

FULLY ALIVE

A Bishop Velychkovsky Martyr's Shrine Publication

PILGRIMAGE TO UKRAINE

FIRST PILGRIMAGE

This past summer we fulfilled one of our dreams: to conduct a pilgrimage in Ukraine to places where Blessed Martyr Vasyl Velychkovsky lived, worked and suffered – to pray at those sacred places and to ask for his intercession.

Sixteen pilgrims from across Canada joined Mary Jane Kalenchuk and myself on this historic journey. We began and ended our pilgrimage by celebrating the Divine Liturgy in the apartment in Lviv where Blessed Vasyl lived during the underground church. It was the first time a Liturgy was celebrated in this room since it was abandoned by the Redemptorists in 1991. Thanks to the efforts of Bishop Michael Hrynchyshyn, C.Ss.R., (who celebrated our closing Liturgy), and Fr. Michael Yakemetz, C.Ss.R. this room was again obtained for the Redemptorists and has now been recreated with some of the original furniture as it was in Blessed Vasyl's time. It has now become a museum/prayer room and is open to the public several times a week. It was a great priviledge for us knowing that this was a sacred place from which he ministered from 1955 to 1969, the place that was his chancery and cathedral, and the place of his second arrest,

In Lviv we also visited and prayed at the place of Blessed Vasyl's seminary (1920-24); the place of his novitiate in Holosko (1924-25); the place of his ordination in Zboisk (1925); a "Basilian underground monastery" that Blessed Vasyl had bought and where the sisters who knew him well still live there today. We prayed at the prison where he was kept from January 1969 to September 1969 and at the courthouse where his 1969 trial took place.



In Kovel we saw the place of the former Redemptorist monastery and church. Here we experienced the hospitality of the newly formed Ukrainian Catholic community where Blessed Vasyl ministered between 1928-35. We prayed at the great Marian Shrine of Zarvanetzia, a place where Blessed Vasyl went often both as a missionary and during the time of the underground church. In Ternopil we prayed before his mother's grave. We did the same in Yabloniv where his father is buried. We also prayed at the monastery in Ternopil where he was arrested by the Soviets on July 26, 1945. In Probiznia, we prayed before the altar of Mary, the same altar before which Blessed Vasyl was consecrated to her when he was just seven years old. We also dedicated ourselves to the Mother of God. In Shuparka, we prayed the Acathist Service in Blessed Vasyl's honour in the church where he received his First Holy Communion and celebrated his First Divine Liturgy on October 14, 1925. In IvanoFrankivsk, we celebrated a Moleben Service at the place of the former Redemptorist Monastery where Fr. Vasyl was a missionary and superior from 1935-41. Now, a new church is being

built on that sacred place. This church will honour Blessed Vasyl, for he was born in this city and worked here. In Kyiv we stood before the prison where Blessed Vasyl spent almost two years and where he was on death row. We prayed for all who were unjustly condemned and for the many Ukrainian Catholics, including bishops, who lost their lives in that prison.

Although our main focus was on Blessed Vasyl's life journey, the pilgrims also experienced

Ukraine and its people as we visited many historical and cultural sites. In sharing with the people we became aware of their struggles during the underground church and how this strengthened their faith. This living faith is still evident in their lives. Through this pilgrimage we came to know Blessed Vasyl in a more intimate way, came to love him more, and were inspired to dedicate ourselves to God in a deeper way.

Submitted by Fr. John Sianchuk, C.Ss.R.

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IN THE FOOTSTEPS OF BLESSED VASYL



L-R: Fr. Ivan Levytsky, C.Ss.R., Fr. Myhaylo Yakemetz, C.Ss.R., Bishop Michael Hrynchyshyn, C.Ss.R., Sr. Teofilia, OSBM, Fr. John Sianchuk, C.Ss.R. after celebrating the Divine Liturgy in Blessed Vasyl's apartment in Lviv



Praying a Moleben Service before an altar dedicated to Blessed Vasyl in the Redemptorist Monastery Church in Lviv.

I was one of 18 people who made a pilgrimage to Ukraine this summer. I am so glad I made this journey and I would like to share some of my observations.

Our journey was to visit the places that in some way were associated to Blessed Vasyl Velechkowsky; his birth place, his church of baptism, his apartment in Lviv etc. Besides the pilgrimage, it was also a sight seeing trip, a shopping trip and enjoyment of the hospitality of the Ukrainian people.

But probably, for me the highlight, was to celebrate Divine Liturgy twice in Blessed Vasyl's apartment - once with only the pilgrims in attendance and once with Bishop Michael Hrynchyshyn, Fr. John Sianchuk and Fr. Ivan Levytsky. This is where Blessed Vasyl heard confessions, prayed, celebrated Divine Liturgy; this is where he ordained priests in whispers, by candle light and also, where his friend, Blessed Nicholas Charnetsky died.

Henry Andrew Spilchuk, Saskatoon



Fr.John with Sr. Irena Korduba, OSBM, a close collaborator with Blessed Vasyl during the underground church in Ternopil.



Blessed Vasyl celebrated many Liturgies in this home which he purchased for the Basilian Sisters.



Our visit with parishioners and their young performers in Kovel where Blessed Vasyl served from 1928 - 35.



The entrance to Blessed Vasyl's apartment in Lviv near the Halychskiy bazaar.

My Journey with Blessed Martyr Vasyl,

In Guido Reni's painting, described as, "an apostle in profile intent on writing to the dictation of an angel", St.Matthew has his eyes fixed on the angel's face. As I reflected upon the meaning of the icon of Blessed Vasyl, I was prompted to ask: "What do you see, Blessed Vasyl?" He seemed to reply, "Come and see!"

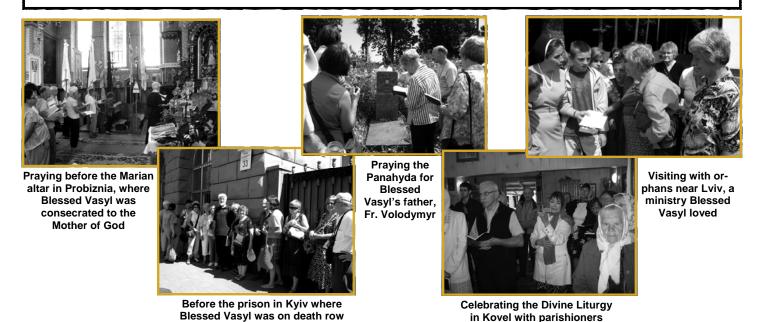
On July 14, eighteen pilgrims journeyed to Ukraine for 19 days to follow in the footsteps of Blessed Vasyl. Our Pilgrimage began in Lviv with Divine Liturgy in a small two room apartment where Blessed Vasyl lived from 1955 to 1969. From this humble dwelling, he fearlessly led the Ukrainian Catholic underground church. We traveled to Kovel, Ternopil, Ivano-Frankivsk, Kamianetz Podilsk and to many villages. In each place we visited, where Blessed Vasyl had lived and worked, his story was narrated by Fr. John with such compassion, vividness and enthusiasm that one could feel the Blessed Martyr's presence. The Basilian Sisters shared joyfully about Blessed Vasyl's life. Oh how they love him!

Seventy years of one man's life squeezed into a short time frame..definitely an intense experience! However, traveling through the mountains and along roads lined with Carpathian walnut trees, enjoying a peaceful evening at the shrine in Zarvanytsia, gave me time to reflect upon this energetic, daring and holy man who bravely stood his ground when confronted by the enemy, constantly praying to Mother Mary for courage, strength and protection.

Amid all the accounts of Blessed Vasyl's life -his joys, his preaching, his imprisonment and torture, the most touching moment for me was to stand before the alter of the Mother of God in Probizhnia where he was dedicated to her at the age of seven.

This pilgrimage has been a blessing and a treasure for which I will always be grateful.

Dobr. Joan Korchinski, Toronto



The pilgrimage to Ukraine this summer was, for me, a trip of a lifetime. We traced the footsteps of the Blessed Martyr Bishop Vasyl and visited places where other martyrs had lived in Ukraine.

The people in western Ukraine, welcomed us warmly and said they were happy we had remembered our roots. We sang Moleben and Akafist to the Blessed Martyrs in several chapels. We recited prayers at gravesites, in front of prisons and in front of monuments dedicated to the martyrs. Father John celebrated Divine Liturgy in the apartment where Blessed Vasyl had lived and celebrated liturgy in secret during the communist occupation of Ukraine. This was a special moment.

People told amazing stories about the hardships endured by the faithful. To go to confession you might need to go for a walk in the park with the priest. Ordinations and the other sacraments were all done in secret

In Nadvirna, we visited a museum. Pictures of tortured people were hung on the walls of the basement which once served as a prison. These images are etched in my memory forever. Suffering children, women and men gave their lives for their faith.

Through this pilgrimage I came to know how precious our faith is.

Please, God grant me the graces to always keep the faith

Patricia Sirski, Winnipeg

CELEBRATING THE FEAST DAY – JUNE 27TH

Feastday Sermon

by Rev. Deacon Stefan Tyrawski June 27, 2008

Rejoice, O Bishop and Martyr Vasyl, glorious Champion for Christ!

The twentieth century is known as a century of martyrs. Millions of people gave up their lives for Christ. In the Soviet Union under the atheistic regime many Christians, especially Ukrainian Catholics laid down their lives rather than deny Jesus Christ and His Church. They all shared their martyrdom there mostly during and after the Second World War. Honouring this sacrifice, on June 27, 2001



Deacon Stefan Tyrawski offering the relics for veneration

Pope John Paul II beatified a number of martyrs for the Ukrainian Catholic Church. Among the martyrs was Bishop Nicholas Charnetsky with twenty-seven Companions. Among the Companions were Bishop Nykyta Budka and the Redemptorist, Bishop Vasyl Velychkovsky.

Blessed Vasyl was consecrated to the Mother of God at the

young age of 7. Throughout his life he referred to this event as pivotal, since he always sensed himself under the protection of her loving care. After becoming a Redemptorist, he promoted devotion to our Mother of Perpetual Help. The Rosary for him was a pillar of strength throughout his life, but especially during his imprisonment in Ukraine. In between imprisonments, he became instrumental in organizing the underground church in Ukraine.

Jesus said: "No one has greater love than this, to lay down one's life for one's friends." (Jn 15: 13). Every witness of faith lives this "greater love" and, after the example of the Divine Teacher, is ready to sacrifice his life for God's Kingdom. In this way we become friends of Christ; thus, we are conformed to him, accepting the extreme sacrifice without limiting the gift of love and service of faith.

In the spring of 1945 the Soviets sought to arrest him, but he eluded them by going from village to village giving missions. Finally on June 26, 1945, the Soviets came to the monastery in Ternopil and arrested him. He was given a chance to deny his faith, leave the Catholic Church and serve as a Russian Orthodox priest. He quickly re-

sponded without any hesitation with the simple but clear words "No Never." Even though he was offered freedom and perhaps a good life if he would accept their proposal, he responded with another heroic statement "you



The rosary was lesd by various parishes and groups.

can shoot me and kill me but you will not get any other answer out of me." With this statement Bishop Vasyl was ready to die for Christ and showing us how strong his faith was. He was ready to accept this extreme sacrifice full of love for Christ and provide the true service of faith.

After two years of interrogations and tortures in the KGB prison in Kiev, he was finally sentenced to die by firing squad. He was on death row for three months. While in the cell with others on death row, he catechized them and prepared them through the sacraments for their coming death. When his name was called, he left the cell ready to die for Christ, but at that moment, his death sentence was commuted to ten years in Soviet labour camps. In 1969, he was arrested again and underwent chemical, physical and mental torture.

In the acafist to Blessed Vasyl we pray: "Pursued by the enemy again you were arrested. The ungodly sought to destroy you, to silence your voice and to scatter the sheep. The Cross of Christ was now placed on your shoulders and under its heavy weight you fell to the ground: your body broken, your mind destroyed, your emotions shattered but your love of God and your faith in Him remained on a solid rock."

What beautiful and encouraging words of prayer are they, stating his act of sacrifice and courage, but also giving us an invitation and support to be faithful until our death?

On January 27, 1972 the second term of imprisonment was over. This time Bishop Velychkovsky was not allowed to return to Lviv; instead, he was sent to Yugoslavia for "recreation." He used this opportunity to visit his sister in Zagreb and then Bishop Vasyl departed for Rome, where he visited Cardinal Joseph Slipyj. He also had a private conversation with Pope Paul VI. Shortly afterwards, following the invitation of Metropolitan Maxim Hermaniuk, Bishop Vasyl visited Canada.

Unfortunately, his visit of the Ukrainian Diaspora in Canada did not last for long. On 30 June 1973 Bishop Vasyl Velychkovsky died at the age of 70 having served as a

bishop for 10 years. Although his heart became silent in his body, but it continues to sound in our souls saying the words from the Book of Revelations: "Do not be afraid of anything that you are going to suffer. Indeed, the devil will throw some of you into prison that you may be tested, and you will face an ordeal for ten days. Remain faithful until death, and I will give you the crown of life." (Rev. 2, 10).

In another place of the Acafist we also pray: Kondak 12 "Having completed the journey of life and succumbing to tortures you received for the sake of Christ, you breathe your last, commending your spirit into the hands of the Lord. You fell asleep in the Lord and your mortal body was placed on Canadian soil where it remains with us, and so we raise our voices and sing Alleluia!" When this beatification was taking place, each Blessed was a beautiful flower, part of a large multi-coloured bouquet of love and life, which was presented to God on behalf of our Ukrainian Catholic Church by Pope John Paul II and also they became those beautiful stars that shine in the darkness showing us the way to our salvation based on their own life examples which we hope to follow and when time comes to receive that heavenly reward from our Lord Jesus Christ.

As we are celebrating this happy occasion, the 7th anniversary of beatification of Blessed Bishop Nicholas Charnetsky together with 27 Companions among whom were Blessed Bishop Nykyta Budka – our first Ukrainian



Evening Procession with the holy relics of Blessed Vasyl

Catholic bishop of Canada and also Blessed Bishop Vasyl Velychkovsky our first Ukrainian Catholic bishop whose mortal remains that were buried in Winnipeg at All Saints Cemetery and now his holy relics (a fully intact body) are enshrined here at St. Joseph's Ukrainian Catholic Church, where we can pray to him asking for his intercessions on our behalf.

Since the opening of the Martyr's Shrine, there have been many blessings and favours that have been received through his intercession. Some have received physical cures, such as cancer, ability to walk, etc.; others received relief of their pain and suffering before their death.

Blessed Bishop Vasyl you are: The Lily and Star of the Ukrainians. Also you are the great example of faith for us Ukrainian Canadians and for all people of the whole world to follow and live all the days of our life.



Pilgrims being anointed after the evening procession.

Blessed Bishop Vasyl pray for us. Amen.

NEW PRAYER GROUP FORMED

We are pleased to announce that at the Nativity of the Blessed Virgin Mary Ukrainian Catholic Church in Brandon, Manitoba, a "Bishop Velychkovsky Prayer Group - Brandon Chapter" has been formed. Blessed by Metro-

politan Lawrence Huculak of the Winnipeg Archeparchy, they meet monthly for prayer and follow a set of statutes that help them live out their spirituality.





Members of the Bishop Velychkovsky Prayer Group visiting and praying at the Shrine in Winnipeg

Visit their website at: www.stmarysukrbrandon.com.

PILGRIMS AT THE SHRINE



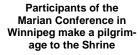
On route to the Eucharistic Congress in Quebec, pilgrims from Western | Canada stop to pray at the Shrine.



Minnesota visit the museum and shrine.



ment Home in St. Boniface visit the Shrine.





Visitors from Texas come to the museum and shrine



The staff from St. Gerard's Catholic School in Winnipeg make their year opening retreat at the Bishop Velychkovsky Martyr's Shrine



OUR SUMMER STUDENT

Kseniya Kavats is a student at the University of Manitoba. She is completing her masters in Slavic Studies and hopes to teach Ukrainian literature and languages. Kseniya was hired this summer to continue transcribing audio and visual interviews that were brought back from Ukraine. Kseniya emigrated to Canada in 2002 with her family. Her knowledge of the Ukrainian language as well as Russian and Polish is a great benefit to the work that she is accomplishing in the Shrine. She thoroughly enjoys her work and has learned a great deal about the life of Blessed Vasyl and his faith. Kseniya is contemplating in doing her thesis on our Blessed Martyr's life and the underground church in Ukraine. She will continue to work at the Shrine throughout the school year.

THANK YOU!!!

Your generous donations make it possible to conduct the ministry of the Shrine and promote the knowledge of Blessed Vasyl throughout the world. Thank you. We are grateful to those who have named the Shrine as a beneficiary in memory of their loved ones. May Blessed Vasyl bless each one of you. Contributions listed below are from June 1st until August 31st 2008.

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+ Ann Kolodi

500+

Elsie A. Tymchak

100 +

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TESTIMONY OF GRACES RECEIVED

My name is Shirley. I visited the shrine of Blessed Vasyl last fall. Shortly before X-mas 2007 my son's wife left him. He had to sell their house as she wanted half of everything. They have three children which he has and cares for most of the time. He had no problem selling the house. He had to buy something smaller and cheaper because he does not make much money. Every house he bid on, someone would bid higher. Kelly was very depressed and broken hearted as he loved his wife dearly. He started to drink heavily as he said he had to get the picture of his wife with another man out of his mind. I prayed to Blessed Vasyl and other saints, but I felt and believed that Blessed Vasyl was holding Kelly in his arms. His eyes (in the picture) seem



so tender and loving. I put Kelly totally in his hands. Soon Kelly stopped drinking so much and seemed to be standing on his feet, but he did not have a house to live in. He needs to be out of his house by Apr. 1. On Mar.11th he finally got a house. I feel that Blessed Vasyl answered my prayer and took care of my son.

Winnipeg, Manitoba

NEW VOLUNTEERS are always needed to welcome pilgrims to the Shrine/Museum. Please contact the Shrine Administrater at 204-338-7321 or e-mail: byshrine@mts.net.

Call in Prayer Requests

For a special intention or prayer request you may phone or email us. Your prayer request will be placed in the Shrine and remembered in prayer every Wednesday evening after the service in honour of Blessed Vasyl.

SHRINE SCHEDULE

Monday:Shrine is closedTuesday to Friday:10 am to 5 pmSaturday:10:00 am to 1:00 pmSunday:opened until 1:00 pm

Shrine is open to the faithful during the times of Liturgical Services. The Museum is opened on weekends after each Divine Liturgy.

Group tours are available.
For pilgrimage group tours call for reservations
204-338-7321 or e-mail: bvshrine@mts.net

EVERY WEDNESDAY EVENING - 7:00 pm
Liturgical Service to Blessed Vasyl
(Acafist or Moleben) followed
by an anointing with Holy Oil blessed by his relics.

Prayer to Blessed Martyr Bishop Vasyl

O Lord God, You are praised by the whole world for the marvelous works in your saints. I thank you for the grace you gave to **Blessed Martyr Vasyl Velychkovsky** to be a faithful witness to You unto the point of death. Through his intercession I ask for the following favour _____ for your Name is glorified forever. Amen.

Please inform the Shrine of any favors received:
Bishop Velychkovsky Martyr's Shrine
250 Jefferson Avenue
Winnipeg, MB R2V 0M6
Canada

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