



# FULLY ALIVE

*A Bishop Velychkovsky Martyr's Shrine Publication*

## IN HIS HONOR

### New Church to honor Blessed Vasyl Velychkovsky

The Redemptorists first came to Stanislaviv (now Ivano-Frankivsk), Ukraine in 1920 and worked in the parish of St. Joseph's. In a few years they built a monastery on Gogol Street (now Chornovolya Street) close to the downtown area and near the university. This monastery had a large chapel, that served not only as the Redemptorist community chapel but also as a mission church. It soon became a centre of missionary activity and a very popular place where people came to be spiritually fed through dynamic sermons and through confessions. On the monastery grounds there was a grotto dedicated to our Mother of Perpetual Help. Thousands would gather at this grotto during feast days. Blessed Vasyl Velychkovsky was assigned to Stanislaviv, from 1926-28 and 1935-41. In his second term he was named



Site of the former Redemptorist monastery in Stanislaviv where a temporary trailer was converted to a make-shift church.

the superior of the monastery.

Blessed Vasyl led a very active ministry from this monastery. It became the base from which he gave numerous

missions every year. He worked with the university students, with young women who came to work in the city, and with the poor and abandoned. He endeared himself to the people and is fondly remembered in that city to this day, almost seventy years later. The monastery chapel was too small for the needs of all the people that came daily for the Eucharist and Confession. Plans were being made to construct a new church. Blessed Vasyl bought the lumber and the materials for this new construction. The architectural plans were made. He only had to wait to obtain a permit from the Polish government. Western Ukraine was under Poland between the two World Wars. The Polish government stalled and refused to give him permission. World War II broke out and when the war finished, Stanislaviv was under the Soviet Union. The monastery was closed and dismantled. Some of the Redemptorists were arrested, while the others were disbanded. The property and all the building materials were confiscated. On a portion of the land, a women's hospital was built.

After the fall of the Soviet Union and when Ukraine became independent in 1991, the Redemptorists attempted to reclaim this land from the government. Because of the hospital, the city government would not allow it. Instead, the Redemptorists were given land on the outskirts of the city where they built a large church and monastery. The people who lived in the area of the old monastery and others who remembered the former Redemptorist monastery began to insist that the land near the hospital **was and is holy land** and should have a church built on its premises. The Eparchial Ukrainian Catholic Bishop, Bishop Sofron Mudrij interceded and in 1997 the city government gave them permission to build a church on this land. Because of a lack of funds, they began to gather for services in an old portable trailer. This

lasted for several years. When the trailer could not accommodate all the people, a nearby old one room school house became the parish church. From the very beginning, the people were very much aware that Blessed Vasyl was born in Stanislaviv, that he served here and had been proclaimed as a Blessed Martyr.

Funds were very limited and it was difficult for the Eparchy to build this new church. The old trailer had been converted into a museum in honor of Blessed Vasyl. People had hidden artifacts from the old Redemptorist monastery chapel in their attics during the Soviet occupation. Now they brought these artifacts to the museum. The Ukrainian



New church being built in Ivano Frankivsk in honor of Blessed Vasyl Velychkovsky.

mafia and other business men were very interested in this property, because of its prime location. One evening, the mafia came and set fire to the trailer. Although the trailer was destroyed, miraculously

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**Fr. Michael Krotkiv, the pastor and builder of the new church in Ivano Frankivsk, along with Fr. John Sianchuk.**

most of the artifacts survived the fire as if protected by some invisible force.

With the help of some donors from America, the construction of a new church began. Blessed Vasyl's project was finally realized. Shortly after the initial beginning, a new pastor was assigned, who had connections from German financiers. The church construction progressed quickly. Building this church was essential, because with a church on this property, no one else would be able to claim this piece of real estate for themselves.

The new Church will be dedicated to the Nativity of the Blessed Virgin Mary, since that was the original intention of Blessed Vasyl. An altar and a museum will be dedicated in

our martyr's honor.

It is with great joy to know that this historic Redemptorist land, where our holy martyrs worked and prayed (Blessed Nicholas Charnetsky, Blessed Zenon Kowalyk, Blessed Ivan Ziatyk and our Blessed Vasyl Velychkovsky) will now be a place where people can again come and pray. Blessed Vasyl will be honored in this new church. His holy relics will be enshrined and venerated in this place.

This church is now in its final stages of construction. It will be officially blessed and consecrated on its feast day, September 21, 2010.

## TESTIMONY FROM UKRAINE

This testimony from Ukraine was passed on to us by a priest who is doing research on the underground church.

"In 1953, Ihor Andriyovych Oleshchuk, as an enemy of the nation, was exiled to Siberia to Vorkuta and was placed into the "remote laager camp". He was working at the coalmine # 9-10. Among the five thousand prisoners, there were priests. Ihor Andriyovych does not remember them. One could not keep a diary, for paper was forbidden for the prisoners. Every day when they were taken to work and when they returned, they had to undress and were checked for various items. Also, once or twice a week they would have a search in the barracks. It was prohibited to have anything. However, Ihor Andriyovych did remember one priest who was etched into his memory for the rest of life. That was Bishop Vasyl Velychkovsky. Everyone knew him in the camp. Bishop Velychkovsky was not only a priest for the prisoners, but also he was as a "walking encyclope-

dia" for no one had knowledge of general interest like he had. Prisoners would turn to him with different religious, political, and historical questions. He gave explanations and



**Coal mines and prison barracks in Vorkuta.**

elaborations about various Ukrainian writers, historians and religious figures. Prisoners had great respect for Bishop Velychkovsky. On the other hand, the guards and wardens treated him harshly, for they considered him to be very dangerous. Before the great feast days, he was locked up and isolated somewhere, so that he would not be able to celebrate Divine Liturgies. However, se-

cretly he would confess the prisoners. Because of his high stature and authority, Bishop Velychkovsky had an easier work detail. He did not work in the coalmine shaft extracting coal. The coalmine had two tunnels, an upper and lower one. Bishop Velychkovsky was the "gate-keeper". When an electric coal car would come and give the signal, he would open the door by pulling a rope. Also he looked after the alarm lamps that indicated the level of methane gas in the coalmine. When the lamps went out, he would exchange them with new ones that were kept in reserve. After the death of Stalin, in 1955 the process to grant amnesty began. The first amnesty was given to the young, those under 18 years old. Ihor Oleshchuk returned to Ternopil and did not see Bishop Velychkovsky again."

Ihor Oleshchuk was interviewed in Ternopil by Andriy Kosiak  
Date: 12. 07. 02  
Translated by Kseniya Kavats

## VELYCHKOVSKY PILGRIMAGE TO UKRAINE 2010

**July 5 to July 27, 2010**

Visit the cities and villages where Blessed Martyr Vasyl lived, worked and suffered . Some of the places we will be visiting are: Lviv, Ternopil, Ivano-Frankivsk, Kovel, Kamianetz Podilsk, Kyiv, the Carpathian Mountains, Zarvanytsia, Pochaiv, etc. On this pilgrimage we will have prayer services and hear stories of Blessed Vasyl's life as well as sight-seeing throughout Ukraine. **Cost is \$3950 CDN** which includes: flights from Winnipeg to Kyiv and back, bus travel in Ukraine, accommodations, meals and attractions. Travel/medical insurance not included. For more information contact by e-mail: [bvshrine@mts.net](mailto:bvshrine@mts.net) or phone 204-338-7321. **Book as soon as possible** as space is limited to 16 pilgrims.

# THANK YOU!!!

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

Contributions listed below are from September 1st until November 15th, 2009

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The estate of Katherine Dankewich  
In memory of Edna & Joseph Kondra  
*Kondra Family*  
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## In Honor of

Chrundy children & grandchildren  
*Paul & Waltraud Chrundy*  
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Please consider Bishop Velychkovsky Martyr's Shrine when planning your estate. This will help to secure the future of this ministry. Thank you.



# SHRINE PHOTOS



Visitors from the Ukrainian Catholic University in Lviv along with Fr. Michael Kwiatkowski and Shrine employee Kseniya Kravats



Annual Shrine Volunteer Appreciation evening - volunteers enjoy a reception, after an informative program about the Shrine 2009 summer project in Ukraine.



Bishop Volodymyr Koubetch, OSBM of Brazil absorbed in viewing of Blessed Vasyl's underground Episcopal staff

## 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**  
**(Acatist 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  
 Tel: 204-338-7321 or e-mail: [bvshrine@mts.net](mailto:bvshrine@mts.net)

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

**Bishop Velychkovsky Martyr's Shrine**  
 250 Jefferson Avenue Winnipeg, Manitoba Canada R2V 0M6  
 Tel: 204-338-7321 Fax: 204-339-1062 Email: [bvshrine@mts.net](mailto:bvshrine@mts.net) Website: [www.bvmartyrshrine.com](http://www.bvmartyrshrine.com)