



FULLY ALIVE

Bishop Velychkovsky National Martyr's Shrine

ARRESTED AGAIN

50th Anniversary

January 27th, 2018, was the 50th Anniversary of the second arrest of Blessed Vasyl Velychkovsky in Lviv, Ukraine. Blessed Vasyl had several experiences of arrest in his life. His first was when he was 17 years old during the First World War. He was arrested by the Polish army, imprisoned, escaped, and was caught at the Slovak border, and escaped again. His second arrest

came in 1940 in the city of Stanislaviv after he led the procession of 20,000 people in honour of our Mother of Perpetual Help. The Soviet authorities arrested him, interrogated him and after a few days released him. They were afraid of the protests by the people that arose as a result of this arrest. His third arrest had much more consequences. It happened on August 7, 1945, in the city of Ternopil. It was part of a systematic attempt of the Soviet Union to suppress and destroy the Ukrainian Greek Catholic Church. After his arrest, he spent months in interrogations which included physical and mental torture. Then he was sentenced first to die by firing squad and later to ten years of hard labour in gulag laager camps. He spent his prison time in Kirov, Vorkuta and Vladimir.

After being released from prison on July 9, 1955, he returned to Lviv. By this time the Ukrainian Greek Catholic Church had been suppressed and made illegal (since March 8, 1946). The Soviets were hoping to utterly destroy the UGCC. When Blessed Vasyl returned to this situation, rather than living in fear and paralysis,

he began to organize an underground church. He secretly kept doing his priestly ministry and encouraged others to do the same. Some called him the "Father of the Catcomb Church".

He did his ministry enthusiastically and with much courage. His humble apartment in Lviv became the centre of church activity. Blessed Vasyl was appointed to become a bishop in 1959,

but there was no one who could consecrate him. In 1963, Metropolitan Josyf Slipyj was released from 18 years of laager prison camps so that he could attend the Second Vatican Council. He summoned Blessed Vasyl to come to Moscow. Here he consecrated Blessed Vasyl to the episcopacy in a hotel room and gave him the authority to head the UGCC in Ukraine. Blessed Vasyl's pastoral ministry increased.

The Soviet system had a high degree of surveillance. Recently, the Bishop Velychkovsky National Martyr's Shrine received a volume from the KGB archives about Blessed Vasyl and the surveillance kept on him. From those pages, it was evident how intense this surveillance was of Blessed Vasyl and his life. It continued from the 1950's until his death in Canada. The Soviets were aware of Blessed Vasyl's status as the head of this illegal underground church. They monitored his activities. They had spies who infiltrated the Vatican and the leadership of the Ukrainian Greek Catholic Church outside Ukraine, who propagated false information in order to cause division and discord within the church. They knew of the communications that Blessed Vasyl had with



Holy cards found during house search



Blessed Vasyl's mug shot during his last arrest



Chalices and rubles found during house search

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Blessed Vasyl looking on as a KGB officer points to all the "illegal" artefacts: vestments, books, altar wine, etc.

Cardinal Josyf Slipyj. They knew of the homes that Blessed Vasyl bought for all the sisters who joined monasteries through his influence. They knew of the clandestine seminaries that Blessed Vasyl organized in Ternopil, Ivano Frankivsk and Zacarpathia. They were aware of the photo labs which produced holy cards and religious literature. All this information they gleaned through spies, through interrogations and from house searches. They saw that the underground church was growing and was alive. Their plan to destroy the Ukrainian Greek Catholic Church was failing.

In 1970, the Soviet Union was to celebrate the 100th birthday of Lenin. In preparation for this occasion,



Rosaries found during house search

the Soviet government once again attempted to destroy the UGCC. They increased their interrogations and their house searches. Blessed Vasyl's apartment was searched in November of 1968. Much incriminated evidence was found,

including the book he wrote on "The History of the Miraculous Icon of our Mother of Perpetual Help". They found bishop's vestments, tape recorders, recordings from Vatican radio, a typewriter, many holy cards and religious items. They knew that Blessed Vasyl was the head and leader of this illegal underground church, therefore, they needed to get rid of him. "Cut off the head and the rest will die." However, to solidify their case against him they needed to catch him "red-handed".

An opportunity came on January 27, 1969. Blessed Vasyl went to the home of Olha Kos to celebrate the Divine Liturgy. The KGB police were tipped off and arrived to catch him in the act. They arrested him and did a house search. Then they took him to

his own apartment and did a second house search. They confiscated many religious articles, vestments, books, and papers. The KGB took Blessed Vasyl to prison where they placed him in solitary confinement. The KGB then spread the news of his arrest in order to terrify other priests and to dishearten the members of the underground church. By their calculations it was working. In April, "news" came to the West that Velychkovsky had died in prison. The story is told by his friends that Blessed Vasyl was pronounced dead. While he was being taken to the morgue, one of the guards noticed some warmth under Blessed Vasyl's underarm. They left him and shortly after that Blessed Vasyl arose and sat up. Blessed Vasyl wrote about the harshness of this pre-trial stay in prison. The KGB decided that they must make a criminal case against Blessed Vasyl (not a civil one). The criminal case would show the world and the Vatican that he was truly guilty and worthy of punishment. To make this case against him, they made 42 house searches, where they found many religious articles and several house chapels. They also interrogated 18 priests. In the end, his trial took place September 22 -23, 1969. Witnesses were brought forth including several priests. One young woman gave "damaging" testimony of how Blessed Vasyl prepared her for baptism and was encouraging her to join a monastic order. Blessed Vasyl was found guilty of anti-Soviet crimes and was sentenced to three years in a penal colony of strict regime in Kommunarisk, eastern Ukraine. It was during these three years, that his health was ruined and that he received deadly poisonous slow-working drugs aimed to cause his imminent death.



Church calendars, rosaries, holy cards, 1st Communion certificates found during house search

Like Christ, Blessed Vasyl was seen as a threat to the ruling power. He was seen as a revolutionary, creating and building this underground church in opposition to Soviet law. He was seen as one who corrupted people by having them accept faith in Christ and reject the indoctrination of the State. Like with Christ, those in power thought by killing this one man, they would end this "revolution". However, as it happened after Christ's resurrection, after Blessed Vasyl's death, the underground church grew even stronger. His sacrifice gave courage to others to stand for the faith in the face of persecution. May his example help us to do the same.

Graces and Blessings

In October 2018 - Thanksgiving Day, to be precise, my husband of 53 years was diagnosed with AML: acute myeloid leukemia, proven by bone marrow biopsy three days later at the Vancouver General Hospital. The prognosis, considering Fred's age, genetic profile, and previous bone marrow anemia was bleak: days to weeks without treatment, three to seven months if palliative chemo proved successful (even this offered a 60% chance of failure!)

Fred was raised in a godless home. However, he has always supported my convictions and respected my Catholicism. Thus, he agreed to be blessed daily with Blessed Vasyi's oil, to sleep with Blessed Vasyi's relic under his pillow, to carry another relic in his wallet on his person and to be prayed for both at my parish, Our Lady of Grace, Salt Lake Island, B.C., and at Blessed Vasyi's Shrine in Winnipeg.

The past months have been a roller coaster ride of chemotherapy, Fred's temperature spiking, days spent in isolation due to infection risk, weekly blood (and platelet) transfusions, countless blood tests. No wonder his arms are bruised! The tears, the fears.... Blessed Vasyi has been with us through it all. Of this, I am sure. Fred's white blood cell count is at zero. Immature blasts cells have filled his blood stream destroying the white cells. Medically, he is "neutropenic". Chemo has been consistently interrupted and suspended after only a few days. He has only completed one seven-day cycle since October). Fred is critically ill.... And yet...he is not. Thank you, Blessed Vasyi!

The family doctor, the oncologist, the internal medicine specialist are baffled: Fred's physical condition in no way matches the poor state of his blood. He should be gasping for air, experiencing severe chest pain, headaches, renal failure. Yet, he is "fine!" Living a fairly normal life – except for agreeing for "mask-up" when going out and about to reduce the risk of infection. His platelet count – which at the time of biopsy was 4 has increased to an amazing 32! Fred has not had a platelet transfusion in over a month.

Our family doctor knows that I am praying for a miracle. He has told me he believes Fred is "living my miracle". He is not sure what this means to his prognosis, but the fact he is experiencing none of the symptoms is indeed miraculous. He suggested I keep on praying.

So please, continue to present Fred's name and cause before Blessed Vasyi. I am thankful for and humbled by Blessed Vasyi's help so far. I do feel quite like Dicken's Oliver in asking "for more", and yet, I am. Please, dear Blessed Vasyi, continue to intervene on Fred's behalf before God's throne.

Marianne Hobbs

Please inform us of any blessings or grace you received, no matter how small they are.

MINISTRY IN UKRAINE



Monthly prayer service at the Vel-ychkovsky museum/shrine in Lviv with Fr. Myhaylo Ivaniak, C.Ss.R.



Presentation in the 17th century church of the Holy Trinity in Zovkva



Presentation to medical staff in a hospital in Kopychyntsi.



Presentation in the church of the Protection of the Mother of God in Buchach



Presentation in Sts. Peter & Paul Parish in Buchach

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 National Martyr's Shrine. May Blessed Vasyl bless each one of you.

Contributions listed below are from November 21, 2018 until February 28, 2019.

1000+

Dr. Barbara Ann Mackalski

+500

Donna Korban

In memory of Steve Sianchuk

Lillian Sianchuk

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Henry & Evangeline Alcudia
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Anne & Kiell
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Samuel Zachary Bass
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Zachary family
Peter & Olga Zachary

A BLESSING On Sunday, Feb. 3rd 2019, my family and I were watching the Superbowl football game when around 6:30pm my granddaughter (18 months) climbed up on the sofa leaned over on the side arm and fell to the marble floor heading her head and face. Her crying and screaming was unbearable. She was bleeding from the nose and her parents quickly rushed her to the children's emergency hospital. At about 8pm, I called my son and could hear her crying in the background. At that moment I began to pray and asked Blessed Vasyl to intercede, I prayed for my little granddaughter, for a miracle and healing. I prayed for awhile saying the Our Father and Hail Mary over and over and in between asking Blessed Vasyl "please help this precious little one." My son called about 9:35 pm to inform me that there were no broken bones, only a bruise above the right eye, right cheek, very sore nose and a swollen lip. She had stopped crying, in good spirits and was enjoying a popsicle that the nurse had given her. The doctor said she will be fine and to keep an eye on her throughout the night. Anxious to see my granddaughter, I arrived the next morning to find her smiling. I was amazed no bruises, no swelling at all. She was in no pain. Her parents and I were overwhelmed. Blessed Vasyl has interceded for children in the past. Thank you Blessed Vasyl for this miracle that our little one received.

Mary Jane Kalenchuk

Shrine Ministry in Winnipeg



Sr. Theresa (Guyana), Sr. Joan & Mele (Wpg), Cindy O'Brien (Calgary)



Students from the Jesuit Centre for Catholic Studies, St. Paul's College, Wpg



Elizabeth & Alex from Edmonton



St. Theresa's RC Confirmation Class and families, Middlechurch, MB



Federico & Flor Manicucci from Dominican Republic

SHRINE SCHEDULE

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.

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