

# **FULLY ALIVE**

*A Bishop Velychkovsky Martyr's Shrine Publication*

## **EVANGELICAL WITNESS FROM UKRAINE**

### **CHRISTMAS EVE 1958**

This past summer while interviewing people who knew Blessed Vasyl personally, we heard an interesting story about a Christmas Eve in 1958 in Ternopil, Ukraine. Blessed Vasyl had been able to purchase a house in that city for the Basilian Sisters so that they could live in community. The communist government was always keeping a watchful eye on this house, suspecting that it was in fact a monastery. At that time religious monasteries were illegal and one could be arrested if one was found to be practicing a monastic life. They were hoping to arrest the sisters and the priest who came to that house. The following is from an interview with Sister Iryna Korduba OSBM who was present that evening. She describes her personal experience of that Christmas Eve.

"They (the KGB) came exactly on Christmas Eve. Were you there? (to another sister) Remember there were twelve of us sisters. We were all in the house in that old building. That was our custom. While we were in that old house they spied on us as they wished. So once they came upon us on Christmas Eve. There were twelve sisters at home. This sister and I were present. Also some lay people, including Michalynka. They (KGB) came to us late in the evening.

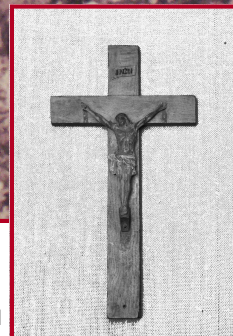
**"We will not let you leave from here. Open up or you will be in great trouble."**

And it's Christmas Eve. We are seated at the table and they come. They begin to bang on the doors and begin shouting at us to let them in. Who will let them in?! We close the



The house in Ternopil where the sisters were protected from the KGB. (L to R) Sr. Iryna Korduba, Sr. Emilia (Anna - Blessed Vasyl's mother), Sr. Maria (the superior), Blessed Vasyl.

The Cross used by Blessed Vasyl



lights and sit quietly. Some hide in the attic. We wait. They knock and knock and try to break in. Around midnight they say from the outside. "We will not let you leave from here. Open up or you will be in great trouble." No one dares to move. Michalynka was bold. She went to the door and bolted it. They said: "See, they are yet bolting the door. We will not let you leave. We will stay here until morning if we have too." Of course Fr. Vasyl Velychkovsky was there. His mother was one of our sisters. So he told us to do nothing but pray. We prayed and prayed. Then at three in the morning Fr. Vasyl went to the door with a cross in his hands and made a sign of the cross over the door. Immediately the KGB left. Then at four in the morning we celebrated the Christmas Divine Liturgy. We were so afraid to celebrate the Liturgy under such circumstances, but Fr. Vasyl insisted upon it. It is the prayer that saved us. Then after the Liturgy he asked us to

slowly leave the house one by one and go back to our homes. No one was caught. Of course Fr. Vasyl stayed since it was Christmas and his mother was living at that house."

The cross used by Blessed Vasyl to ward off evil and protect the monastery is in the Shrine Museum. Sister Josepha OSBM donated it to us last year. We are very grateful for this precious second class relic.

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## WORDS OF A MARTYR

This past year, through Divine Providence, we were able to obtain some reel to reel audio recordings of **sermons by Blessed Vasyl**. An underground priest 'secretly' recorded a priests' retreat that Blessed Vasyl conducted in 1965 in the town of Rudno (near Lviv) in a Basilian nun's house. These tapes were secretly kept and listened to often. Fortunately they were never found and confiscated by the Soviet authorities. Although this priest had past away just a few months before our arrival in Ukraine, we learned about the recordings from our interviews. With some difficulty, we were able to track them down and obtain a copy. Hopefully, in the not too distant future, these sermons will be published in English and Ukrainian. The following is a small portion of one of the sermons given by Blessed Vasyl. Although it is for priests, the lesson applies to all.

*Rejoice in the Lord, and again I say rejoice." Do not be downcast or sad, for holiness demands that God's servant should not be sad or downcast. One is unfortunate who allows sadness to enter the heart. A true servant of God must be full of joy, because he is over-filled with happiness. If a priest is downcast, it is difficult to see in him the spirit of God. The spirit of a true priest is one who has*

*the spirit of Christ, of truth, of happiness, a spirit filled with peace, silence, sweetness, and the most intimate love of God. For love gives us happiness and peace.*

*Therefore St. Paul says: "Rejoice in the Lord, and again I say Rejoice. The Lord is near. Do not worry about anything." Be indifferent to the whole world. For the earthly goods that God gives us, rejoice and be glad. But always rejoice in the Lord and for the Lord. The joy of the Lord will fill you and be with you forever. Then our sacrifice for God will be filled with joy and happiness. Then it will be known that it is with love that we bring this sacrifice to God and not as slaves.*

*That is what Jesus our God asks of us, and the apostle repeats it. We have to repeat it through the witness of our lives to Christian souls."*



**Blessed Vasyl giving a retreat in an underground monastery.**

## SHRINE PILGRIMS



**Gospa Bus Tour from Saskatchewan**



**World Wide Marriage Encounter Council from around the world**



**Pilgrims from Sts. Peter & Paul's in Saskatoon**



**Youth Group from Notre Dame Parish in Lorette, MB**



**Redemptorist General Consultors from Rome**



**Catechism classes from Selkirk, MB**



# THANK YOU!!!

*Your generous donations make it possible for us to conduct our ministry at the Shrine and to promote the knowledge of Blessed Vasyl throughout the world. Thank you to all the contributors to the Bishop Velychkovsky Martyr's Shrine. May Blessed Vasyl bless each one of you.*

*Contributions listed below are from September 1st until November 30th, 2005*

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In memory of daughter Sharon  
*Alice Hood*  
In memory of Shirley Kaupar  
*Stan Kalupar*  
Slovak Redemptorist Fathers  
In memory of father Steve Starosta  
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Ukrainian Canadian Foundation of  
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*Alice Carter*  
Danny & Gloria Szun  
Steve & Phyllis Trach  
Helene Yuzwa

## <100

In memory of parents Philip & Nettie Kereliuk  
& Joseph & Kathereen Happychuk  
*Gene & Elizabeth Happychuk*  
In memory of Helen Nechwediuk  
*William J. Karlicki*  
In memory of Alexson family  
*Redemptorists, Concord, NC*  
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Gerald & Alexis Antymis  
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In memory of Steve & Julia Kozak  
*Lorraine Samborsky*  
In memory of Anne Krosney  
*Anna Banera*  
In honour of our 55<sup>th</sup> Wedding Anniversary  
*Michael & Mildred Kucher*  
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Michael & Mary Lepki  
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*Dennis & Steffie Wawrykow*  
*Marianne Wawrykow & Chris Kowal*  
*Donna & Antonio Spanu*  
In memory of Preyma & Predon families  
*Nick & Julie Preyma*  
Walter & Pauline Prystai  
In memory of Nykola Romaniuk  
*Harvey & Gloria Winn*  
In memory of husband Michael  
*Jean Roshko*  
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Barbara Slobodzan  
Iris Smellie  
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*Jenny Swydneyck*  
UCWL of Holy Family Parish  
B. Walus  
Evelyn Wasylshen  
Walter & Nettie Yakimovich  
Robert & Margaret Young  
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## TESTIMONY FROM KOVEL

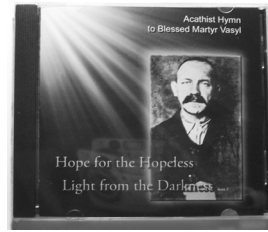
*"I thank you very much for the 1st Class Relics of Blessed Vasyl. Again he walks down the streets of Kovel through my footsteps and he travels to his village Kolodiazhne with me. Blessed Vasyl really helps me to preach. From the time that you came to Kovel and gave me the relics, I carry them with myself and have begun to preach in a new way. I do not know where I find the powerful words, the logical arguments, but the sermons just flow. I attribute this to be a miracle from Blessed Vasyl."*

Father Evhen Zadorodny, C.Ss.R., Kovel, Ukraine.



Fr. Evhen preaching in Kovel

**Please notify the Shrine of any graces received through the intercession of Blessed Vasyl.**



Thank you to Stan Kalupar for a donation of \$1500 (in memory of his beloved wife Shirley) towards the production of a new Acathist CD entitled **"Hope for the Hopeless, Light in the Darkness"** which is available in the shrine/museum gift shop.

### SHRINE PASTORAL MINISTRY

Shrine volunteers will be visiting the sick in hospitals upon request, taking with them the 1st Class Relics of Blessed Vasyl. They will pray with the patient for Blessed Vasyl's intercession. If you or your loved ones wish to have the shrine volunteers visit, please contact the Shrine office at 338-7321.

The Bishop Velychkovsky Martyr's Shrine acknowledges the **Ukrainian Canadian Foundation of Taras Shevchenko** for a grant of \$2,000 given towards the ongoing enhancement of the museum, in particular to conserve and exhibit artifacts and original writings of Blessed Vasyl.

### 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 closed  
**Tuesday to Friday:** 10 am to 5 pm  
**Saturday:** 10:00 am to 1:00 pm  
**Sunday:** 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](mailto:bvshrine@mts.net)

**EVERY WEDNESDAY EVENING 7:00 pm**  
**Liturgical Service to Blessed Vasyl**  
 (Acathist 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:  
 Fr. Provincial  
 250 Jefferson Avenue  
 Winnipeg, MB R2V 0M6  
 Canada

*Wishing all of our supporters and their families  
 a blessed Christmas and a peaceful and healthy New Year.*

**Bishop Velychkovsky Martyr's Shrine**  
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