



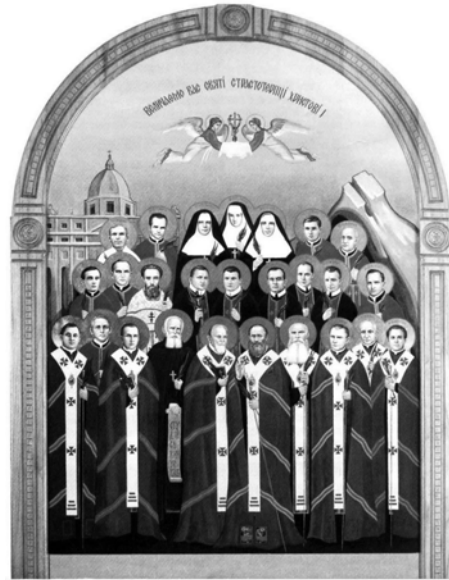
FULLY ALIVE

A Bishop Velychkovsky Martyr's Shrine Publication

CHURCH OF THE MARTYRS

Ten years ago, Ukraine was preparing for the pastoral visit of the Servant of God Pope John Paul II. The Pope asked the Ukrainian Greek Catholic Church to present him a list of their martyrs so that he could beatify them. Because of the religious persecution by the Soviets and their liquidation of the church, the Ukrainian Greek Catholic Church had many martyrs, even thousands of martyrs: bishops, priests, religious, lay men and women. In the short time allotted from the time of this announcement to the time of the Pope's visitation, the church was able to obtain only the necessary documentation for 25 of these martyrs: 8 bishops, 7 religious priests, 6 eparchial priests, 3 religious nuns and a layman. Of those who were chosen, one of them stood out, because of his popular opinion of sanctity by the many thousands of faithful who regularly visited his grave and sought his intercession: namely Bishop Nicholas Charnetsky. The pope named this group of martyrs as **Nicholas Charnetsky and 24 Companion-Martyrs**. Among these "companions" is our Blessed Bishop and Martyr Vasyly Velychkovsky.

As we begin to celebrate the 10th Anniversary of this event, it would be fitting to briefly mention their names. All these martyrs won their martyr's crown under the persecution of the Soviet regime. The first of them was a Studite priest **Leonid** Feodorov, ordained a Greek Catholic and became the Exarch of the Russian Greek Catholic Church in 1917. He was duly arrested and died in prison in 1935. During the first Soviet occupation (1939-41) in late June of 1941, Father **Nicholas** Kondrad and his cantor **Volodymyr** Pryima were shot in the forest by the NKVD as they were on



Nicholas Charnetsky and 24 Companion-Martyrs with Blessed Priest-Martyr Emilian Kouch

their way to visit a sick woman with the sacraments. Fr **Andrew** Ishchak, refusing to leave his parishioners and hide with others, was dragged from his parish, shot and stabbed to death. Fr. **Severian** Baranyk, a Basilian, was arrested in Drohobych. When the prison was opened by the Germans, his black bloated body was found with a cross carved into his chest. Another Basilian, Fr. **Joachim** Senkivskyi, also from Drohobych was boiled alive in prison. A Redemptorist, Fr. **Zenon** Kovalyk was found crucified to the prison wall on Zamarstynivska Street in Lviv. Since all of the above happened in late June 1941, and many on June 27th, the Pope declared this day (June 27th) as the feast day of **Nicholas Charnetsky and 24 Companion-Martyrs**. During the second occupation of the Soviets in 1944, the first martyr was a young 25 year old Sister Servant, Sr. **Tarsykiia** Matskiv,

who was shot for simply being a nun.

In 1945, in their effort to liquidate the Ukrainian Greek Catholic Church, **all** the bishops were arrested. In December 1945, Bishop **Gregory** Khomyshyn died a martyr for his faith in the infirmary of a Kyiv prison. Bishop **Josaphat** Kotsylowski, died in 1947 in a concentration camp near Kyiv. Bishop **Nykyta** Budka, the first Ukrainian Catholic Bishop of Canada, died in 1949 in a labour camp in Karaganda, Kazakhstan. His corpse was devoured by wolves. Bishop **Gregory** Lakota died in 1950 in exile after harsh labour conditions near Vorkuta, in far northern Russia. The abbot of the Studite monastery, Archimandrite **Clement** Sheptytsky died in 1951 in a harsh prison in Vladimir, Russia. Another Basilian, Fr. **Vitalis** Bairak, also from Drohobych, died in 1946 after a severe beating in prison. A young priest, Fr. **Roman** Lysko, after refusing to deny his Catholic faith, was arrested and was sealed alive in a Lviv prison wall. He could be heard singing the psalms at the top of his voice. Fr. **Nicholas** Tshelskyi, separated from his wife and children (who were also arrested) and after enduring extremely horrid conditions in the prison camps died a martyr in 1951. A Redemptorist, Fr. **Ivan** Ziatyk was clubbed severely in prison camps on Good Friday and died shortly after in 1952. Two Sisters of St. Joseph's, Sr.

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Olympia Bida and Sr. **Lavrentia** Herasymiv, both died as martyrs after enduring very inhuman living conditions in Siberia in 1952. Msgr. **Peter** Verhun, after years of imprisonment and labour camps, died a martyr's death in the Krasnoyarsk territory in Siberia in 1957.

Many arrested priests returned from their first prison sentence and began working in the underground church. Because the Ukrainian Greek Catholic Church was now an illegal body, one could be arrested simply for exercising one's faith. Fr. **Oleksii** Zarytskyi was arrested again in 1957 and sent to Karaganda where he met his martyr's death in 1963. Bishop **Nicholas** Charnetsky returned from prison in 1956, a terminally man. He spent his remaining years in prayer, guiding the underground church. As a result of his poor health, he died a martyr in 1959. Bishop **Simeon** Lukach was rearrested in 1962. After severe interrogations, he became critically ill and died a martyr in 1964. Bishop **Ivan** Sleziuk was also arrested again in 1962. In 1973, he was called in for an "interrogation" where he was placed in isolation and exposed to radiation for two hours. He died two weeks later a martyr's death in 1973. Finally, our Bishop **Vasyl** Velychkovsky, who was subjected to chemi-

cal, electrical and physical torture during his last imprisonment from 1968 to 1972, died in Winnipeg in 1973. He joined this bouquet of Ukrainian Catholic Martyrs.

At the same time, Pope John Paul II beatified separately Fr. **Emilian** Kouch, who died a martyr in 1944 in a German concentration camp in Majdanek, for helping the Jewish people escape persecution. Also beatified was Bishop **Theodore** Romzha of Transcarpathia. He was poisoned in a hospital as he was recovering from a KGB intentional accident. He died in 1947.

May their sacrifice for Christ, encourage us to live a life wholly given to God.

O Holy Blessed Martyrs of the Ukrainian Greek Catholic Church pray for us!

P.S.

Pope John Paul II will himself be beatified by the Church on May 1, 2011. His beatification will be shown live on EWTN.

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, 2010 until February 28, 2011.

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Michael & Zenya Werezak

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In memory of Mary, William, Michael &
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Henry & Sophie Sych
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In thanksgiving for graces received

Adeline Dudar & family
Adeline Dudar

**With the special donation
of \$25,000 from the
Werezak family, we have
opened a special fund for
the canonization process
of Blessed Vasyl.**

SHRINE VISITORS



Students from the International School of English in Winnipeg. These students were from Ukraine, Brazil, Senegal (Africa), Dominican Republic, Korea, and Cameroon(Africa)



Lilis Family from Omaha, Nebraska, came to the Shrine to pray for the physical healing of their 2 yr. old son Julian.

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

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
 250 Jefferson Avenue Winnipeg, Manitoba Canada R2V 0M6
 Tel: 204-338-7321 Fax: 204 -338-7321 Email: bvshrine@mts.net Website:www.bvmartyrshrine.com