

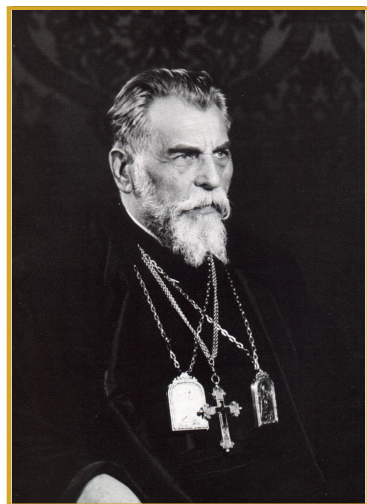
FULLY ALIVE

A Bishop Velychkovsky Martyr's Shrine Publication

TREASURES FROM UKRAINE

PASSING ON THE TORCH

In 1963 Metropolitan Josyf Slipyj, after spending 18 years in Soviet laager camps, was released so that he could attend the Second Vatican Council in Rome. While in Moscow he was allowed to meet with one family member. He sent telegrams to several of the priests in Ukraine. Only Blessed Vasyl Velychkovsky responded and arrived in



Metropolitan Josyf Slipyj who consecrated Blessed Vasyl to the episcopacy

Moscow on February 4th. Because the Metropolitan was about to be escorted to catch a train to Rome, he quickly and secretly ordained Blessed Vasyl in a Moscow hotel room. He wanted Blessed Vasyl to shepherd the underground Catholic Church, since all the Ukrainian bishops were either imprisoned or had already died. The ceremony took place in all simplicity, without any of the majesty and pageantry that would have normally accompanied such an event. After Blessed Vasyl was ordained, Metropolitan Josyf took his walking stick (a sim-

ple hand carved piece of wood) and gave it to Bishop Vasyl as a symbol of the authority that he would have to lead the church. This piece of wood would now be his crosier or bishop's staff.

I first heard of this staff in 2002 during a sermon that Fr. Andrij Chirovsky gave at St. Joseph's Church in Winnipeg. In 2004 while in Ukraine, Mary Jane Kalenchuk, our Shrine Administrator and I were researching Blessed Vasyl's life. We interviewed Sister Mykolaya, a Sister of Mercy, who was then Blessed Vasyl's cook. She recalled that he received a telegram to go to Moscow. He returned several days later with a staff in his hand. When I heard this, my heart began to beat rapidly, just to know that what Fr. Andrij mentioned in his sermon was true. Thus began the quest to find this sacred staff.

We had interviewed over 40 people in the following two years. We asked everyone whether or not they had any knowledge of this staff. No one knew about it and no one ever saw such a staff anywhere. We thought that perhaps Blessed Vasyl gave it to Bishop Sterniuk when he secretly ordained him to the episcopacy, but that too brought no results. Finally, the following events of God's Providence occurred.

It was the last week of our stay in Ukraine in 2005. We were to leave early Friday morning. We had been working very hard and there was still so much to do, so many more people to interview. We were also preparing the apartment in Lviv where Blessed Vasyl lived. It was to become a museum in his honor. Among the people that we still had to interview was a Basilian Sister, Sr. Justina. She was living alone. No one really knew where she lived and those who perhaps knew had no desire to tell us. However, earlier

that week, I came upon some secret documents concerning Blessed Vasyl's KGB files. On Wednesday of that week, I had an opportunity to look at them. There were several volumes of documents. Among other information, the name Julia Tverdohlib kept appearing along with her address. When I asked if anyone knew her, I received a negative answer. As for the address that was in these documents, the name of the street had changed and those with me had no knowledge of the new name. Sr. Justina was born in 1923, so there was a good chance that she was no longer living. She had been a close collaborator with Blessed Vasyl and she too was often interrogated.

On Thursday, I prepared Blessed Vasyl's apartment by refurbishing it with his furniture. We had decided that we would stop our work at noon. Around 2:30pm I received a phone call from Mary Jane that at the Basilian convent (where she was staying), there was a Sister waiting to be interviewed. The interview with Sr. Ambrose was nothing extraordinary, but at the end she brought out a black booklet with names and asked us if we had interviewed these people. Most of the Sisters on the list had been interviewed, except for the last name. That name was Sr. Justina, and in brackets was the name Julia Tverdohlib with the same address as in the documents. I was surprised that she was still living. We asked some of the Sisters if they could accompany us to Sr.

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Justina's apartment, but that was not possible. It was already 4:00 pm. Our plane was leaving Friday morning at 6:00 am. It would be impossible to meet her, unless there was some Divine Intervention.

Since Mary Jane was doing other work that morning, she wanted to see the furnished apartment. Our plans were to visit the apartment, do some shopping and have supper at a restaurant. When we arrived at the apartment, we discovered that we had forgotten our camera equipment. We would have to return. Around 6:30 pm we returned to the convent to pick up the camera and go for supper. The Sisters insisted that we stay for supper and so we did. As we were finishing our meal, a person arrived at the convent and was surprised to see that we were still in the city. This person had just returned from Sr. Justina's and said that she was waiting for us. Without hesitation, we immediately went to her place.

Sr. Justina lived in an impoverished apartment – two tiny rooms and a washroom. Nothing had changed much from Blessed Vasyl's time. The "underground" altar was still in the corner of the room surrounded by holy pictures which Blessed Vasyl gave her. His tattered books and prayer books were still being used by her. We discovered that after being released from imprisonment in Vorkuta, Blessed Vasyl had his first retreat in her apartment. Soon after she became his first "underground" vocation to the Basilians. Sr. Justina was a seamstress and had sewn many

"underground" vestments for him. She hid holy cards for him. She had the stamp used to make the antimimension (a cloth with relics of a martyr, placed on an altar where the Divine Liturgy is to be celebrated) and made many antimensions which Blessed Vasyl as a Bishop blessed. Although arrested and interrogated many times, Sr. Justina never betrayed him. Her memory of Blessed Vasyl was very much alive, as if it was yesterday. When Blessed Vasyl was being released from prison in 1972 and was being exiled from Ukraine, she was one of two Sisters who went to Kyiv to visit him. She was the last person in Ukraine to see him alive. She shared with us some of the intimate details of her conversations with Blessed Vasyl, especially about the completion of the book he wrote on the Mother of Perpetual Help. We now have this book in our possession in the Shrine/Museum.

As this precious interview was coming to a close, I asked her the same question that I had asked everyone else about the staff. By now, since no one else had ever seen it, I wondered whether the information we received was really true. When I asked her, she replied that after Blessed Vasyl returned from Moscow, he gave her the staff to keep for safe-keeping. It had been in her closet all these years. After freedom came to Ukraine in 1991, she gave it to a Redemptorist priest who in turn passed it on to Bishop Kurchaba, also a Redemptorist. Both of these men have since died. However, I knew where and who had possession of Bishop



Blessed Vasyl's episcopal staff

Kurchaba's belongings. But time prevented us from pursuing this further.

This past summer 2007 we returned to Ukraine to continue our exciting research. I was able to obtain this staff. It was exactly as Sr. Justina had described. Bishop Kurchaba told no one whose staff it was and mistakenly, the priest who had it, thought it belonged to Bishop Kurchaba. Sr. Justina's description confirmed that this staff was indeed Blessed Vasyl's.

We now have this precious 2nd class relic in our Shrine/Museum in Winnipeg - a priceless treasure for the whole Ukrainian Catholic Church. It was definitely through the intercession of Blessed Vasyl and through Divine Intervention that this staff was found and is now present for all to see and revere.

PILGRIMS AT THE SHRINE



Dr. Giovanni Lucio Rocca & his wife Francesca, & sons Gino Maria & Mario, from Milano, Italy



Bus Group from St. Paul, Minnesota and surrounding area visit the Shrine before touring Folklorama.

THANK YOU!!!

Your generous donations make it possible to conduct the ministry of the Shrine and promote the knowledge of Blessed Vasyl throughout the world. Thank you. 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.^d
Contributions listed below are from May 1st until August 31st 2007.

1000+

Dr. Taras & Patrusia Babick
 Elizabeth Drost
 Redemptorist of the Edmonton/Toronto
 Province
 Slovak Redemptorist Fathers
 Sts. Peter & Paul Ukrainian Catholic Church,
 Saskatoon

500+

Dr. Peter Gnanapragasam
 In memory of father Nicholas Gural
Don & Denise Chipilski
 Rev. Fr. Ivan & Lidia Nykyforuk
 Redemptorist of Venice FL
 St. Joseph's Ukrainian Catholic Parish
 Seniors
 St. Joseph's U.C.W.L.C.
 Olga Welichka

100+

Olga Babick
 Don Barrett
 William & Genevieve Berezny
 In memory of the Boychuk and Solotki family
Alexander & Olga Boychuk
 Mike & Margaret Chererika
 In memory of husband William
Sonia Domitruk
 Father Seelos Center
 Bert & Val Galay
 In memory of Mom, Dad, Mike, Bill, & Lauretta
Roy Gulenchin
 Holy Eucharist U.C.W.L.C.
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 Knights of Columbus – Fr. Delaere Council
 Knights of Columbus – Holy Eucharist Council
 #11330
 Geraldine Koban
 In memory of mother Lidia
Ihor & Christine Kotowycz
 Patricia Kreklewetz
 In memory of deceased family members
Fr. Methodius Kushko
 In memory of Nettie Melnychuk
Ted & Sophie Gierys
 Michael & Veronica Mlynarowich
 Gerard & Regina Muench
 Redemptorists of Virginia
 In memory of husband Wasyl
Anna Samson
 For the health of Bill
William & Linda Skromeda
 Robert & Sylvia Sliva
 St. Nicholas Ukrainian Catholic Church
 For the health of Bruno & Leona Osog
Joan Turek
 U.C.B.C. Bing/Breaker Account
 U.C.B.C. Holy Eucharist Branch
 Walter & Nellie Wowczuk
 In honour of our 65th wedding anniversary
Steve & Pauline Wushchenny
 In memory of Russell Yalowega
Marie Yalowega

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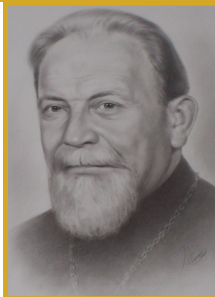
Jennie Bailey
 In memory of Roman Baluta
Leo & Oksana Baluta
 In memory of tato Wolodymyr
Leo & Oksana Baluta
 In memory of Nick Banera
Wade & Bonnie Christensen
 Genevieve Borys
 Stefaniya Bounia
 In memory of Rt. Rev. Msgr. Bozyk
William J. Karlicki
 In memory of Katharina and Luka Staranczuk
Ewhen & Stephanie Brenycz
 In memory of deceased family members
Nellie Burgess
 Mariak Buriak
 Paul & Adeline Carbotte
 In memory of Grege Chanway
Dan Mitchler
 Vera Chaykovska
 In memory of parents Mary and Michael
John M. Chomyn
 John M. Chomyn
 Christ the King School
 In memory of Joanne Coombs
Elsie Borecky
Leslie & Caroline Dubowits
Iris Smellie
 In memory of Faye Demchuk
Dennis & Patti LeBlanc
 Marianne Derkach
 Patricia Dick
 Veronica Domingo
 Iwan Dubickyj
 In memory of Stan Dudzic
Mercil & Elizabeth Corkal
Anna Marie Konopelny
 In memory of Debbie Dunits
Dorothy Labay
 Lionel & Eleanor Fedorowich
 Alexandra Fedoruk
 In memory of my mother
Lawrence Gilles
 Elizabeth Houghton
 In memory of Mary Mae & Stashy Hunter
Bonita Hunter-Eastwood
 Mary Jane Kalenchuk
 In memory of Br. John Kanski, C.ss.R.
Bettie Haverluk
Stan & Luba Sirdar
 William J. Karlicki
 Joseph & Rosalia Kitz
 In memory of Edna Kondra
Stan & Luba Sirdar
 A. Kosowan
 In honour of Lorraine Kozakewich
Terri Scott
 Fr. Michael & Marilyn Krochak
 In memory of Michael Kszyk
Erika Kszyk

In honour of Fr. Methodius Kushko, C.Ss.R.

Bailey's Funeral Home
 Michael & Mary Kuzminski
 Bernard & Marjorie Lapchuk
 Michael & Mary Lepki
 Darlene Litchie-Brown
 In memory of parents Barbara & Bud
Darlene Litchie-Brown
 In memory of Rose Lukie
Metro Lukie
 In memory of Tony Praziazniuk
Nell Lupyrypa
 For health of Larry
Michael & Fenna Madejczyk
 In memory of Roman Mamchyn
Leo & Oksana Baluta
 James & Elaine Mandziuk
 In memory of Michael Mikolayenko
Leslie & Caroline Dubowits
 Dr. Richard Moorhead
 Marie Morin
 In memory of Nicholas Gural
Marven & Nell O'Neil
 Greg & Mary Papinko
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 In memory of Eillin Raidron
Mary Earnsham
 In memory of Thomas
Redemptorists of Concord
 Ken Romaniuk
 In memory of husband Michael
Jean Roshko
 Jean Roshko
 Jean Rubel
 For health of Miguel & Maria Omita
Manuela Rubio
 In memory of Korol, Sapischuk & Wawrykow
 families
Margaret Sapischchuk
 Russell Sawchuk
 Kathy Seneko
 Anne Shpak
 Lillian Sianchuk
 Mary Sinclair
 Terry & Gladys Sloboda
 Lena Smaluk
 In memory of Patricia Warrenchuk
St. Basil's Ukr. Cath. Women's League
 St. James Assinoiboia CWL
 For health of Anna Stasiw
Michael & Fenna Madejczyk
 Jenny Swydneyck
 In memory of Ann Wach
Anne Banera
 Fr. Andrij & Lydia Wasylenko
 A. Winkler
 Frank & Nellie Zeaton
 In memory of Oshust family
Ann Zulak
Correction from May 2007 Newsletter:
 In memory of Stephen Nebozenko & Xsenia
 Chrynowski
Olive Nebozenko

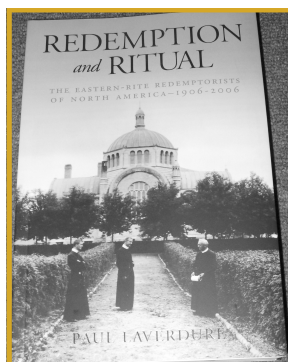
TESTIMONY OF GRACES RECEIVED

On March 18th, 2005 , I, Gary Medwechuk, of Dauphin was anointed with the holy oil of Blessed Vasyl at the church in Dauphin. I was told by my doctor at Health Science Center that my knee bone in my leg would not grow back and that another surgery would be required. I prayed for a favor from the bishop to help my bone heal. I went on April 26th, 2005 to Health Science center to see my doctor. He said that no surgery would be required and that my bone is healing and filling in. I believe I was deeply blessed and graced by this. I came today to pray and thank the bishop in his Shrine.



COMMEMORATING 100 YEARS

The Redemptorists of the Yorkton Province celebrate the completion of their 100th Anniversary . A new book presenting the history of the



Province has just been published. The book is entitled "Redemption and Ritual" written by Dr. Paul Laverdure. This 421 page book with 334 photographs depicts the personalities and events of the past hundred years in the Yorkton Province of Redemptorists

Copies of this book are available from our gift shop for \$39,95

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 Vasyl.

NEW VOLUNTEERS are always needed to welcome pilgrims to the Shrine/Museum. Please contact the Shrine Coordinator at 204-338-7321.

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

***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