The year 2020 will long be remembered as the time when an unpredicted pandemic changed our lives beyond recognition. How easily open spaces became closed, how quickly each passer-by turned into a threat. But while there is invisible danger lurking in the air and some of us are staying safe in our fortresses, others turn these unfortunate circumstances into an opportunity to



Stiprūs kartu
(Strong Together)
volunteer website
during pandemic

discover hidden skills and powers. People are uniting to make protective shields, take care of their neighbours, sew face masks and hand out them – *these are* all acts of kindness. When shared, it gives hope to the weaker. This can be illustrated by the Strong Together initiative started by the Owl Squad of the Lithuanian Riflemen's Union, which was later joined by Lithuanian scouts and other organisations that came together to create a volunteer network, sending sympathy and help even to the farthest corners of the country. Many people work hard every day without recognition to make the lives of others a little easier. And this is how hope, the one that shines a light through the darkness, spreads. When the entire country was gripped with fear, watching the number of deaths climb all over the world, some were already planning what they could do to keep hope alive. They were spreading the virus of hope. Life-changing decisions are usually made when one is at the point of no return. The world has been given many warnings but never took them seriously. Could this become the year when humankind stops ignoring the signs and



Homemade face shields for medical staff
by Adomas and Dovilis Paliukai (personal archives)

starts paying attention to expert advice? Could the ray of light that is now illuminating the SOS sign also light our path towards a brighter future? Maybe this is the time we understand that we are already at the tipping point?

Post tenebras spero lucem – after darkness, I hope for light.

Light always finds its way when everything seems lost.

Jurgita Ludavičienė

Light at
Montanagade 27,
Aarhus, Denmark
19 August
Charcoal, paper
(2019)
by Marija
Marcelionytė Paliukė