



# FULLY ALIVE

*A Bishop Velychkovsky Martyr's Shrine Publication*

## EXTRAORDINARY VISITATION

### Patriarch Sviatoslav Visits Shrine



**His Beatitude Patriarch Sviatoslav, Head of the Ukrainian Greek Catholic Church**

The year 2012, marks an important year in the history of the Ukrainian Greek Catholic Church in Canada. It commemorates the 100<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the appointment of the 1<sup>st</sup> Ukrainian Catholic Bishop to Canada, Blessed Bishop and Martyr Nykyta Budka. Blessed Nykyta was beatified together with Blessed Vasyl on June 27, 2001. On the occasion of this important anniversary, the Ukrainian Greek Catholic Church, un-

der the leadership of Patriarch Sviatoslav Shevchuk, decided to hold the Synod for all the Ukrainian Catholic Bishops of the whole world in Winnipeg.



**His Beatitude is enthralled with the KGB documents, while the Shrine staff shares their findings**

His Beatitude Patriarch Sviatoslav had an opportunity to make a personal visit to the Shrine. We were very honored with his presence. The Shrine staff, Fr. John, Mary Jane, Kseniya and Iris had the privilege to give the Patriarch a tour of the museum and shrine. Patriarch Sviatoslav, who is only 41 years old, listened intently as we shared the story of Blessed Vasyl. His Beatitude watched the video and was delighted to hear the voice of Blessed Vasyl at its conclu-



**His Beatitude examining secret documents found in a garden in Lviv**



**Fr. John explains the Episcopal staff which Blessed Vasyl received from Metropolitan Josyf Slipyj**

sion. He was amazed at the "incorruptibility" of Blessed Vasyl's holy body and the fragility of the vestments in which he was buried. When shown the documents that were found buried in a garden in Lviv, he enthusiastically read the responses that Blessed Vasyl had

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**His Beatitude praying before the holy relics of Blessed Vasyl**

received from Cardinal Josyf Slypij. He perused through the volumes of material which we had obtained from the “KGB” archives in Kyiv. His Beatitude engaged in conversation regarding particular documents.

In the Shrine chapel, the Patriarch spent time in prayer before the holy relics of Blessed Vasyl. With wonder, he listened to some of the graces and miracles that have already occurred through Blessed Vasyl’s intercession.



**Patriarch Sviatoslav examining the “oil-weeping” icon**

In particular, he was very interested in the icons, the 3<sup>rd</sup> class relics, and the cross, which had wept perfumed oil.

At the conclusion of his Beatitude’s one hour visit, we presented him with a 1<sup>st</sup> Class relic of Blessed Vasyl. The adoration that the Patriarch showed to this relic was inspiring and humbling. He held the cross with the relic close to his



**The Patriarch receives a 1st Class relic of Blessed Vasyl**

heart for the rest of the day, refusing to put it down anywhere. His reverence made us more aware of the great privilege we have in working daily in the Shrine and the gift that we have - the holy relics of Blessed Vasyl. The Patriarch’s visit was a great blessing for us all.



**Patriarch Sviatoslav with the Shrine staff**

## UGCC SYNOD IN CANADA



**The altar upon which the Synodal Bishops took their oath**

The Synod of the Ukrainian Greek Catholic Church took place in Manitoba, Canada from September 8<sup>th</sup> to the 15<sup>th</sup>, 2012. Approximately 40 Ukrainian Catholic Bishops from all over the world were in attendance. The preparatory committee in consultation with his Beatitude Patriarch Sviatoslav decided to hold the opening ceremonies (taking an oath) at the Bishop Velychkovsky Martyr’s Shrine.

This historical event took place on Saturday evening on September 8<sup>th</sup> 2012. By invitation the Redemptorists and their ministries: Partners in Mission, Shrine volunteers and Welcome Home volunteers, were present to witness this historical event at St. Joseph’s Ukrainian Catholic Church. The bishops began the evening by praying the Moleben to the Holy Spirit. Then, each bishop, beginning with His Beatitude, solemnly

took the oath before the relics of the martyrs: Blessed Nicholas Charnetsky, Blessed Vasyl Velychkovsky and a 2nd class relic (a hand cross) of Blessed Nykyta Budka. After the oath, each bishop received a candle with Blessed Vasyl’s image. The bishops solemnly proceeded to the Shrine where they placed their candle on Blessed Vasyl’s sarcophagus. There they spent some time in personal prayer.



The Bishops process to the Shrine Chapel carrying Blessed Vasyl candles



The bishops receive a brief tour of the Blessed Vasyl museum

After praying at the Shrine, the bishops proceeded to the museum where they were given a short tour describing the important artifacts of Blessed Vasyl. They were shown the spoon upon which Blessed Vasyl celebrated the Eucharist while imprisoned in Vorkuta. The bishops were intrigued with the simple staff that Blessed Vasyl received from Cardinal Josyf Slipyj, who consecrated him to the episcopacy in a Moscow Hotel room. This staff was the symbol of the Episcopal authority being passed on to Blessed Vasyl. Some of the bishops noted that February 4, 2013 will mark the 50th anniversary of this momentous clandestine event. They were most intrigued with the KGB documents that we had obtained from Kyiv in 2009.



The bishops placed their candles on the sarcophagus of Blessed Vasyl. They remained lit throughout the Synod

The bishops congratulated the staff on the fine job in forming such a wonderful museum. They encouraged us to continue our work in publications and spreading the knowledge of Blessed Vasyl to others. We were very blessed and honored to have the Ukrainian Catholic Bishops of the world in the Bishop Velychkovsky Martyr's Shrine.



The Hierarchy of the Ukrainian Greek Catholic Church before the opening Pontifical Divine Liturgy at Ss. Volodymyr and Olga Cathedral. Photograph by N. Iwan

## Velychkovsky Pilgrimage to Ukraine

Our third Pilgrimage to Ukraine began on August 20<sup>th</sup> to September 4<sup>th</sup> 2012. We visited and prayed at the places where Blessed Vasyl lived, worked and suffered. Fifteen youthful pilgrims from across Canada and the United States were part of our pilgrimage. It was a time filled with blessings and graces. Hearts were touched and changed as we travelled through the land of the Ukrainian martyrs. Blessed Vasyl's story became more alive as we walked in his footsteps, as we met people who knew him personally, and as we became more aware of the sufferings of a people under the atheistic Soviet regime. Some of our pilgrims have shared their experiences with us.



2012 Pilgrims with friends at Blessed Vasyl's apartment in Lviv

*"The faith and spirituality shown was very powerful and difficult to describe. The prayers and reflections have certainly deepened my faith. I will have many, many wonderful memories from my pilgrimage that will keep me focused and strengthen my spiritual journey. It was a safe, happy and inspiring travel."* Sonia



Pilgrims before the prison where Blessed Zenon Kowalyk was crucified

*"A memorable experience was in Zarvanytsia. I felt great peace as I walked off the bus into this important pilgrimage site. It was incredibly moving to have been a part of the evening candle light procession with other pilgrims from across Ukraine and abroad. Everyone sung with one voice and raised their candles in unity. I also enjoyed the way of the cross which our group did on our own, in the pitch dark, with nothing but a candle to light our way up the steep hill. The next morning we attended the Sunday morning liturgy. The church was packed and they had two choirs singing, it was really heaven on earth for me. I'll admit, to my surprise, I got a little choked up as they began to sing "Bipyio" (our creed). It made me think about what I believe in, and what Blessed Vasyl, and the other Ukrainian Catholic Martyrs died for."*  
Brent

*hearing their stories about him and how they came to serve Christ, knowing that at the time choosing Christ could mean imprisonment and torture if caught. I am always interested in hearing stories of people who follow their hearts and take the road less travelled no matter where it will take them. This, of course, was true for Blessed Vasyl. We also met Sister Julia who works with the children at an orphanage. I can't imagine how frustrating her work is. She visits the children and brings them supplies. She has to walk a fine line because if she has any concerns or questions regarding the orphanage, she could be stopped from seeing the orphans. Seeing her with the children was awesome. They really care about her and were so excited to see her. She is making a difference. There are still people who are trying to bring God to people no matter where they might be and how many obstacles could be in their way. It was very inspiring."* Natasha



Celebrating Divine Liturgy in Kovel where Blessed Vasyl ministered from 1928-1935



Enjoying lunch on the road near the Pochaiv Monastery

*"This is the first major pilgrimage I ever went on. After this experience I want to make a major pilgrimage every 5 years at least! More than that if I can! The graces I have received from this pilgrimage are unbelievable. The people I met both inside the group and outside the group were beautiful. They each had Christ in them and this pilgrimage taught me that very clearly. It was wonderful and amazing to see all of us from different walks of life with different personalities and different stories, all together seeking Christ on this journey. Like I said, Christ was visible in everyone! It was amazing. I was truly blessed to be part of this pilgrimage. I could go on and on! Thank you Fr. John, Mary Jane and Kseniya. Thank you fellow pilgrims. God bless you I will never forget you and I will pray for you always!"* Magdalene (19 yrs)

*“Following in Blessed Vasyl Velychkovsky's footsteps on our recent pilgrimage brought me great joy. The pilgrimage also made me think and reflect, and it touched my heart many times. This pilgrimage made all the stories I have heard about Blessed Vasyl's life and the work of our Shrine staff in Ukraine come alive for me. This pilgrimage should be part of "basic training" and "keeping in shape" by all Redemptorists like myself. It was amazing to meet my brother Redemptorists from the Lviv Province in Ukraine. Much was shared among us pilgrims - prayer, meals, conversation, fun, and great experiences. Thank you for making the commitment to these precious two weeks of pilgrimage. Thanks especially to our leaders: Fr. John, Mary Jane, and Kseniya. They gave and gave until it hurt on our journey together - a journey of faith, a journey of discovery, a common journey, a journey to our roots.”*

Fr. Michael



**Pilgrims pray before the altar of the Mother of God, where Blessed Vasyl was consecrated to the Blessed Virgin in 1911**

*“I want to extend sincere thanks to Mary Jane, Father John, Kseniya, and everyone who made the Velychkovsky Pilgrimage 2012 possible! The two weeks in Ukraine were certainly unforgettable! From the trip I have gained a deeper understanding for the faith, and deeper sense of how we as Christians should live out their faith. To walk in the footsteps of Blessed Vasyl was incredible! During the pilgrimage, us pilgrims not only visited locations where Vasyl lived and visited, but we had the great opportunity to meet and talk with people who were close to him. This included meeting his nephew, as well as three nuns who were under Vasyl's spiritual direction. This pilgrimage was truly a once in a lifetime experience! Through this pilgrimage I have gained a deeper love for my Ukrainian Catholic Faith. I have also gained lifetime friends in my fellow pilgrims. It has been an immense blessing to be able to take part in this journey, and I will continue to keep in contact with those who are dedicated to Blessed Vasyl and the Velychkovsky shrine.” Katherine (19 yrs)*



**In Yabluniv, we prayed before Blessed Vasyl's father's grave, Fr. Volodymyr Velychkovsky**

*“My desire to go on this pilgrimage was one of personal spiritual renewal. What I did get from the pilgrimage was so much more. To begin with, to start our pilgrimage by visiting Blessed Vasyl's apartment immediately had me getting my whole self immersed in the opportunity to walk in the footsteps of Blessed Vasyl. It was so moving to be able to say liturgy in the same place where Blessed Vasyl had done many years before - one of many differences was, however, we were privileged to not have to profess our faith in silence but with as much gusto as we could muster. As the days went on, I was moved by the strong faith of the people of Lviv and area of Ukraine. Their call to prayer at every and any moment of the day, made that desire build in me as well.” Andrea*

*“Blessed Vasyl Pilgrimage 2012 . . . a journey that instilled for me the feeling of being welcomed home and experiencing the love and compassion of our Lord through the sufferings and blessings of our beloved martyrs and the people of Ukraine. Returning after two years, in which my life changed dramatically through the blessings, graces and healings I had received from that experience, left me feeling at peace and knowing that God is with me always.*

*I was truly touched and blessed to be with our group of fifteen pilgrims at the Pochaiv Lavra and to be able to venerate the Icon of Our Lady of Pochaiv, which on rare occasions is lowered down, allowing pilgrims to be blessed with this experience.*

*The experience of visiting the four orphan children at the psychological institution, where it pulled at your heart strings to see how they lived, and yet the joy in their faces at seeing us and Sister Julia, and the love they have for her, the small gifts that we brought to them and the time we were able to spend with them. Continuing on to the orphanage, as we missed the children at the camp, we were able to spend some quality time with the small group that was there. Bringing them treats and toys, playing with them and listening and*



**Pilgrims sorted the many donated items that were to be distributed to the orphans**



Our pilgrims with Sister Julia, SSMI and a handful of orphans at the orphanage in Syne Vedno

watching them as they delighted in the things they received and seeing the work that Sister Julia is doing with them, giving them that loving touch that they do not receive, but appreciate so much.

Hearing the stories of the courage and faith of Blessed Vasyl and struggles he endured for the love of the Blessed Mother and her Son, Jesus Christ and the Ukrainian Catholic Church, encourages us to turn to Christ and the Virgin Mary with all our struggles and not to be discouraged, but to embrace our crosses and let Christ walk with us in our daily lives. This was so evident when we visited the home of the Basilian Sisters in Lviv, and hearing the stories from Sister Teophelia and Sister Muza, who worked closely with Blessed Vasyl to the day of his final arrest.



While in Stradch, where Blessed Mykola Kondrat and Blessed Volodymyr Prejma were martyred, we reflected on the meaning of the Cross in the life of the martyrs

Fifteen pilgrims left together on August 20<sup>th</sup> from Toronto, and together we became a family journeying together under the guidance of our wonderful leaders, Father John, Mary Jane and Kseniya, binding us together through the steps of our martyrs, feeding our souls, mind and body, and yet balancing it with the social and physical aspect as well. We came back on September 4<sup>th</sup>, tired, but yet feeling refreshed and renewed. Thank you for walking with us, as each one of us was blessed with many gifts and memories of this journey together.”

Chris (Chrystia)

## 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.

Contributions listed below are from May 16th until August 31st 2012.

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W. Allan Bailey  
Stan and Luba Sirdar

# UNITY 2012

Blessed Vasyl Velychkovsky Martyr's Shrine was privileged to participate in Unity 2012 in Pinawa, MB where Ukrainian Catholic youth from across Canada gathered.



Youth from Toronto attending Unity 2012



Participants in Unity 2012 from Edmonton praying for Blessed Vasyl's intercession



A presentation on the life of Blessed Vasyl by Kseniya at Unity 2012

Searching for photos and videos of Blessed Vasyl between June 1972 and June 1973. If anyone has any information about who may have filmed his arrival or banquets and Liturgies he attended, please inform the shrine. (204)338-7321

## 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.

## 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@mymts.net](mailto:bvshrine@mymts.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:  
Bishop Velychkovsky Martyr's Shrine  
250 Jefferson Avenue  
Winnipeg, MB R2V 0M6  
Canada

**Blessed Velychkovsky Martyr's Shrine**  
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