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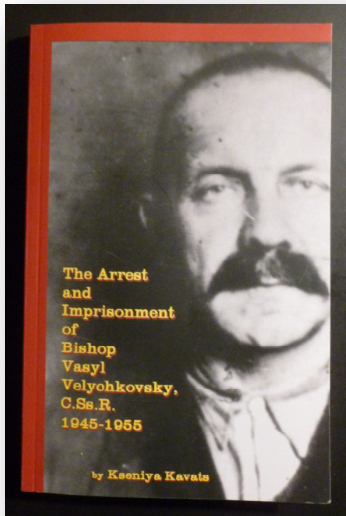
A Bishop Velychkovsky Martyr's Shrine Publication

SUFFERING SERVANT

Blessed Vasyl's 1st Arrest Examined

We are pleased to announce the publication of a new book on Blessed Vasyl Velychkovsky. This book, written by Kseniya Kavats, who worked for the Shrine for a number of years, is her Master's thesis. It is about Blessed Vasyl's 1st arrest, interrogations, trial and imprisonment. This book's foreword is an introduction for you and we encourage you to obtain a copy of this book from our gift shop (www.bvmartyrshrine.com).

"As this foreword is being written, Ukraine is again in crisis. Foreign powers, in particular, the Russian Federation is again on the borders of Ukraine waiting for the moment when it can enter and "save" its brother. Nearly seventy years ago, a similar scenario took place at the end of WWII. At the end of the war, the Soviet Union occupied all of Ukraine and joined it to the Union of Soviet Socialist Republic. A period of oppression and suppression began for the Ukrainian Greek Catholic Church. Because of its ties to the West, the Vatican and the Diaspora, it became an internal threat to the Soviet system. There was no room for western influence or any ecclesial unity with the Vatican. By 1946, the Ukrainian Greek Catholic Church was dissolved in Ukraine through the Pseudo-Synod of Lviv. Its clergy (those who weren't arrested) joined the state-controlled Russian Orthodox Church. All the hierarchy and over 1,700 priests of the Ukrainian Greek Catholic Church were arrested and imprisoned. The present danger to Ukraine, to some degree, threatens the existence or at least the free practice of the Ukrainian Greek Catholic Church.



"This thesis on the first arrest, interrogations, trial, and imprisonment of Blessed Vasyl Velychkovsky is very timely. The methods used in 1945 to extract information from him have been witnessed by the world in recent months, shown through social media, of the events on the "Euromaidan". Not much has changed. The struggle be-

tween good and evil, truth and lies, justice and corruption, freedom and enslavement continues in Ukraine. After twenty years of formally leaving the Soviet Union as that Republic unraveled, Ukraine has not been able to cleanse itself of corruption in politics, in the courts, in the security forces and in the business community.

"Euromaidan" made it clear that the true struggle of the human soul is for justice, freedom, and peace - to recover the true God-given dignity of each human being. Blessed Vasyl's struggle was very similar. He struggled to remain faithful to his beliefs in Christ and in His Church. He choose not to compromise his convictions. For this he was tortured, convicted and imprisoned.

"Blessed Vasyl Velychkovsky's story is important, not because it was unique, but because of his future role in the life of the Underground Ukrainian Greek Catholic Church. Blessed Vasyl was a Redemptorist priest when he was arrested August 7, 1945. After spending ten years in the Soviet prisons and laager camps, he returned to Lviv, Ukraine and began to organize the faithful into an active Underground Church. He was not deterred by the fear of further imprisonment. He courageously continued to work clandestinely in organizing and ministering to the spiritual needs of the faithful. In 1963, he was secretly consecrated a bishop in a Moscow Hotel room by Metropolitan Josyf Slipyj. As a bishop, he was then able to consecrate others, so that when he would be



Kseniya Kavats, author of "The Arrest and Imprisonment of Bishop Vasyl Velychkovsky, C.Ss.R., 1945-1955"

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arrested again, the underground church life would continue. So it happened. When Blessed Vasyl was arrested again January 27, 1969, he was sentenced to three years of imprisonment and then exiled from the country in 1972. Bishop Volodymyr Sterniuk, who was consecrated by Blessed Vasyl, assumed the leadership of the Underground Church for the next twenty years until it again became a legal entity.

"This thesis written by Kseniya Kavats is important, because it is based on the documentation of Blessed Vasyl's case as found in the KGB archives. In 2009, Kseniya was able to obtain permission from the SBU to make copies of the two volumes of documentation that the KGB had compiled concerning the first arrest of Blessed Vasyl. Through these documents, Kseniya has been able to unravel the details of his case. She was able to determine the circumstances of his arrest. Through her analysis of the eleven interrogations, she was able to show the inhumane methods used by the Soviets to extract information, or more accurately, a false confession of crimes that one never committed. The details of the trial revealed how much it was a "show trial" - simply to go through the motions of a trial for the conviction was already sealed. Through her work, we now see more clearly the circumstances of his imprisonment and the injustice of the Soviet system.

"This thesis offers us a window into the penal Soviet system. Since the main source was the KGB archived documents, we enter into the mind of the Soviets. We see the case as they saw it. But as one looks closer at all the documents, one becomes aware that there is a hidden level. Small details reveal the truth of the inhumane treatment that Blessed Vasyl received. Her analysis of the KGB documents is augmented by eye-witness accounts of other prisoners as they described their treatment in their autobiographies.

"It pleases me to present this thesis to you the reader. Since Blessed Vasyl was beatified by the Pope, St. John Paul II, this is the first academic work accomplished on his life. As the director of the Bishop Velychkovsky Martyr's Shrine, I welcome this thesis and contribution, not only to the academic world, but also to all those seeking to come to know our Blessed Martyr - his steadfastness, his sufferings, his unshakeable faith and his courage in the face of great danger and tribulation. Blessed Vasyl's long-suffering in that corrupt and unjust system is being echoed today by those in Ukraine who today are willing to lay down their lives for truth and justice."

Foreword written May 15, 2014
by Fr. John Sianchuk, C.Ss.R.
Shrine Director

GRACES AND BLESSINGS

This letter was received from a prisoner in Ukraine. What is important to note is that this prisoner knew Blessed Vasyl as a Patron of Prisoners nearly two years prior to the announcement made by the Ukrainian Catholic Patriarch on September 2013.

Glory be to Jesus Christ!

Good day and peace to you, dear people of God! My name is Mykola. I am 35 years old. I am from Vinnytsia, Ukraine, where I lived and worked. I am currently in prison. It is eleven years already that I am serving a sentence for a crime which in fact I did not commit. I want to tell you how I got inspired to study the Scriptures, which I never saw or read before.

Three years ago, I had a very strange dream in which I saw an old man, a grandfather. He was dressed in a black robe with a large cross on his chest. It is not the first time I had this dream. In the beginning, he looked at me grimly and angrily, but then he smiled and told me not to be afraid of him. He told me that he wanted to help me save my soul from hell. I asked him why he wanted to do this for me and he replied, that I will have some special mission and I will save a great number of souls. He also said that his name is Vasyl Vsevolod Velychkovsky and that he is the Patron Saint of Prisoners. I also remember that he said that the only true church is the Greek-Catholic Church. This is not the first time it happened to me. However, I asked him how I can save a great number of souls if I cannot do anything? He replied that this is God's holy will. This is not the first time it happened to me. I did not think much of it. I even forgot about these dreams. It was a dream but it seemed like reality.

Two weeks ago, accidentally I got my hands on a holy card of this old man who came to me in my dreams. I recognized him at once. On the back of the holy card, there is a prayer to him. I put the card away and continued doing everyday things, but the voice of this old man did not leave me alone. I could not sleep for almost two weeks. I tossed and turned in my sleep and in my head I could hear him say "you will heal troubled souls". I am sure that this was the voice of this old man. He told me to pray and to write you a letter.

I don't have a habit of writing letters and did not write already for a long time but by writing this letter I got so much courage which I did not have before. What made an impact on me was that after saying the prayer, my pain diminished and almost went away. I was sick. I had cystitis (bladder inflammation), prostatitis (inflammation of the prostate) and pancreatitis (inflammation of the pancreas). I had such pain that I wanted to climb the walls, but after saying the prayer everything changed.

*With respect,
Mykola*

MINISTRY CONTINUES IN UKRAINE

In our last newsletter (December 2014), we shared about our ministry in Ukraine. Oleh and Tania continue to promote Blessed Vasyl through presentations. Besides numerous engagements in Western Ukraine, they have travelled to the eastern parts of Ukraine, in particular to Odessa. Although Odessa has not seen any fighting in recent months, during the Euromaidan event, there were uprisings in this sea port city. In this city, they found a deep hunger among the people to know Blessed Vasyl and to have the opportunity to venerate devotedly the 1st class relics. They also had presentations in the capital city of Kyiv, at the Patriarchal Sobor of the Resurrection and at the Basilian church. We ask you for your prayers and support so that Oleh and Tania can continue this good work.



The Incarnate Word Community in the village of Krykhyvtsi near Ivano-Frankivsk



Patron of Prison Ministry Icon with relics which is in the Sobor of the Resurrection in Kyiv



Oleh being anointed in the Sobor in Kyiv after the presentation



Tania making a presentation in St. Andrew's Cathedral in Odessa



Pastor of St. Andrew's Cathedral in Odessa receiving an icon of Blessed Vasyl



Parish of St. Elias in the village of Ilichsk near Odessa



Children from Kokhavyna near Stryi after a presentation about Blessed Vasyl



Parishioners from the village of Rosdilne near Odessa venerating the relics and the icon



A Bandura performance in the church of Bl. Charnetsky in Lviv during a presentation on Bl. Vasyl



Fr. Volosyanko, a friend and confrere of Bl. Vasyl, being anointed in Kokhavyna

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 December 1, 2014 until February 28, 2015.

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Shrine Ministry in Winnipeg



Fr. Mark Semehen from Rome examining documents in the museum from Cardinal Josyf Slypij



Kevin & Marie Stuyt from Waterloo, ON



Mrs. Phyllis Kwiatkowski with her two grandsons from Edmonton



Catholic ARISE Group from Winnipeg



Sunil Nadarajun and family from Tampa, FL

Canon Luhovy Assembly #374 from Winnipeg view a presentation on the proclamation of Bl. Vasyl as Patron of Prison Ministry



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Monday: 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: info@bvmartyrshrine.com

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.

Bishop Velychkovsky Martyr's Shrine
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