



# FULLY ALIVE

A Bishop Velychkovsky Martyr's Shrine Publication

## SURETY IN THE CROSS OF CHRIST

### UNDER ATTACK

On March 5, 1953 Joseph Stalin died. Although the Soviet system was still intact, a certain era of terror had ended. In the various prisons and laager camps throughout the Soviet Union, prisoners began to riot, demanding to have their rights restored. These protests often precipitated a violent response from the prison guards. Blessed Vasyl was blamed for causing the riot in his laager camp in Vorkuta. He was transferred to a prison of the strictest regime in Vladimir (near Moscow). Although this was a maximum security prison, he had access to a library. In this prison, he formulated a **letter** of protest to the Supreme Soviet in Moscow, attesting to his innocence and wrongful conviction. This **letter** reveals Blessed Vasyl's faithfulness to his beliefs and convictions. It shows his commitment to Christ and the Catholic Church even in the face of torture, persecution and death.

The following is an excerpt from this letter of protest written on July 7, 1954 which was found in the **KGB archives**:

**"I protest the illegal, unjust and false accusations that were the foundation of the "Sentence" given by the Kyivan Court in 1946, namely:**

1. It is untrue that I was discovered to belong to a Catholic Order of Redemptorists. Rather in 1924, I became a member of a Ukrainian Catholic Congregation of priests of the Most Holy Redeemer (in Latin it is called the Redemptorist Congregation). But is this a crime in the U.S.S.R.? I don't know.
2. It is untrue, that as a missionary in Kovel in Volyn from 1927-1935, I converted the Orthodox to Catholicism

and systematically preached against communism (after integrations no witnesses of this could be found), but it is true that I worked there with the migrants from Halychyna.



Blessed Vasyl on death row August 1946

3. It is untrue that I wrote a "Marian Calendar" in Stanislaviv in 1941 with anti-soviet content, but it is true that while I was the Superior, a church confraternity published this booklet with only one anti-soviet word. Since I was unable to remember who in fact wrote that work and was in poor physical state (being beaten and starved for six months), I admitted to be the one responsible and took the blame upon myself.
4. It is untrue that in 1941, I preached a sermon with anti-soviet content. But what is true is that my sermons were of a purely spiritual nature with no political themes. This can be proven by a whole sack of my sermons that were confiscated by the NKVD. The parishioners of Stanislaviv and Ternopil where I lived during the Soviet occupa-

tion until my arrest can attest to this.

5. On the basis of these accusations, I received the highest sentence, that of death by firing squad. This was illegal, for according to Statute #54 10/11 of the Ukrainian Soviet Code, there is no such punishment.

After two months of waiting on death row, my sentence was changed to 10 years of imprisonment. Then after more waiting, I was moved not to a prison, but to the laager camps in Vorkuta.

**I will now prove the actual reason for the interrogations, trial and commuting of sentence. These are the facts:**

1. In 1944 during the time of the "Movement to Unite the Greek Catholic Church with Russian Orthodoxy", the NKVD in Ternopil were forcing me to join this movement, but I refused.
2. On August 3, 1945 after the NKVD searched my room and confiscated all my writings, they took me to the Mayor of Ternopil. He informed me that if I signed allegiance to the Patriarch of Moscow, then I would immediately be sent home (they lacked the necessary material to arrest me), but if not, I would immediately be put under the authority of the NKVD.
3. After I was kept in the internal prison of the NKVD for two weeks, orders for my arrest (which were back-

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## Graces and Blessings

dated) were given. Although I was often abused, after two months of interrogations, not one case document was written for lack of material. Here too I refused their propositions that I deny my religious convictions.

4. It was only after I arrived at the prison in Kyiv that a formal interrogation began, which was based on my biography. There, for six months I was starved and morally abused.

5. After the interrogations in Kyiv, I was called out to the head of the prison. I was asked whether I had considered joining the Moscow Patriarchate. If not, then my trial would not go well and even worse than I can imagine. I answered that I would not deviate from the dictates of my conscience.

6. The same was asked of me after I was sentenced, while I was on death row, and again when I was in the laagers. Thus, this is the main reason for my arrest and imprisonment.

7. This declaration will have no effect upon me, since my prison term is almost over. I make this protest to show the injustice of the former regime (that under Stalin) and to affirm the truth."

July 7, 1954

*Dear Friend: I had come across Blessed Vasyl's website when I was so sick. I was unable to keep food down for a long time and had lost a lot of weight. I had been to the doctor countless times to no avail. It just kept getting worst. I was in tears asking Blessed Vasyl to pray for me and the next week I got better. Several friends that week told me to go to see a nurse practitioner, which I did and she knew right away what was wrong. My diabetic medication was the source of all my weight loss. It was changed and I am eating fine and keeping my food down. I know it was through the intercession of this saintly man that the solution was found because I had been going for months to no avail and I thank him. Now I am praying for the healing of legs so that I can walk right again. I know Blessed Vasyl is praying for me and I have such confidence in him. Thank you Elizabeth*



## 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 November 16th, 2009 until January 31st, 2010.*

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*Vladimir & Marlene Solman*  
James Zaboroski  
*Orest & Margaret Fedorchuk*

# SHRINE VISITORS



A large group of participants attending the Catholic Christian Outreach National Conference held in Winnipeg visit and pray at the Shrine.



The Boy's Club from Welcome Home, an inner city Redemptorist outreach in Winnipeg, make a pilgrimage to the Shrine.

## Shrine Volunteers are still needed

If you can spare 2 hours a week taking pilgrims on a spiritual journey through the Museum and Shrine, please contact the Shrine office at 338-7321. This is a beautiful way to share with others promoting the Martyr's Shrine! What a blessing it is to be in the presence of the Holy Relics of Blessed Martyr Bishop Vasy! Velychkovsky!

## 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 Vasy!

## 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

The 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 Vasy!**  
**(Acatlist or Moleben) followed by an anointing with Holy Oil blessed by his relics.**

## Prayer to Blessed Martyr Bishop Vasy!

*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 Vasy! 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:  
 Shrine Administrator  
 250 Jefferson Avenue  
 Winnipeg, MB R2V 0M6  
 Canada

## Bishop Velychkovsky Martyr's Shrine

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