



FULLY ALIVE

A Bishop Velychkovsky Martyr's Shrine Publication

BLESSED VASYL HONoured IN LVIV

THE WAY OF THE CROSS

On April 3, 2016, I had the privilege of walking through the streets of Lviv with *Blessed Vasyl Velychkovsky*, carrying his holy relics, as we celebrated a Way of the Cross. It was Holy Cross Sunday, the 3rd Sunday of Lent according to the Julian Calendar. This Way of the Cross was attended by more than 50,000 people, who walked, sang and prayed this service.



Fr. John carrying the 1st Cass Relics of Blessed Vasyl during the Way of the Cross in Lviv

This particular Way of the Cross was poetically composed by Sister Thaddea, a Redemptorist Sister, who for each Station wove together the Passion of Christ, the life of Blessed Vasyl and the contemporary situation in Ukraine. It was a very moving, emotional, unforgettable and profound experience as this vast crowd prayed together for peace and stability in their country of Ukraine.

The procession was led by Sisters carrying a large wreath of thorns, followed by scores of altar servers, seminarians, nuns and priests. Then processed the Gospel book, the relics of Blessed Vasyl, a large icon with his image, the readers, a small birch cross, the bishops, followed by a large heavy wooden cross. For each Station various people carried the birch cross, according to the theme of each Station. The Knights of Columbus, the military, the police force, fire-fighters and various social organizations took turns carrying the large cross, interchang-



Sr. Thaddea, Redemptorist, composer of this Way of the Cross

ing for every Station. The military, police force and young soldiers kept order so that this procession would not be trampled by the crowd. The Basilian seminarians sang appropriate hymns between each Station and for all the responses. The walk, which was over three kilometres, started from St. Michael's Studite Church to the Cathedral of St. George's and took three and a half hours to complete.



For each Station, Sister Thaddea chose particular events from Blessed Vasyl's life and related them to the Passion of Christ and to today's life. The reflections were very deep, poetically beautiful and challenging. In most of the Stations, Sister chose themes that were quite original. When we celebrate the Way of the Cross, we reflect on the sufferings of Jesus. What was unique about this service was that these sufferings found concrete incarnation in the life of Blessed Vasyl. The Passion of Christ was seen in the very events of Blessed Vasyl's life. I would like to summarize some of these themes.

In reflecting upon Jesus accepting and carrying the Cross, we see Blessed Vasyl accepting to carry the leadership of the persecuted Church when he was consecrated a bishop by Metropolitan Josyf Slypiy in a Moscow Hotel room. We are warned that if we accept responsibilities of leadership, we must know that with them we embrace the Cross and must carry it.

When Jesus meets his Mother, who could only silently suffer with her Son, we

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reflect upon Blessed Vasyl's mother, who felt powerless, except when she was before Mary. She gave Blessed Vasyl a rosary to remind

him that he is a child of Mary. The rosary was his strength throughout his whole life filled with sufferings and trials. Today mothers of Ukraine also sacrifice their sons as they go to battle. One such mother, who lost her son in the war which still continues in Ukraine, carried the birch cross in this procession.

In reflecting upon Jesus encountering the crying women, what was emphasized was the fact that Jesus stopped his journey when he saw those tears. Human suffering also caused Blessed Vasyl to stop and reach out, for example, when he cared for the orphans in Ternopil during the war. We are challenged to be compassionate and merciful to the needs of others.

As Jesus was stripped of his garments, we reflected on how easily people strip others of their dignity.

They become just numbers and disposable. Blessed Vasyl knew his own dignity and even in prison gave others their



dignity. We are called to always treat our neighbor with dignity. The hammer blows, nailing Jesus to the Cross, announced to the world the price God was paying for our salvation. Blessed Vasyl's tortures which he received during his 2nd imprisonment was the price he paid for his faith. Can we persevere in our vocation no matter what price we may have to pay?

In reflecting on the death of Jesus, Sr. Thaddea chose the phrase "he died outside the city," emphasizing Jesus' loneliness and feeling of abandonment. Blessed Vasyl had deep roots in Ukraine with its people and its Church. Towards the end of his life, he is exiled to Can-



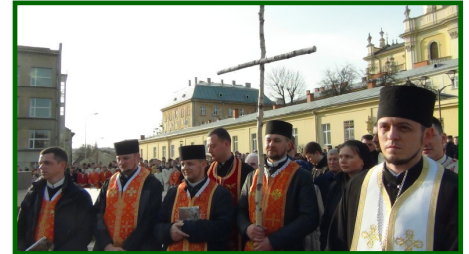
ada and dies outside his country. When reflecting on the burial of Jesus, Sister relates Jesus' body to a most pre-

cious seed that will rise in three days and fill the whole universe. All those who throughout the centuries gave their lives for freedom, for their faith, for justice, are the seeds that were planted in the soil of Ukraine. We can

either trample upon them forgetting their sacrifice or we can nurture those seeds by living lives worthy of our faith.

In reflecting about the Resurrection, the sermon of Bishop Michael Hrynchyshyn at Blessed Vasyl's funeral was quoted as saying that the very presence of Blessed Vasyl was a sign of the power of the Resurrection of Christ. That Christ has won the victory and has overcome evil and darkness.

Each Station had a profound impact on the people. Many shed tears as they prayed for those in battle on the frontlines of war in Eastern Ukraine; for those who have sacrificed their lives; for those who are abused, rejected, discarded; and for those who have nurtured our faith. The birch cross that was carried was



Fr. Yaroslav Feduniv holding the birch cross from Eastern Ukraine

brought from the battle field by Fr. Yaroslav Feduniv. In September 2014, he together with another priest, being army chaplains, planted this cross in one of the military camps. That night the camp was shelled by the enemy and completely destroyed. Only this birch cross stood unharmed. It became a symbol of the powerful presence of God in the midst of this conflict. The cross was carried in this service as a sign that God will overcome all evil. He is the Resurrection.

In 2015, when Blessed Vasyl was proclaimed Patron of Prison Ministry by Patriarch Sviatoslav in



Zarvanytsia before some 200,000 faithful, I commented that Blessed Vasyl had now returned to Ukraine. Until then, he was relatively unknown. With this glorious Way of the Cross, I can now say that Blessed Vasyl has returned to Lviv, his home during the time of the catacomb Church. The people of Lviv heard his name and were inspired by the events of his life which so closely

imitated the Passion of our Lord Jesus Christ.

This Way of the Cross which was so beautifully written in Ukrainian will soon be translated into English. Also a DVD of this Way of the Cross will be available on our web-site.

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

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 March 1st 2016 until May 15th, 2016.

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In memory of Steve and Katie Kyba
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Visit our website:
www.bvmartyrshrine.com

COME & CELEBRATE THE FEAST DAY of Bishop & Martyr BLESSED VASYL VELYCHKOVSKY

**MONDAY
JUNE 27, 2016**

Guest Homilist:
Fr. Mark Gnutel



DAY PROGRAM

9:00 Divine Liturgy
10:00 Rosary
10:30 Moleben to
Blessed Vasyl
with anointing

Lunch available

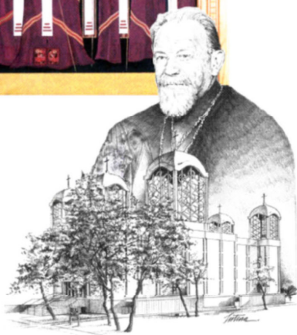
1:00 Presentation
2:00 Acafist Hymn
in honor of Blessed
Bishop and Martyr
Vasyl Velychkovsky,
C.Ss.R.

EVENING PROGRAM

7:00 Divine Liturgy
Pilgrimage Procession
Veneration of Relics
Anointing for Healing

LOCATION:

**ST JOSEPH'S UKRAINIAN CATHOLIC CHURCH
BISHOP VELYCHKOVSKY MARTYR'S SHRINE**
250 Jefferson Avenue, Winnipeg, MB
for more information call: 338-7321



EWTN

Watch for the airing
of "Steadfast and
Faithful: a Martyr's
Journey" on the life
of Blessed Vasyl
which is usually
aired on June 30.

**Visit our
Online Gift Shop
for our latest
gift shop items.**

www.bvmartyrshrine.com

SHRINE SCHEDULE

Monday: Shrine is closed
Tuesday to Friday: 10 am to 5 pm
Saturday: 10:00 am to 1:00 pm
Sunday: Open until 1:00 pm

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

Group tours are available.
For pilgrimage group tours call for reservations
204-338-7321 or e-mail: info@bvmartyrshrine.com
Website: www.bvmartyrshrine.com

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 to:
Bishop Velychkovsky Martyr's Shrine
250 Jefferson Avenue
Winnipeg, MB R2V 0M6
Canada
or E-mail: info@bvmartyrshrine.com