



FULLY ALIVE

A Bishop Velychkovsky Martyr's Shrine Publication

LIFE REVEALING MEMORIES

With only a photograph of Blessed Vasyl, his mother and two other unknown individuals, we departed in July for Ukraine to continue our research on Blessed Vasyl Velychkovsky's life. This photograph led us to many more people, especially nuns, who worked with Blessed Vasyl, who knew him and loved him.

We met an individual by the name of *Volodymyra* who met Blessed Vasyl in 1928, shortly after he became a priest. She spoke of his shy disposition. She met him again in 1934 during a mission (the missionaries lived in their home). She now spoke of Blessed Vasyl as a young powerful missionary who was able to inspire the faithful with his sermons.

In Ternopil we met an orphan *Iryna* whom Blessed Vasyl looked



An altar in a home where Blessed Vasyl celebrated the Divine Liturgy

after during the Second World War between 1943-45. She spoke of how he would take her by the hand as they walked the streets, protecting her from harm and being a father to her. He continued to care for her and visited her after he came back from prison.

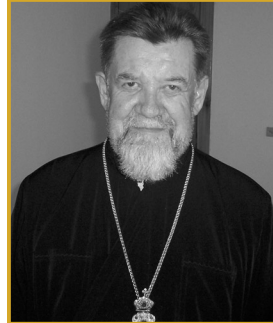
We met *Sr. Irena Korduba* OSBM (one of those unknown indi-

viduals from the photograph) who worked very closely with Blessed Vasyl, especially from 1955 to 1959 in Ternopil. She helped Blessed Vasyl establish the Basilian sisters in that city. We heard of stories of divine protection that occurred through the prayers of Blessed Vasyl as the KGB tried to capture and arrest him and the sisters. Once Blessed Vasyl escaped from the clutches of the KGB by disguising himself as a woman.

We met a young woman, *Olha*, who as a little girl remembers being awed by his presence during the underground Divine Liturgies celebrated in her house. She recalled her favorite moments when Blessed Vasyl would take her on his knees and talk with her.

We also met *Sr. Anhelina* in Lviv, who was in contact with Blessed Vasyl daily from 1960 to 1969. Her spunky character and 4'6" height made her ideal to be a "runner". She would carry packages and messages from Blessed Vasyl to other priests and nuns. One day she was carrying the Bishop's books and vestments in a large sachet hidden under bundles of fresh parsley. She was taking these vestments to the place where he was to ordain some underground priests. A KGB officer she passed pitied her and helped her carry the large package. He did not know what he was carrying.

We spoke with *Bishop Julian Voronowski*, who was ordained to the priesthood by Blessed Vasyl in 1968. He claimed that Blessed Vasyl was the "motor" for the underground church. Blessed Vasyl organized the church and inspired the people and the clergy by his charismatic, courageous and faith-filled leadership. According to the



Bishop Voronowski

bishop, Blessed Vasyl was responsible for the existence of a **vibrant underground Ukrainian Catholic Church**.

We met *Sr. Justina*, who was present at his first underground retreat in Lviv in 1956. She herself became a Basilian sister. She had a talent for sewing and thus sewed many vestments for Blessed Vasyl.

Her small apartment became a storage place for a number of religious articles, holy pictures, vestments, relics, and even the staff that Blessed Vasyl received when he was consecrated a Bishop by Metropolitan Josyf Slipyj in a Moscow hotel. After Blessed Vasyl was released from his last imprisonment, she met him in Kyiv before he was exiled from Ukraine. She was the last person from among his friends to see him alive in Ukraine.

These are only a few of the people we met during this summer's research trip to Ukraine. We certainly felt God's hand at work and the intercession of Blessed Vasyl in finding these people and being able to hear their stories.

Besides these interesting interviews, we were able to obtain more second class relics of Blessed Vasyl (items which belonged to him or used by him). These articles will be displayed in our museum in the near future.

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TESTIMONY OF GRACES RECEIVED

I suffer from hypertonia and became deaf. I would walk and pray but nothing helped. I asked two doctors: what I could do and they said I need hearing aids. I could not afford them. I was so deaf that I could hear nothing. I would go to church, but I could not hear a word, neither when the priest spoke, neither the "Amen" nor "Lord, have mercy", or when a door was opening, nothing at all. Even when I walked on the street I could not hear a car approaching. I prayed and asked God, and I thought to myself – if God so wants to He will do. It was two and a half months already since I could not hear anything. The thought came to me that I should pray to Blessed Charnetsky, but then I thought, I knew Bishop Velychkovsky very well. I will ask him to intercede with God. I said "dear Father Vasyl, if it is God's will, ask God that I may hear, for it is very hard to live and not hear anything. Ask God that I may hear at least something." And I prayed a "Hail Mary" and a "Glory be". I was walking home but could hear nothing, but I prayed: what will be will be. Sister had to shout loudly into my ear so that I could hear.



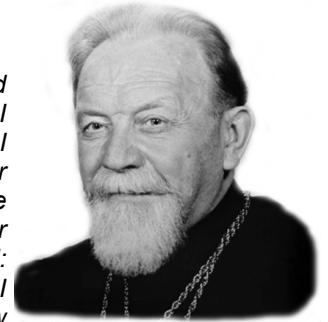
Sister Iryna

The next day, I went to church for Liturgy. I prayed again the intention to Blessed Velychkovsky. "Bishop, if you could ask God that I could regain my hearing, so that I could at least hear a bit of the word of God and the Divine Liturgy." I prayed the "Hail

Mary" and the "Glory Be" and went home. When I got home I continued to pray. Suddenly I heard some noise as if a door was opening. Then Sister came into the room and came to my ear and began shouting. I replied: "Why are you shouting to me? I hear you well." She said: "How can you hear me? What is it with you? Were you pretending all the time?" I said: "No, I don't know how but I hear you well." Then at eight o'clock there was a program from Vatican radio and I heard every word that was said. I thought that most likely it was prayer that helped me. The next day I went to church for the Divine Liturgy. I came late to church and when the church doors opened, I heard the Gospel being read. I stood at the entrance and didn't go any further. From the entrance I heard every word.

I am very thankful. Many times I pray to Blessed Velychkovsky and I thank him for the gift of healing. I believe that it was truly a miracle and that the grace came through Blessed Vasyl.

A Testimony from Sister Iryna Korduba OSBM
Ternopil, Ukraine



Please notify the Shrine of any graces received through the intercession of Blessed Vasyl.

RESTORING A TREASURE

In downtown Lviv, near the Halytsky Market, where one can buy beautiful flowers, is the apartment where Blessed Vasyl lived from 1955 to 1969. From the time of his release from his prison term in Vorkuta until the time of his final arrest, Blessed Vasyl made his apartment the center of church activity.

His apartment had two small rooms. The first was a kitchen and pantry. The second was his bedroom, his



Blessed Vasyl's apartment being restored with his furniture

office, a chapel (cathedral), library, and his chancery. He shared this room with a Redemptorist, Bro. Irene, C.Ss.R..

Here, early each morning he would quietly celebrate the Divine Liturgy in one corner of the room away from the window. In this room daily he would secretly meet priests and nuns and laity who would bring him requests for baptisms, marriages, liturgies, or for some holy objects such as crosses, holy cards, rosaries, etc. He would distribute what he could and fulfill whatever requests for apostolic work he could personally. Or he would assign this work to those priests who would come to him. He encouraged all to be courageous and not be afraid of arrest, for they were doing God's work. Witnesses told us that there would be up to twenty or more people coming each day.

In 1991 after Ukraine declared its independence, this apartment no longer belonged to the Redemptorists. A few years later, through the efforts of Bishop Michael Hrynchyshyn, C.Ss.R. and Fr. Michael Yakemetz, C.Ss.R., the apartment was bought back. We have now begun to restore it to its original state. This past summer we collected furniture used by Blessed Vasyl: his bed, a free standing closet, table and chairs, and the "altar". Many

of the original artifacts were found. Among the most precious was an icon of our Mother of Perpetual Help. This icon has several bullet holes in it – a



Notice the bullet hole above Jesus' head

testimony to the time of conflict and war. This icon hung in Blessed Vasyl's apartment. He fervently prayed before it. Now again it hangs on the wall of his apartment.

This museum/room will become a place of pilgrimage and prayer for the people of Ukraine and for pilgrims from abroad.

Our future plans are to organize pilgrimages from North America to his apartment and other sites in Ukraine where Blessed Vasyl lived and worked.

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. We are grateful to those who have named the Shrine as a beneficiary in memory of their loved ones. May Blessed Vasyl bless each one of you.

Contributions listed below are from May 1st until August 31st 2005.

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John & Marta Baluta
Leo & Oksana Baluta
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Slovak Redemptorist Fathers
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Fr. Josaphat and Joan Korchinski
- 100+**
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In memory of husband Michael
Jean Roshko
Anne Ross
Helen Schentag
Anne Shpak
Mike & Darlene Sidak
In memory of Catherine Sirski
Anne Banera
Lena Smaluck
H. Tomchuk
Deacon Jude von Mann
Peter Wozney
Irene Yarema
In memory of deceased family
Olga Yaskiw
William & Kathleen Zambrick
In memory of sister Mary
Ann Zulak
Ann Zulak

MISSION IN KOVEL

Blessed Vasyl spent eight years of his early priesthood in the northern province of Volyn, working in the city of Kovel. His work was mainly with the Orthodox faithful who reunited themselves with the Universal Catholic Church. After World War II the Redemptorists were forced to leave this mission. They have recently returned and have begun their apostolic work among the people of Kovel where Blessed Nicholas Charnetsky, Blessed Zenon Kowalyk, and Blessed Vasyl, once preached and worked. Visiting this newly formed Ukrainian Catholic Church was very precious.

After celebrating the Divine Liturgy in the small chapel (a new church is being built), the congregation approached to be anointed with holy oil blessed with the relics of Blessed Vasyl. As they were anointed, they heard a recording of the **words of Blessed Vasyl's sermons** which he preached in 1965. It was moving experience for all to once again hear the powerful preaching of Blessed Vasyl in Volyn.



The Gospel proclaimed in the little chapel in Kovel

My name is Sviatoslav (Slava) Bohdanovych Yurashchuk. I moved to Canada from the Transcarpathian mountains of western Ukraine over a decade ago. While in Canada my involvement in the Ukrainian community ranged from being a Plast member to teaching at the Ukrainian National Federation School of Dance to hosting the Ukrainian Program on CKJS AM Radio. I'm also a student of History at the University of Manitoba, and hope to continue my studies in order to fulfill my role as a conscientious Canadian-Ukrainian.



This past summer's work experience at the Blessed Vasyl Velychkovsky Martyr's Shrine was a tremendous experience in meeting new people and learning new things that I will cherish in fond memories for years to come. I only hope that I was able to return at least a fraction of the hospitality, warmth, and kindness that was offered to me by everyone involved. Thank you for an invaluable experience!

THANK YOU, SLAVA!

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

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:
Fr. Provincial
250 Jefferson Avenue
Winnipeg, MB R2V 0M6
Canada

Blessed Velychkovsky Martyr's Shrine
250 Jefferson Avenue Winnipeg, Manitoba Canada R2V 0M6
Tel: 204-338-7321 Fax: 204-339-1062 Email: bvshrine@mts.net
Website: www.bvmartyrshrine.com